

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	25 January 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Primary School Expansion Programme
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children's Services
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	None

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report provides updated information on the Council's primary school expansion programme.

**Recommendations:**

The Education Consultative Forum 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. The Education Consultative Forum has received several reports on the increasing demand for primary school places in Harrow.

### **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.

#### Consultation

3. In accordance with the Place Planning Strategy, a consultation was undertaken on proposals to expand permanently 11 primary schools. Consultees included all schools in Harrow, Diocesan and faith organisations, neighbouring local authorities and interested parties, including MPs and voluntary sector organisations.
4. During the consultation, school site feasibility studies were completed for those schools proposed for expansion. These provided potential expansion solutions for the schools, an outline of how a phased capital programme could be delivered and an indication of capital investment

#### December Cabinet Meeting

5. At their meeting on 15 December 2011, Cabinet considered a report on the outcomes of the consultation and the feasibility studies. The report recommended that 11 schools should be taken forward to the statutory process for permanent expansion, subject to affordability.
6. The schools proposed to be taken forward for the statutory process, subject to affordability are:

Camrose Primary School  
Cedars Manor School  
Glebe Primary School  
Pinner Park Infant School  
Pinner Park Junior School  
Stanburn First School  
Stanburn Junior School  
Vaughan Primary School  
Welldon Park Infant School  
Welldon Park Junior School  
Marlborough Primary School

7. The Cabinet report also included the capital costs for the permanent expansions which totalled £27.4m. Given that the Government's school

capital announcement had not been made at the time of writing the report, the recommendation delegated the decision on the final list of schools to be taken forward for permanent expansion to the Corporate Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges.

#### Engagement with Schools

8. Officers invited all schools that were included in the consultation to a meeting on 8 December 2011 to explain the recommendations in the Cabinet Report and the next steps for the statutory consultation.
9. All community primary schools in Harrow will be part of the strategic approach and those schools not proposed for permanent expansion will be included in the programme of bulge classes or contingency bulge classes during the next five years. Any increase in provision by voluntary aided schools or through free schools will be factored into planning. The opening of bulge classes will depend on actual demand around the borough, and the use of bulge classes will be monitored and reviewed annually. It may be necessary to bring schools forward in the programme, or for schools to drop back, depending on demand for additional places each year.

#### Government Capital Announcements

10. On 14 December 2011, the government announced their capital allocations. The capital grant allocated to Harrow in 2012/13 is confirmed at £5.1m, which is less than last year's allocation and therefore less than the assumed level of funding for the expansion programme. The government did not make their announcements on the Primary School Building Programme or the additional £600m for pupil places nationally included in the Autumn Statement.
11. 3 of the schools proposed for permanent expansion were the subject of an application to the Primary School Building Programme. If these schools were successful in entering the programme, then this could have a positive impact on the current funding shortfall.

#### Next Steps

12. Officers are now reviewing the proposals to ensure that those taken forward to the statutory process are affordable. The timescale for the statutory consultation will also be reviewed if other schools are now proposed for permanent expansion.
13. Cabinet will receive further reports on the Primary School Expansion Programme during the statutory process. A report will be presented in April 2012, after the statutory consultation period, to decide whether to publish statutory notices. If statutory notices are published, a further report will be considered in the summer to determine the statutory notices.
14. A verbal update will be given to the Forum about the proposals being taken forward to statutory processes for permanent expansion.

## Financial Implications

### Revenue

15. 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

16. Feasibility studies are being undertaken to determine the capital works required to deliver the primary school expansion programme. It is currently estimated that the cost of permanently expanding all 11 schools in the consultation is £27.4m. At this stage this figure is an indicative figure provided for illustrative purposes. It will be refined and modified as the expansion projects are developed.
17. There is considerable range in the cost to achieve permanent expansion which reflects the individual nature of the schools and their sites. Some sites, due to capacity and stock condition, require minimal capital investment; others such as Vaughan and Marlborough would require significant rebuild to address capacity and condition. The capital costs of the expansion programme will be phased over several years as not all additional accommodation will be required at the same time for each school.
18. It is expected that the majority of the capital funding will be from the Department for Education (DfE). The expected capital funding sources are:

### DfE allocation to local authorities for Basic Need and Capital Maintenance

19. The capital grant allocated to the local authority for 2012/13 has been confirmed at £5.1m (a reduction on the £6.744m allocated in 2011/12). The priority for this funding is the primary school expansion programme although there are other calls on this funding, especially in respect of essential capital maintenance.

### DfE Priority School Building Programme

20. 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. This programme could provide funding for the expansion programme and rebuild of some

schools proposed for expansion through PFI. Where these schools are proposed for expansion, the enlarged size has been part of the application. The outcome of the applications is expected to be announced shortly.

#### DfE Safety Valve Funding for Additional Places

21. On 3 November the DfE announced the allocations of the additional funding for local authorities to address the shortage in pupil places. Of the £500m funding, Harrow was allocated £120,280. This is one of the lowest in London and Nationally. The Education Consultative Forum meeting on 7 November 2011 requested this allocation is challenged to secure more realistic basic need funding for Harrow.
22. It was announced as part of the Autumn Statement that there is to be an additional £600m for pupil places nationally although we don't yet know when or how this funding will be allocated. Given that Harrow has fared badly from the current allocation method, we believe that we have received less capital grant for our actual pupil growth to date than any other outer London borough. The case for a fairer allocation for Harrow is being raised more widely.

#### Other funding opportunities

23. Wherever possible officers will seek to maximise the benefits to Harrow from government policies and new housing development. For example, the contribution of Free Schools to school provision, and Section 106 contributions to mitigate the impact of new housing developments within Harrow.
24. Until all these funding streams are confirmed it is not possible to know whether there will be sufficient external funding to provide for the estimated cost of the expansion programme. Following confirmation of the funding a further consideration of the proposals will be undertaken, especially in respect of the most expensive sites, and alternative options could be developed. However there remains a real risk that there will not be adequate external funding for the expansion programme and this is being considered as part of setting the Council's 2012/13 to 2016/17 Capital Programme.

### **Equalities Implications**

25. 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.
26. As proposals for permanent expansion are brought forward, there will be Equalities Impact Assessments undertaken on specific proposals.

27. Any future decisions must be taken in accordance with the public sector equality duty. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### **Performance Issues**

28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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**

32. 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.

33. 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**

34. 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**

35. 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:	9 January 2012		
Name:	Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	4 January 2012		

## **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.  
Cabinet Report 15 December 2011, School Expansion Programme.