

# 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 and the 2016 update has been completed recently. 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 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 2016 Admissions**

All children seeking entry into Reception or into Year 7 have been offered places. An additional 30 places have been offered at Hillside Infant School (in a bulge year class) and 30 additional places at Northwood School. In addition Guru Nanak Academy received approval in August 2016 from the EFA to increase their Reception intake by 30 places for September 2016.

At this early stage in the new school year, a large number of offers are being made as late applications are processed. The position should reach a steady state around mid-October.

## Primary Place Needs - North of the Borough

- Primary Pupil Planning areas in the north of the Borough have shown an increasing demand for additional school places over the past four years. The updated forecast for the north is showing signs that demand is starting to plateau.
- Overall, there is sufficient capacity in the Reception year for the start of the school term in September 2016. However, capacity has tended to be concentrated in a relatively small number of schools. Therefore, the ability of parents to access places within 2 miles of the home address also needs to be factored into place planning. To meet localised pockets of need, there is still a need for additional school places.
- For September 2016, an additional 30 place bulge year class has been available at Hillside Infant School for the Reception year group, which has proven to be required. Most of the additional 30 places at Hillside infant School are now offered and there will be further applications during the coming school year which it is anticipated will take-up the additional places available.
- The demand for school places in some primary place planning areas in the north, particularly Area 2 (Northwood) and 5 (Ruislip/South Ruislip) are affected by the cross-borough movement of pupils to Hillingdon schools. The demand from out-of-Borough pupils is subject to a higher degree of change, affected by parental preference and local provision of school places. In Harrow three primary schools within reach of Hillingdon's boundary have expanded creating an additional 90 places which may reduce the future demand from Harrow pupils to travel to Hillingdon schools.
- There are high levels of pupil movement within Hillingdon as parents seek to exercise their preference for a school place. Popular schools attract pupils from beyond their local area, pushing demand higher than would be indicated on the basis of the resident pupil population. In particular, the demand for school places in the Ickenham area (Glebe and Breakspear schools) is high, with a significant number of parents living in the Eastcote and Ruislip area applying for and securing a place at one of the two schools in Ickenham.
- Take-up of places in independent schools can vary year-on-year but overall independent schools in the north of the Borough are showing a sustained increase over the last four years, which has the effect of reducing demand for state funded school places in the area.
- Pockets of housing development in the area are likely to increase demand in non-admission year-groups as well as Reception (e.g. Arla Dairy site).
- To meet the future forecast need for additional primary school places in the north of the Borough, initial feasibility studies have been undertaken to assess the expansion potential at three school sites - Hillside Infant and Junior schools, Warrender Primary and the Newnham Infant and Junior schools. Further work is underway with the schools to review options for expansion, prior to any planning application being submitted. Subject to expansion proceeding on all three sites, in total, these projects could provide up to 90

additional admission places in Reception (i.e. 630 places across all year groups). Proposals would be subject to a statutory process, including consultation.

### **Primary Place Needs - South of the Borough (south of A40)**

- 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 demand for school places in the Uxbridge area is high and affected by a significant number of pupils who travel in from surrounding areas and who choose not to attend a school more local to their home. In particular, it should be noted that the pace of completing residential units by housing developers on the St Andrew's site has been slower than expected and therefore school places have been available at the new John Locke School to families who do not live in the area. As the demand for school places in the Uxbridge area increases from local families, parental preference will, in time, be displaced back to areas outside of Uxbridge.
- Most demand for additional primary school places in the south of the Borough is concentrated in the Hayes area, with a high proportion of the demand for additional places coming from new residential developments. Further places (3 to 5 forms of entry) are expected to be required in the short to medium term. This figure is expected to increase as further housing development comes forward.
- Parental preference and other factors are leading to significant pupil movement within central areas and the south of the Borough. As in the north of the Borough, the popularity of individual schools and the geographical locations affects capacity at a local level and hence the ability to offer places.
- The loss of places at the Free School, Nanaksar Primary School has exacerbated the forecast shortfall of places and the continuing uncertainty regarding future admissions adds to the difficulty of forecasting future place needs.
- The Harmondsworth area shows rising demand, which seems to be attributed to a more recent increase in families moving into rented properties in the area. This area is subject to a unique set of challenges owing to the transitory pattern emerging within housing close to Heathrow.

### **Secondary Place Needs - North of the Borough**

- For September 2016, the marginal predicted shortfall in places has been managed, in part due to circa 30 pupils living in the Borough being offered a school place at Pinner High School (Harrow), as expected. The expansion of Northwood School provided 30 additional Year 7 places.
- At the start of the new school year in September 2016, school places in the north of the Borough were still available. However, over the next five years, the updated forecasts

indicate that additional places will be needed. Over this period, the forecast need is for 9 to 10 additional forms of entry. Discussions are continuing with two schools in the north of the Borough regarding expansion and consultants are being appointed to confirm expansion potential and consider design options. Some interim accommodation may be needed, pending the expansion of existing secondary schools. On 16th September 2016, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) announced that two secondary Free Schools for Hillingdon had been approved. Subject to the availability of suitable sites being secured for these new schools, it is anticipated that the additional places would be available from 2019.

### **Secondary Place Needs - South of the Borough (south of A40)**

- 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.
- However, there has been a loss in some secondary school places in the south of the Borough as the Schools Adjudicator has 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.
- Based on the updated forecast for the next five years, there will be sufficient capacity in the south of the Borough to meet demand up to 2018. Thereafter, two or three expansions to provide two to three additional forms of entry will be required.

### **Next Steps**

Further analysis of the updated forecasts will be undertaken, together with analysis of take-up of places when information from the October School Census is available. Officers will progress options for meeting the future forecast need for school places and report these to Members in the first instance.