

QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING UPDATE

Committee name	Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Dan Kennedy, Residents Services
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The purpose of this report is to provide the Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee with the updated (2019) projections for primary and secondary school rolls in Hillingdon. They show the continuing rising secondary demand, whilst primary rolls continue to be high and relatively stable. There is a slight reduction in forecast secondary demand compared to the previous (2018) projection, but still a growing need for additional Year 7 places over the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

1. Note the latest (2019) projections for future Primary and Secondary school rolls;
2. Note that officers are developing options to manage changes in demand for primary school places, for Member consideration;
3. Note the increasing demand for Year 7 places from 2020 onwards, for at least the next seven years, as the pupils are already in primary schools;
4. Note that options are being presented to Members to meet the projected increase in secondary school places and proposals will be reported back to the Committee once confirmed by lead Members; and
5. Question officers about the update.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Updated Forecast 2019/20 - 2026/27

1. The Council has a legal duty to ensure every child is offered a school place (the 'sufficiency' duty).
2. The actual rolls in each school vary due to parental preferences and the relative popularity of schools, including those out of the borough. Therefore the forecasts can only be a guideline which requires interpretation and judgements to be applied. The Department of Education (DfE) advise a 5%-10% margin should be considered in school places planning to meet movement in-year and between schools. Considerations for school places planning include:

- a. Parents are becoming far more informed and aware of the excellence of many of our schools and some are prepared to travel some distance at primary as well as secondary level to secure a school place of choice.
 - b. Sibling links give priority, even if parents have moved house. Recent temporary expansions have themselves generated new sibling links across north/south and borough boundaries.
 - c. Increasing numbers of pupils with ECHPs are taking up more of the first preferences in popular schools, slightly distorting the chances of success for other applicants.
 - d. Schools report some families are moving out of the Borough due to housing costs. There is a small but rising number of pupils from temporary housing mainly in the far south of the Borough, who are new arrivals in the Borough.
 - e. Demand is affected by new residential development rates in the Borough as well as international factors such as currency exchange rates which affect international migration rates, especially families moving for employment.
3. Options are being discussed with schools and the Lead members to ensure proposals are cost effective for residents.

Primary School Rolls

4. It is clear that after over a decade of increasing demand, overall Primary school rolls reached a plateau in 2016/17 and are projected to be stable with minor rises and falls to 2026, by which time the surplus places would rise, without intervention.
5. There is still some volatility of pupils moving schools and families moving in, out and across the borough, mainly due to high housing costs.

Table 1 - Year 7 Demand Projections

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Primary Demand (places in Reception)	3984	3990	3923	3951	3948	3961
Primary surplus Places	567 (surplus)	681 (surplus)	748 (surplus)	720 (surplus)	723 (surplus)	710 (surplus)

6. Overall Reception Year rolls have been stable since 2017/18, and that is projected to continue.
7. Options are being considered to manage the changes in demand. Some schools have requested caps on the number of children being offered a school place and others are exploring reductions in their Published Admission Numbers. A well managed process will help to ensure parental preferences can be met and schools can provide stable classes with quality teaching, whilst avoiding schools facing roll numbers that are difficult to manage and could add to existing budget pressures in schools.

8. There are still pockets of pressure, driven mainly by new residential developments such as in Uxbridge, West Drayton and Hayes.
9. Options to reduce the Published Admission Numbers are being considered for primary schools in areas where there has been changes in parental preference and wider demand. In addition a few specific year groups in some schools may have a cap put on for 2019/20 where the demand has dropped by over 1FE. Detailed options have been discussed with individual schools and options are being presented to Members for consideration.

Secondary Rolls

10. The September 2019 Year 7 roll has increased compared to the previous year and reflects the first year of the primary bulge moving up. The duty to provide offers to all residents was met. Some late applications are still coming in but there are limited vacancies at this late stage, except at Harefield Academy where the outcome of parental preferences has left many places empty for the past few years, increasing the demand for places elsewhere.

Table 2 - Year 7 Forecast Rolls and Demand

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
North - forecast demand (pupils, Y7)	1749	1763	1761	1811	1750	1723
North - extra places needed	64 (surplus)	-77 (shortfall)	-75	-125	-64	-37
North - FE	0FE	3FE	3FE	5FE	3FE	2FE
South - forecast demand (pupils Y7)	2052	2030	2012	2091	2089	2073
South - extra places needed	-16	-9	9	-70	-68	-52
South - FE	1FE	1FE	0FE	3FE	3FE	2FE
Total - extra FE required	1FE	4FE	3FE	8FE	6FE	4FE

Planning for 2020 Year 7 Admissions

11. A significant factor in the small projected shortfall of places for 2020 year 7 is the decision taken recently by the Harefield Academy to reduce the number of places available from 150 places to 90. The closing date for parents to express preferences for secondary admissions is 31 October 2019, at which point officers will review the position again. Any shortfall in capacity will be dependent on parental preferences and cross-borough movement. Officers have developed a set of options for Members to consider which will meet the need, should it arise.

Meeting the Needs of Hillingdon Residents - The Next Five Years

12. In line with other Outer London Boroughs, there is a clear need for more secondary places for resident pupils. Secondary rolls have risen since 2015/16 when there were over 14% surplus places and most parents easily achieved one of their top preferences. All seven existing primary year groups are as high or higher than last year's Year 6. Therefore options are being assessed to meet rising demand and secure more high quality secondary education places to benefit residents.
13. There are other potentials for change: some schools have spaces in Years 9-11 because some of their pupils leave to go to the two UTCs and Studio Schools, but the national future of these is still uncertain (they are not included in these numbers because they have no Year 7). Locally, the extent of cross-borough movement and relative popularity of schools could change numbers. Public transport links north to south of the borough mean it is far easier for some pupils to go out of borough east or west than access borough schools that are closer in distance. However, the number of places in these out-of-borough schools available to those living further away may change, as could the success rate for grammar schools or even these schools admissions criteria.
14. Officers will ensure that plans for increased future provision for pupils with ECHPs and SEND will be fully integrated into proposals. The free school plan includes an ASD resource base.
15. It is important to balance creating extra places that meet parental preferences without destabilising existing schools. In practice the Department for Education has experienced challenges in securing a suitable site for the agreed free school and the choice of schools to expand is limited by site constraints. Officers are presenting a range of options for lead Members to consider to fully meet the need for additional school places in the medium term.

Financial Implications

16. The financial implications are being reviewed of different options, both capital and revenue, as part of the Council's budget setting process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. Nil.