

# QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING UPDATE

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## REASON FOR ITEM

To update the Committee on the changing demand for school places in the Borough.

## SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the update.
2. Question officers about the update.

## INFORMATION

### Introduction

This paper presents to the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee an update on planning for primary and secondary school places in Hillingdon, following the annual refresh of the pupil places forecast.

### Background

Demand for school places is being driven by rising birth rates, new residential developments and families moving into the Borough. The forecasts are updated annually, with the next update scheduled for completed by the end of July 2017. Given that the demand is changeable, monitoring the demand for places and related analytical work takes place throughout the year. Following completion of the pupil forecast, the potential implications of any changes from the previous forecast are assessed.

### Future Demand for School Places

The key points from the 2016 forecast, previously reported to the Committee are as follows:

- The forecast confirms that the future need for primary school places in most areas of the Borough has largely been met through the comprehensive and successful primary school expansion programme and the provision of three new primary schools in the Borough.
- In the north of the Borough (Northwood and Ruislip / Eastcote areas), some residual excess demand for primary places is forecast in future years. However, demand is now beginning to show signs of plateauing in the north. There remain high levels of pupil mobility in the Borough as parents exercise a preference for a school beyond their immediate local home area, which helps to explain the changing patterns of demand.

- As previously reported, there is also additional demand for primary school places in the south of the Borough, especially in the Hayes area. In the short term, the principal reason for this is the continuing suspension of further intakes at Nanaksar Primary School given that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) have not provided the necessary classroom accommodation for this Free School. In addition, there has been significant residential development and further housing developments are expected in the area. This will increase further the need for additional primary school places.
- The forecast shows that the need for additional secondary school places is building more slowly than previously forecast in 2015. This is understood to be because more pupils are expressing a preference for schools outside their immediate home area, including schools out of Borough. The updated forecast shows a need for 11-12 forms of entry over the next five years. This is in addition to the expansions of Northwood, Abbotsfield and Swakeleys schools. Most of the additional need for places is in the north of the Borough.
- Further analysis is underway to assess the full implications of the new forecast for the school places programme.

### **School Place Needs Forecasting**

The update of the forecast for school places takes place every year using the latest population projections for Hillingdon from the Greater London Authority (GLA), calibrated by the GLA using actual pupils on a school roll, movement of pupils in and out of Borough to other schools and the latest residential development data. For 2016, the GLA has refined its model of demand for school places using patterns of pupil mobility which, in part, reflects a degree of parental preference for school places. In accordance with the DfE rubric, the pupil forecast can only include housing development that has full planning permission or where it can be demonstrated with a degree of certainty that the development will go ahead within the timeframe of the forecasts.

As a general point, forecasting for school places beyond five years does carry a higher risk of volatility in trend analysis and therefore the focus has been to remain within the short to medium term to secure greater reliability, particularly given the various factors at play, including parental preference and housing development.

### **Management of Demand for September 2017 Admissions**

#### **Secondary School Places**

National Offer Day for secondary school places was on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and all Hillingdon children who applied for a secondary school place on time were offered a place. This is not the case in every local authority, as demand for places continues to climb.

- 94.9 per cent of Hillingdon pupils have received one of their preferred choices.

- 67.4 per cent of pupils were allocated their first choice of secondary school, despite an above-London average increase in applications for places. Hillingdon remains as one of the top boroughs in West London for allocating school places at a school of choice.
- Hillingdon Council received a record high of 3,416 applications for secondary school places.

There have been some important developments in demand for secondary school places for September 2017:

- There has been a loss in some secondary school places in the south of the Borough as the Schools Adjudicator had previously approved a proposal from Harlington School for a reduction in its admission number from 2017, resulting in a loss of circa one form of entry.
- There are overall fewer children from Hillingdon in the south of the Borough who have been offered a school place in a neighbouring Borough. This in turn has meant Hillingdon has offered more secondary school places to Hillingdon residents.

In terms of meeting future demand for secondary school places:

- The expansion and rebuild of Northwood School in the north of the Borough completed on time as expected – the school now offers one additional form of entry.
- Expansion projects at Abbotsfield and Swakeleys schools have now started on site and this will provide 4.5 additional forms of entry. Abbotsfield School will become co-educational, commencing with admissions for September 2017. These two projects are being led by the EFA.
- Options to expand existing schools are being progressed.
- The Education Funding Agency has confirmed that they have approved two new Free Secondary Schools in the north of the Borough (north of the A40).

### **Primary School Places**

Demand for primary school places in the Borough has largely been met by Hillingdon's successful school expansion programme, including the construction of new primary schools. There are pockets of pressure for additional school places, in particular in the Eastcote / Ruislip area which will be addressed through expansion of Hillside schools and Warrender Primary School.

In the south of the Borough as a whole, demand will continue to rise throughout the forecast period (a rise of nearly 11%/over 300 Reception places) between 2015 and 2021. The overall trend is one of increasing demand, with some pockets of localised variability. The position is being kept under close review and options to meet this demand in the future are being considered.

National Offer Day for Primary School Places is on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017, and the early signs are that all on-time applications will be offered a school place, with an increase in school preferences met.

An update will be provided to the Committee in the next update report.

### **Next Steps**

Officers will progress options for meeting the future forecast need for school places and report these to Members in the first instance.