

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 15 March 2012

Subject: Primary School Expansion Programme

Responsible Officer: Catherine Doran, Corporate Director
 Children and Families

**Scrutiny Lead
Member area:** Councillor Christine Bednell, Policy
 Lead – Children and Young People
 Councillor Krishna James –
 Performance Lead – Children and
 Young People

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report updates the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a number of school place planning issues, including: the outcome of the statutory consultations; applications for Reception places in September 2012; Free Schools, and; capital funding for schools

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider the report and offer any comments.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Harrow Council is working closely with primary schools in Harrow to ensure a sufficient supply of school places to meet the increasing demand. Work is progressing to implement the agreed strategy to permanently increase the size of a sustainable number of primary schools and to meet peaks and variations in demand through opening temporary additional classes across all schools in Harrow.
2. This report updates Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the range of work that is being progressed on:
 - Primary School Expansion Programme
 - Reception and Year 7 for September
 - Special School/SEN Placements Strategy
 - Free Schools

Primary School Expansion Programme

3. At its meeting on 15 December 2011, Harrow Cabinet considered the outcomes of the borough-wide consultation held during the Autumn Term and agreed that statutory consultations would be undertaken about proposals to expand 9 schools on 7 sites.
4. A review is being conducted of how to meet the remaining need for additional places in the South West Primary Planning Area. In view of the considerably low capital allocation from the government and the resulting unaffordability of the proposed school expansion programme, it was decided to defer with the statutory consultation on proposals to permanently expand the Welldon Park schools and to consider the possibility of a different solution to meet the remaining need for additional places in the South West Primary Planning Area. The schools in the South West Primary Planning area have been invited to submit their thoughts about potential solutions to meeting the increased demand for school places in the planning area. A verbal update will be provided to the meeting.

Statutory consultations about proposals to expand schools

5. Statutory consultations were held between 16 January 2012 and 27 February 2012 about proposals to expand the following schools:

Camrose Primary School with Nursery
Cedars Manor School
Glebe Primary School
Marlborough Primary School
Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School
Pinner Park Junior School
Stanburn First School
Stanburn Junior School
Vaughan Primary School

6. Harrow Council distributed consultation information to a wide range of stakeholders including neighbouring local authorities, local MPs, Councillors, unions, diocesan bodies, voluntary organisations, and Harrow Youth Parliament. The schools distributed information and response forms to their school communities, including parents and local residents, and arranged meetings and displays to enable discussion about the proposals. Officers attended consultation meetings at 8 of the schools.
7. At the time of writing this report the statutory consultations had not closed. A verbal update will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny at the meeting.
8. The outcomes of the statutory consultations will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 April 2012 and Cabinet will decide whether to publish statutory proposals in relation to each of the schools.

Applications for Reception places

9. Applications for Reception places in September 2012 are being received in line with projections, and plans are being finalised to open sufficient Reception classes to meet the demand. The 7 schools proposed for permanent expansion that have Reception classes, and Welldon Park Infant and Nursery School, have each agreed to open an additional Reception class in September 2012.
10. Officers are reviewing the applications against the number of places. At this stage in the process, it is expected that a further two additional Reception classes will be required. Late applications for reception classes continue to be received. The final decision about how many additional Reception classes to open in September 2012 will be made in March 2012 prior to offers being made to parents. This will ensure that the schools are able to plan for the additional class during the summer term.
11. The Governing body of Krishna-Avanti Primary School have decided not to open an additional Reception class in September 2012.

Applications for Year 7 Places

12. On the National Offer Day 1 March, 1969 places were offered in Harrow Schools against 2220 Year 7 places. 69% of 1st preferences were met and 88% were offered one of their top three preferences in comparison to 66% and 87% respectively in September 2011. Approximately 600 Harrow residents were offered places at out-borough schools. There were approximately 250 vacancies across 4 schools. This compares with approximately 100 vacancies in September 2011. There will continue to be late applications but it is expected that a higher level of vacancies will remain this September.
13. There are a number of factors that are considered to contribute to the position for September 2012. The main reason for less applications being received is the lower number of Year 6 pupils in Harrow Schools. More out-borough places have been offered suggesting that there are fewer pupils applying for places generally.

14. The number of places in Year 7 has been reduced by 60 places with the reduction of the Rooks Heath planned admission number for September 2012 from 270 to 210. There are also other proposals that could reduce the number of Year 7 places. Park High School consulted on a reduced planned admission number from 300 to 260 in their Admission Arrangements for September 2013-14.
15. Whilst these reductions manage the number of places in the current context, sufficient capacity needs to be retained across the high schools to accommodate the predicted increase in pupil numbers that are currently being experienced in the primary schools. Some of the additional demand could be met by the proposed Avanti House Free School which would create an additional 6 forms of entry. However, the location of this school and whether it will open in September 2012 as announced is unknown.
16. The impact of the additional places can not be assessed until the location is confirmed but at this time additional Year 7 places for September 2012 are not required. The challenge will be for all high schools, free school proposers and Harrow Council to work together to manage the supply of places to ensure all Harrow residents have a Year 7 place as required when the pupil numbers increase.

Special School/SEN Placements Strategy

17. The Local Authority, working in partnership with schools, is developing a Special School/SEN Placements Strategy. The overarching vision for the Strategy is to ensure that there is provision for pupils, young people, and their families, with special education needs or Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) that is continuous from 0 to 25 years, is supported by coherent services, and has a vision shared by all partners which is communicated consistently.
18. The strategy is intended to address a number of issues that the Local Authority, in partnership with schools and providers, needs to address currently, including:
 - the impact of an increasing pupil population with the associated rise in the proportion of pupils with SEN;
 - greater financial pressure arising from Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements;
 - changing SEN demand/profile with more complex needs, and;
 - pressure on places in special schools.
19. In Spring 2011, the Department for Education (DfE) published the Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper. A consultation period followed until the end of June 2011. The Green Paper proposed fundamental reform to the SEN system to address a range of problems. The Government's response is awaited and the impact of these Government policy changes will inform the local context.
20. It is proposed that a report is presented to Cabinet in July with a series of options for consultation. Consultation would take place during the Autumn Term with a report to Cabinet in December. If there are any

proposals requiring statutory processes these would be undertaken accordingly. It is expected that there would be a phased implementation of any changes and these would be planned to coincide with the beginning of new academic years.

Free schools

21. In October 2011, the Government announced that a free school would open in Harrow in September 2012. The proposers are the I-Foundation and the proposed free school, Avanti House, will be an all through school with two forms of entry in the primary phase and six forms of entry in the secondary phase. To date no site has been identified for the school by the proposers and government officials. The Council has a relationship with the I-Foundation established during the process to open Krishna-Avanti Primary School.
22. The proposers are inviting applications to the new school for Reception and Year 7 places. These applications are being made outside the Local Authority's timescale for admission to reception and Year 7 in September 2012. Those parents that apply to Avanti House may be offered a school place received through applications to local authorities as well as at Avanti House.
23. Any free school places would contribute to meeting the increased demand. In particular, the proposed secondary school places would make a significant contribution to the predicted shortfall of secondary places when the increased numbers of pupils in the primary sector transfer to secondary schools from around 2016.
24. The Government has invited applications from proposers wishing to open mainstream, special and alternative provision free schools in September 2013. The deadline for applications was 24 February 2012. Any successful applications for free school provision in Harrow will need to be factored in to school place planning.

Financial Implications

25. The current capital cost of the primary school expansion strategy is estimated at £26.2m. These costs were considered as part of setting the Capital Programme 2012/13 to 2014/15. DfE capital grants are insufficient to fund the expansion programme so council funding, totalling £2.25m, has been allocated in the capital programme. To fully fund the expansion programme requires additional funding, estimated at £7.9m. We routinely negotiate section 106 planning resource (s106) contributions from developers, including specific allocations for additional school places. It is planned to use these s106 contributions to fund the financing costs associated with the additional borrowings required for the first three years. Once the Council's transformation programme is complete there will be headroom in the capital financing budget to accommodate the future years financing costs.
26. Government announcements are awaited on the Primary School Building Programme (for which Harrow submitted 11 applications) and on the additional £600m for pupil places nationally included in the

Autumn Statement. The outcome of the national review of schools' capital is also awaited.

27. Harrow believes it has fared badly from the current Department for Education allocation method for basic need, and that in the latest announcements it has received less capital grant than any other outer London borough. Strong representations about this have been made to officials at DfE and to Harrow's MPs. In order to further represent its position, Harrow is participating in a pilot capacity data collection exercise being conducted by Partnership for Schools (PfS). The intention of the exercise is to help the Department for Education to better capture basic need pressures. PfS plan to report on their findings to the Department for Education by the end of February 2012.

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 Act 2011 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 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.
34. For those schools that are proposed for expansion, planning applications will be required and part of the application will be a travel plan. Through this process and the development of the solutions for the schools, the impact of the additional pupils and their travel modes will be addressed.

Risk Management Implications

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

Equalities Implications

16. Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken by officers and headteachers on the schools proposed for expansion. The conclusions of these assessments are that the implications are either positive or neutral.
17. Harrow's schools are successful and inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow and will build on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's schools.

Corporate Priorities

18. 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: 6 March 2012		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 5 March 2012		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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

Background Papers:

Primary School Expansion Programme report to Cabinet 15 December 2011
Primary School Expansion Programme statutory consultation documents