

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	1 November 2011
Subject:	School Place Planning (including Admissions Policy)
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children's Services
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Policy Lead Member: Councillor Christine Bednell – Children and Young People Performance Lead Member: Councillor Krishna James – Children and Young People
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Annexe A: Primary School Expansion Programme Consultation Document and Background Papers 1-3.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides information on the Council's primary school expansion programme and related school organisation issues including proposals for secondary school strategy, up-dates on free schools and academies, and school admissions.

Recommendations:

Overview and Scrutiny is invited to note this report and offer comments.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. The local authority has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area. There are several key strands to delivering sufficient school places. This report provides information on the Primary School Expansion Strategy, planning for the Harrow secondary school strategy, current developments with free schools and academies, and admissions.

Primary School Expansion Strategy

2. In July 2011, Cabinet agreed a school expansion programme as part of the school place planning strategy. The strategy aims to secure sufficient primary school places through the creation of additional permanent places, supplemented by planned bulge classes and contingency bulge classes that will be opened if required.

Estimated Expansion

3. Harrow Council commissions the Greater London Authority (GLA) to provide pupil projections. The borough is divided into 6 planning areas for the purpose of primary school place planning. 5 planning areas are geographic and 1 planning area contains all the voluntary aided schools. The projections for each planning area were used to estimate the number of additional reception places required. Overall the projections indicate that there will be 2,851 pupils requiring a reception place in September 2017. This is the predicted peak of the demand. There are currently 2,550 permanent reception places in Harrow. Using the projections and a planning factor of 5%, at the peak of the increase, it is estimated that up to 15 additional forms of entry would be required. Without the planning factor, this equates to approximately an additional 11 reception classes. (Detailed projections are available at Annexe A, Background Paper 1.)

Representative Headteacher Working Group

4. A representative group of primary headteachers was established to work with officers to develop the primary school expansion programme and ensure that there was an on-going dialogue with schools about the programme. The group met on three occasions. The group developed a set of guiding principles to identify schools for potential expansion. The principles covered a range of factors including school site and building capacity, quality of education, popularity and location. These were then applied to schools to indicate which schools would be most suitable to consider for expansion. The group also advised officers on the consultation mechanisms and provided feedback to the Primary Headteachers' Executive.

Consultation

5. In accordance with the Place Planning Strategy, a consultation was launched on 10 October 2011 and will close on 11 November 2011. The consultation is seeking views on a set of proposals affecting

schools across Harrow. Consultees include all schools in Harrow, Diocesan and faith organisations, neighbouring local authorities and interested parties, including MPs and voluntary sector organisations.

6. The consultation document sets out the challenge for Harrow to meet in respect of increased demand for school places and proposes permanent expansion of 11 schools from September 2013. This would be preceded by temporary expansion from September 2012. Following further consideration of the projections and the experience of managing bulge year groups, there has been an increase in the number of proposed permanent expansions. This would provide greater certainty for both schools and parents and it is believed will be a sustainable level of increased places.
7. The following documents have been published for the consultation and copies of these documents are at Annexe A.
 - Detailed consultation document and response form
 - Background Paper 1 – Demographic Information
 - Background Paper 2 – Map of the Borough
 - Background Paper 3 – Schools by Planning Area

Capital

8. There are considerable capital implications in the proposals for expansion. During the consultation, school site feasibility studies will be completed for those schools proposed for expansion. This will provide an expansion solution for the schools, a phased capital programme and an indication of capital investment.
9. Capital funding for the expansion programme will be available from:
 - The government's funding to local authorities for schools. Although the details for 2012-13 are yet to be finalised, it is assumed that the funding will be similar to the funding for 2011-12 which was £7m.
 - As part of the Council's budget making process, contingency funding is being proposed in case government funding is not sufficient at any point.
 - In July 2011 the Government launched the Priority School Building Programme to rebuild approximately 200 of the schools in the poorest condition across the country through a privately financed programme. Working with schools meeting the threshold for the poorest condition, officers have submitted applications for 11 schools. Where these schools are proposed for expansion, although this is subject to consultation and Cabinet decisions, the submissions are for expanded schools. The applications were submitted on 14 October 2011. The government will announce in December which schools are invited to the next stage. The application at this stage does not constitute formal commitment from the schools or the

government. There are few details on this scheme, but it has been considered that an application at this stage constitutes an expression of interest and recognition of a need to address the most serious condition issues. This initiative may provide an opportunity to expand any Harrow school that makes a successful application.

Next Steps

10. At the end of the consultation, all responses will be considered, along with the outcome of the feasibility studies, and a report will be presented to Cabinet in December. The Cabinet report will recommend to Cabinet those schools that should be taken forward to the statutory process for permanent expansion.

Secondary School Strategy

Secondary School Projections

11. The available projections for high schools indicate that there will be a small shortfall of Year 7 secondary school places in September 2015. The shortfall will increase as the pupil numbers rise and there will be a need for approximately 9 additional forms of entry by September 2020. Further details of the projections are included in the consultation Background Paper 1 (pages 19-21). However, these are preliminary projections and further analysis and development is required.
12. There are a number of associated matters including the number of pupils coming into the borough during their secondary education, provision for pupils with low levels of English language, the potential for schools to expand, pupils with special needs and a potential new school.
13. Officers have had initial discussions with the High School Headteachers Executive. It is proposed that options to address the pupil growth are developed in partnership with the high schools.
14. There will be a strong interface with this work and the work with the High School Headteachers Executive. This work will commence in November and initial outputs will be produced in the Spring.

Academies

15. 7 high schools converted to academy status on 1 August 2011. The council is currently developing its offer of services for purchase by all schools. Some residual local matters from the conversion are being resolved. The government is undertaking a number of consultations on school funding which arise from the impact of the academies policy. The Schools Forum is considering the impact of these proposals for Harrow community schools.
16. At this time the local authority is unaware of any other schools investigating formal agreement to convert to academy status.

Free Schools

17. On Monday 10 October 2011 the Government announced that 79 new state funded schools would open from September 2012 onwards. The Department for Education (DfE) will work with the proposers to develop their vision into plans to open the schools. As part of this stage the local authority will be consulted on the proposals and site issues will be addressed.
18. One of the successful schools is St Chaitanya's School, proposed by the I-Foundation. The proposal is for an all through school, with 2 forms of entry in the primary school and 6 forms of entry in the secondary school. The school would be located in Harrow and officers are waiting for guidance from the DfE on this process. Officers have an established relationship with the I-Foundation and worked in partnership to support the opening of the Krishna-Avanti Primary School.

Admissions Policy Up-date

Pupil Numbers in September 2011

19. There has been a particular pressure for infant school places in the south east of the borough. To address this, an additional class in Camrose Primary School has been opened in Year 1. This is the first time that an additional class has been opened in a year group other than in Reception. This indicates the need to ensure a sufficient number of permanent expansions to meet demand across the year groups.

Outcomes of the allocation of places for Reception class and 11+ transfer for the 2011-12 academic year

20. The outcomes of the allocation of places for community schools into Reception classes and Year 7 (11+ transfer) for the 2011-12 academic year in accordance with first preferences is presented in the table below:

ALLOCATIONS	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10
Reception	79%	77%	74%
11+ transfer	81%	87%	N/A

21. To meet the demand for reception places, 8 bulge classes were opened for September 2011. All on time Harrow applicants were offered a school place to start in September 2011.
22. All Harrow applicants were offered a high school place to start in September 2011.

Government's Consultation Code of Practice

23. The Government undertook a review and consultation on the Schools Admissions Code of Practice and School Admissions Appeals Code.

Some of the key proposals for change were about the exceptions to the infant class size regulation (circumstances where an additional teacher is not required if there are more than 30 pupils in a class), the abolition of the requirement to establish an Admissions Forum and removing the requirement for in-year co-ordination. The new Code is proposed for implementation for school admissions in September 2013.

24. The outcome of the consultation is expected to be received early in November 2011. There are implications for the current admissions arrangements and the annual consultation that takes place between November and January.

Harrow Admissions Arrangements Consultation

25. As the admissions authority for community schools in Harrow. The annual consultation will commence in November. Outcomes will be reported to Harrow Admissions Forum and then determined by Cabinet before 15 April 2012 for implementation in September 2013. The final detail of the consultation will be informed by the new Schools Admissions Code of Practice.

Financial Implications

Revenue

26. Any school expansion programme will inevitably have significant financial implications. School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As the Department for Education (DfE) allocates DSG based on pupil numbers, any increase in pupil numbers results in additional revenue funding for the expanding school. The revenue funding is allocated to schools based on the Harrow Schools' funding formula. As school budgets are based on pupil numbers in the January prior to the start of the financial year, there is always a funding lag when schools increase their pupil numbers. To ensure that schools who agree to an expansion are not financially penalised the Harrow school funding formula provides 'Additional Class Funding' for the period from September to the end of March, following which the mainstream funding formula will take effect. This ensures that schools have adequate funding for at least the average costs of a teacher.

Capital

27. During the consultation, there will be work on the school sites to assess their needs. From this work, costings for each school will be developed. The outcome of this work will inform the final proposals for permanent expansions.
28. It is expected that the majority of the capital funding will be from the government's Department for Education (DfE). As part of the government's reduction in public spending, the allocation of funding from the DfE is under consideration. The government has confirmed that its priorities are to improve the condition of school buildings and to ensure that there are sufficient school places. The government will confirm its allocation to all local authorities, including Harrow, in

December for 2012-13. If funding levels are maintained, it is assumed that there will be approximately £7m per year for the next three years.

29. Funding the expansion programme is also being considered as part of setting the Council's 2012/13 to 2016/17 Capital Programme in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In 2011/12 the DfE acknowledged the need to provide additional places through the allocation of £3.2m of basic need capital grant. A national review of schools' capital is currently underway and no funding has been confirmed for 2012/13 onwards, though for planning purposes it is expected to be in line with the 2011/12 allocation.
30. The capital costs of this expansion programme will be phased over several years as not all additional accommodation will be required at the same time for each school. As part of the Council's budget process, contingency funding is being proposed in case government funding is not sufficient at any point.
31. The Council has a small capital fund available for those schools that have a bulge class in September 2012 and which would proceed to a permanent expansion. Schools will be invited to bid for this funding for essential works to accommodate bulge classes where this is necessary.
32. The Government launched the Priority School Building Programme in the summer which aims to rebuild the schools in the poorest condition across the country through Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Although there were few details of the programme and many concerns about PFI, Harrow has submitted applications for 11 schools. Where these schools are proposed for expansion, the enlarged size has been part of the application. The outcome of the applications will be announced by the government in December. At this stage, the application does not constitute formal commitment to enter the programme.

Equalities Implications

33. An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the school expansion programme. The conclusion of this assessment is that the implications are positive or neutral in that the school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow. Harrow's schools are successful and inclusive and provide a diversity of provision, and the school expansion programme will build on the positives that already exist in Harrow's schools
34. As proposals for permanent expansion are brought forward, there will be Equalities Impact Assessments undertaken on specific proposals.

Performance Issues

35. Harrow is a high performing Local Authority and the large majority of local services are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. Schools in Harrow perform well in comparison to national and statistically similar

local authorities. Most primary schools and all secondary schools are judged good or outstanding.

36. The Schools White Paper and Education Bill maintain a focus on driving up standards in schools, and place more of the responsibility with the schools directly for their improvement. The role of the Local Authority in measuring performance and driving improvement is changing significantly and will reduce from its current level. However, the Local Authority will maintain a strategic oversight and enabling role in local education, and is likely to retain some role in monitoring educational achievement and key measures such as exclusions and absence. The exact nature of the respective roles and responsibilities is still emerging and is being discussed with the schools.
37. Although the national indicator set has been abolished by the Department for Communities and Local Government, all of the key education indicators remain in place and continue to be reported to the Department for Education (DfE). This situation remains under review and the DfE is yet to provide clear guidance on if and how educational performance will be judged at a borough level.
38. There are implications for the provision of performance and management information to other services within Children's Services where schools' data is not transferred to and held by the Council. This includes data from potential academies and other schools not taking up some interdependent SLAs.

Environmental Impact

39. The school expansion programme will have an environmental impact that will need to be considered. Schools account for 50% of the council's total carbon emissions (62% of emissions under the Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme – [CRC]) and will need to play a full part in reducing these emissions by 4% per annum, as set out in the council's climate change strategy.
40. The government's position on whether the council or academies are responsible for emissions under the CRC is yet to be clarified.

Risk Management Implications

41. The directorate and corporate risk management implications for the council arising from school place planning are included on the directorate and corporate risk registers.

Corporate Priorities

42. These considerations will support the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2011-2012:
 - United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
 - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	19 October 2011		
Name:	Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	17 October 2011		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Johanna Morgan, Education Professional Lead, Education Strategy and School Organisation, 020 8736 6841.

Background Papers: Cabinet Report 21 July 2011, School Expansion Programme