

QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING UPDATE

Contact Officer: Dan Kennedy
Telephone: 01895 250495

REASON FOR ITEM

To update the Committee about the demand for school places in Hillingdon.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To note the update about demand for school places.
2. To question officers about the update and the future demand for school places.

INFORMATION

Introduction

This paper presents to the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee an update on school places planning for primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. For ease of reference this update also re-states background information previously presented to the Committee.

Background to School Places Forecasting

The forecast for future school places predicts that the demand for additional school places will be sustained. In Hillingdon, the demand for additional school places is driven by rising birth rates, new residential developments, and families moving into the Borough who stay. This is because Hillingdon is a prosperous Borough of choice for many families.

Primary School Places

Overall, the 2014 school places forecast shows that the future need for primary school places over the next 5 years is largely met through the delivery of the successful schools expansion programme. This includes three new primary schools (two of which opened in September 2014 and one further school is on track to open by September 2015). Two new free schools (Hewens and Nanaksar) have also contributed to the supply of new primary school places in high demand areas of the Borough. Officers are currently reviewing options to meet this need.

Primary Planning Area 2 – Northwood – there is a forecast need for up to an additional one form of entry in the Northwood area of the Borough – which is a direct consequence of children living in south Hertfordshire applying to attend a primary school in the very north of the Borough (Frithwood and Hillside schools in particular). This pressure was experienced in the September 2014 admissions round where the net position was 24 children from Hertfordshire securing and being offered a school place at Hillingdon primary schools in Northwood. This demand from families living just outside Hillingdon is expected to continue into future years.

Primary Planning Area 3 – Coteford Area – there is a forecast need for an additional one form of entry in primary places in this area, which seems to be mainly driven by rising birth rates and families moving into this area.

Primary Planning Area 5 – Ruislip / South Ruislip Area - there is a forecast need for an additional one form of entry in this area, which seems to be mainly driven by rising birth rates and also children from neighbouring Boroughs travelling to Hillingdon schools (this demand equates to a net two forms of entry from other Boroughs). Most Hillingdon schools in this area are full or close to being full.

Action Being Taken

Since the previous update to the Committee, and as reported to Cabinet, officers have visited selected primary schools in the north of the Borough to identify those with the potential for expansion for further discussion with Head Teachers and Chair of Governors. Three school sites are being explored further and the findings will be reported back to members for consideration.

Future Demand for Secondary School Places

The updated forecast for secondary school places in Hillingdon shows that the profiled demand for additional school places from September 2016/17 onwards is high and largely consistent with the previous 2013 forecast.

Overall, the forecast indicates a need for up to an additional 27 forms of entry in secondary school places to September 2021 with a higher demand for school places in the central and north of the Borough secondary schools.

From discussion with neighbouring London Boroughs, many are experiencing a very similar picture in demand for additional secondary school places and are at the same stage as Hillingdon preparing plans to meet the rising need. As a general point, forecasting for school places beyond 5 years does carry a higher risk of volatility in trends and so for the purposes of secondary school places planning, proposals will be developed initially which focus on the need for school places in the period to the academic school year September 2019 (i.e. over the next five years, representing 21 additional forms of entry forecast to be required in this period).

Action Being Taken

To meet the future need for additional secondary schools places, it is proposed that three existing secondary schools will be expanded (subject to Planning Approval). The schools are: Northwood Secondary School, Swakeley's School and Abbotsfield School.

In addition, officers have been reviewing the suitability of expanding five further secondary schools in the Borough. Options have been prepared which are currently being considered by Members.

September 2015 Update – Starting Primary School / Starting Secondary School

All children who applied on time for a secondary school place have been offered a place. A higher than average percentage of secondary school age pupils in Hillingdon are offered their preference schools (in Hillingdon 93% offered one of their top three choices of schools compared to 87% across London). At the time of writing officers are in the process of finalising offers for primary school places on 16th April 2015. All children who applied for a primary school place on time will be offered a place.