

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Briefing Paper Member/Officer Working Party –

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REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The higher GLA alternate roll projection methodology be adopted as the basis of primary school planning for 2014/15 and beyond**
- 2 A margin of 2% be considered above projection to provide for parental choice in order to improve the rate of first choice allocations**
- 3 That discussions be undertaken with schools identified for expansion in the report with a view to reporting the outcome to Education PDS Committee**
- 4 Where not already in hand and in consultation with schools, feasibility studies be undertaken to assess the scope and cost of enlargement**

BACKGROUND

- 1 The strategic planning of primary school places and school organisation in the Borough is driven through the Primary Schools' Development Plan. A comprehensive review of the Primary Schools' Development Plan (PSDP) took place in August 2012 to address the significant increase in demand for primary school places; and the outcomes from this review were reported to the Education PDS in November 2012. This is an update of the PSDP taking into account the 2013/14 admission cycle and the latest school roll projections.
- 2 The overall strategy is to meet forecast growth by a combination of existing surplus capacity, expansion of current provision, new schools and bulge classes. Major expansion would be considered where sustainable and feasible, with new schools supported in areas of greatest need. From year to year, bulge classes would be used to ensure sufficient places are available, and in some cases a step towards permanent expansion. The growth strategy should reflect parental choice and represent value for money. Item 7 in the appendix illustrates the expansion schemes in programme 2010-13.
- 3 London's population is forecast to grow by 1.3m between 2006 and 2031. Although overall growth in Bromley at 4.5% was one of the lowest in London between 2001 and 2011, this is forecast to rise to some 7.5% between 2011

and 2022 as the impact of demographic, housing, travel and other factors is felt in the area. However, as the growth is mainly in the birth rate, the numbers of 4 year olds expected in schools rises to 17% over the same period. Patterns of growth experienced in the inner London boroughs are now being seen in Bromley, with the greatest pressure in the north and east of the borough.

- 4 School population projections are provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA) based on the ONS figures above, taking into account rolls in previous years, overlaid with housing growth assumptions. Two projections are provided, a standard and an alternate which uses development data to distribute population within the borough, but constrained within the overall GLA trend based projection for the borough as a whole. The process by which the GLA produce the school roll projections is set out at Item 1 in the appendix. Item 3 illustrates the live births year by year across all London boroughs.
- 5 For the school year 2013, applicants for reception class places exceeded previous forecasts and it was necessary to supplement the agreed changes by 90 places (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to ensure every on time applicant received a valid offer. The total number of places originally available for 2013 was 3,733, increased to 3,823. 3,820 on time applicants were made an offer in April 2013. Given these risk factors it is recommended that the higher alternate forecast be adopted as the basis for planning, subject to review.
- 6 The reason for the variances between the numbers above is because the growth is localised. The need to provide primary places within a reasonable travelling distance means that whilst many schools are full others, mainly in the south, may still have places. In a number of cases places were offered in excess of numbers where it was known that schools have in the past experienced a high degree of movement between offer day and the start of the autumn term. Item 9 in the appendix shows that the number of places in the independent sector has remained broadly stable, and where parents also apply for a Bromley school this can release a place when confirmed. Although some 117 late applications have been received since the on time deadline passed, because of this 'churn' it has been possible to make reasonable offers without the need to add more places. While final numbers will not be known until the census next term, it is clear that pressure is continuing and further action will be needed to ensure not only places are available but, so far as possible, in schools of choice.
- 7 For the 2013/14 round the number of on time applicants securing their first choice of school in Bromley was 76%, and the first three choices 89%. The London average was 81% and 92% respectively. This was a fall from the

previous years (Bromley 79%/90%) and reflects the increasing pressure on places. As more schools become full it is increasingly difficult for parents to secure their school of choice, and for the most popular the home to school distances have fallen substantially and can be as little as 0.1 mile. These are published in the primary booklet for the last three years. However, many applicants are unrealistic in their choices, do not specify local schools and are often disappointed. Whilst there is movement in waiting lists, the most popular schools recruit very locally.

- 8 In some cases, offers had to be made to schools not named by parents. These included the 60 additional places at Worsley Bridge, hitherto a Junior school but following a recommendation from the Working Party last year, consultation on reorganisation as an all through primary school took place. Given wide support, it was agreed by the Portfolio Holder that the effective date should be brought forward to September 2013, enabling 60 reception class places to be offered. Although not named in the original published booklet, letters of explanation were sent to parents and the school is now full in the reception year. The statutory notice is due for approval in late August 2013. Some 30 places were also added at Malcolm Primary School (Harris Primary Academy Crystal Palace from September 2013) in agreement with the Federation, with the expectation that the school would enlarge permanently to 2FE.
- 9 For 2014/15 three new free schools are due to open – Harris Beckenham and Harris Bromley, both providing 2 forms of entry (60 places) and a Bilingual School also expected to be located in central Bromley offering 50 places. Being in the area of highest pressure, the Harris schools should not only alleviate demand but also act to improve parental choice. The Bilingual School will recruit more widely although it is expected to be substantially from Bromley. Each is shown with commentary in the planning area presentations below.
- 10 Free School applications are being considered by a number of other providers for submission to the DfE with the expectation to open in 2015 and beyond. Consultation has commenced on a joint application sponsored by Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools to provide a 2FE primary school on their grounds and would serve both Planning Areas 2 and 3. As schools move towards Academy status there is scope for schools to change their permanent admission limits by a shorter process than maintained schools.
- 11 The planning assumptions laid before the last Working Party showed a forecast demand for reception class places for 2013/14 of 3,792 using the higher GLA alternate projection. In order to meet demand in the school year 2014/15 it is proposed that the alternate forecast of 3,896 is used as a starting point given the variations across the borough.

- 12 Although the main focus has been the growth in demand at reception, there is increasing pressure on in year admissions, especially with families arriving in the borough with children of different ages. Whereas in the past it has been possible to accommodate older children more easily as numbers have traditionally fallen in the higher age groups, this is becoming more difficult as the schools become more full. If no place is available in a chosen schools, an in year applicant would then be directed to a suitable school, i.e., within reasonable travelling distance. Otherwise the child would have to be placed through Fair Access, by which schools would agree to vary their admission numbers. However, class size regulations have an impact in KS1 although in some circumstances it is possible to operate larger classes with additional classrooms assistants. Item 8 shows the number of pupils in primary schools by year group in the spring term 2013.
- 13 Even if space is available, schools find it financially difficult to open new classes for a small number of pupils because the revenue generated is insufficient to meet the additional staffing and other costs. It may be possible in some circumstances for classes to be split and operated as two or more smaller units. Consideration may need to be given to bulge classes in higher year groups. More analysis is being carried out to establish the extent of the problem, the possible solutions and costs.
- 14 In Item 2 in the attached presentation, a factor of 2% has been added to each planning area projection to provide for parental choice. Across the country, a margin of up to 5% is considered desirable but in view not just of the additional capacity but also the increased density of provision due to the new schools, coupled with the public expenditure issues it is considered prudent to adopt the 2% at this stage, subject to review.
- 15 Specific planning assumptions for primary school provision were reviewed in the last presentation to the PDS Committee, as follows:
- accommodate children in schools in the locality in which they live;
 - maximise strategic locations;
 - expand existing provision wherever possible;
 - consolidate at whole-forms of entry (FE) where possible;
 - encompass all maintained and state funded schools.
 - amalgamation of infant and junior schools whenever the opportunity arises.
- 16 A key responsibility of the LA, allied to the provision of sufficient school places to children, is the delivery of high quality education and the efficient use of resources. The Primary Schools' Development Plan focuses on the supply of places, but the quality of education provided by those places and the efficient use of resources are also major considerations. When schools

are being considered for reorganisation, the impact on standards should be considered which may influence the nature or timing of a decision.

17 INITIAL OUTCOMES FROM ANALYSIS

The Working Party made recommendations to the PDS Committee for the pattern of provision in 2013/14 and these are reviewed below, under the section dealing with individual primary planning areas along with recommendations for 2014/15 and beyond.

- 18 The number of reception pupils in Bromley schools has risen from 3,165 in January 2007 to 3,861 in January 2013. On the higher GLA forecast, total numbers are projected to rise to 4,041 by 2018 and to remain at that level to 2030. A full presentation of the forecasts by planning area is shown in Appendix A. The projections beyond 2022 are based on standard factors at this stage as development data cannot be projected that far ahead.
- 19 The analysis in below identifies by planning areas some of the issues to be considered by the working party. A map of planning areas is shown at Item 4 in the appendix with the school by school analysis, with individual forecasts, below.
- 20 Item 2 in the appendix brings together the forecasts for each planning area showing the planned number of places for 2014/15 onwards in each school. The new schools are also shown. Where schools have already agreed to increase their roll, or consultation is in hand, these are shown.
- 21 Whereas some deficits do remain, the overall picture shows that without any other changes there is sufficient capacity to meet the forecast number across the borough with a margin of around 1FE. This masks local pressures, and members are invited to consider how these might be addressed in the area by area analysis below.

22 ANALYSIS BY PLANNING AREA

PLANNING AREA (PA) 1

Wards: Crystal Palace, Penge and Cator, Clock House

This continues to be the most volatile area in terms of rising demand for places. The numbers of 4 year olds in this area remains above that of the total admissions numbers for the schools. The analysis indicates a history of migration to schools in the neighbouring PA 2 and a high percentage take up of primary places in Croydon and Lewisham. When the 2% uplift is included, this area is currently showing a shortfall of places of approximately 3 to 4 FE deficit, falling

back to 2FE by 2030. However, in 2013 a 2FE deficit was met by neighbouring areas and for 2014 Balgowan will offer a bulge class taking its total to 4FE (120) for one year. The base provision now includes an expanded Churchfields to 2 FE, as proposed in the previous report, and Harris Crystal Palace will now be permanently expanded to 2FE. There is scope to consider James Dixon for enlargement to 3FE in time, and it is proposed that discussions be initiated, and that a bulge class of 30 be opened for 2014. The former Royston Primary (opening as Harris Kent House in September 2013) has the potential for enlargement in the medium term after improvement measures have taken effect. When PA1 is taken with the neighbouring PA2, and with PAs 1-4 (as they lie together) the position improves as capacity can be used to meet PA1 needs within a reasonable travelling distance for many applicants. The Bilingual Free School should draw more widely and provide some additional capacity here and across the borough.

Issues for consideration

- Consult James Dixon for a bulge class for 2014 and permanent expansion to 3FE
- Consult Harris Federation on expansion of Kent House to 3FE in 2015 or beyond
- Consider scope for other schools to expand following consultation and feasibility studies

PLANNING AREA 2

Wards: Copers Cope, Kelsey and Eden Park

Analysis of projections indicates that there has been a very close match of places to demand and an increase in projected reception numbers. The opening of Harris Beckenham in 2014 will provide more places and therefore more choice for parents in this area. The permanent expansion of Unicorn to 2 FE and bulge classes at Clare House have ensured sufficient places to meet the current increased demand as well as making a contribution to the needs in PA1 above. Worsley Bridge and Bromley Road are being reorganised as separate primary schools; Worsley Bridge took 2 bulge classes in 2013. Taking into account the 2% uplift, there is a shortfall of 1FE for 2014 across PAs 1 and 2. From 2015 onwards, if the Langley free school proposal is approved a further 2FE of capacity will be available between PAs 2 and 3 (as it would lie on the border). There is also scope for bulge classes at Bromley Road as it reduces in size from 9 to 7 classes, and potential for expansion to 3FE at Worsley Bridge, an option included in the current feasibility study.

Issues for consideration:

- Expand Clare House permanently to 2FE based on the outcome of feasibility
- Await outcome of free school submission proposed by Langley Boys/Girls
- Consider bulge classes for 2014 at Bromley Road as alternative to James Dixon
- Consider expansion to 3FE at Worsley Bridge in the medium term

PLANNING AREA 3

Wards: Shortlands, West Wickham, Hayes and Coney Hall

The opening of Harris Bromley Free Primary in 2014 offering an additional 60 places will ensure more than sufficient provision to meet the needs of the area. In the past there had been a close match of places to demand, and there is now a forecast margin of 111 places in 2014. However the Free School is close to the border with both PA2 and PA4 and would therefore expect to draw recruitment from these neighbouring planning areas. There is also scope for enlargement at St. Marks' CE to meet the needs in of neighbouring planning areas because of its location, and discussions with the school are in hand. Taken in isolation two forms of entry of capacity would remain to 2030.

Issues for consideration:

- Keep area under review and consider medium term options for enlargements
- Consider St. Marks for enlargement by 1FE as a contribution to wider needs

PLANNING AREA 4

Wards: Bromley Town, Plaistow and Sundridge, Bickley

Although capacity in this planning area has been closely matched to need for several years, assisted by the enlargement of Bickley in September 2011, forecast growth will require additional places, and for this planning area there is a shortfall of 77 for 2014/15 rising to 137 by 2030. Both Valley and Parish accepted an extra form of entry in September 2011 and September 2012 and it has been agreed to consult on the permanent expansion of Parish from 2 FE to 3 FE. Scotts Park admitted an additional form of entry in 2012 and 2013 with a view to permanent expansion. St George's CE has indicated that it would wish to consolidate from 1.5 FE to 2FE if feasible, and that will be pursued in line with current policy subject to site constraints. However, in the short term when the

needs of planning areas 1-4 are taken together, these shortfalls can be met by bulge classes or enlargements as proposed above. Assuming the Bilingual free school opens on a central Bromley site, that will also make a contribution to the overall requirement.

Issues for consideration

- To confirm the permanent increase of Scotts Park from 60 to 90.
- To confirm the permanent increase of Parish from 60 to 90
- To consider the feasibility of enlargement of St George's CE to 2FE

PLANNING AREAS 1-4

Taking the four PAs in the north west of the borough together, including 50% of the planned places for the Bilingual free school it is forecast that there will sufficient places to meet demand in 2014/5. However, in subsequent years there is an ongoing deficit of between 3 to 4 forms of entry. This can be met by a combination of the options described above. It is recommended that this is kept under review and that discussions continue with schools and other providers.

PLANNING AREA 5

Wards: Bromley Common and Keston, Petts Wood and Knoll, Farnborough and Crofton

Demand has increased in recent years in part due to a significant housing development on the 'Blue Circle' site, planned to consist of 788 dwellings, of which 75% are 2 bed or larger, suitable for family occupation. Proposals have been made for the expansion of Princes Plain by 2FE, making use of the former Education Development Centre on the site for which a feasibility study is in hand, and in the meantime an additional 60 places are proposed for 2014/15. However, it is clear that for permanent expansion the building would require enlargement. Any further expansion of Keston CE is subject to planning permission on a small extension to provide a bulge class. With the proposed expansion of Princes Plain the needs would be met for the next two years but thereafter a deficit of 0.5FE rising to 1FE would need to be addressed.

Issues for consideration

- To consider permanent expansion of Princes Plain to 4FE on the EDC campus
- To consider the scope to open a bulge class if necessary at Keston CE, subject to planning
- To consider other options to meet the ongoing deficit in 2016/17 and beyond

PLANNING AREA 6

Wards: Chislehurst, Mottingham, Chislehurst North

PA6 includes the major residential development on the site of the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design. Chislehurst CE and the Diocese of Rochester have been in discussions with the Local Authority concerning the feasibility of relocating and expanding the school to a new site in Chislehurst. There are two 'stand alone' infant schools in this planning area. The planning for this area assumes Red Hill Primary School and Mottingham Primary School will admit additional pupils at Key Stage 2 to accommodate some, or all, of the pupils that leave these local infant schools. There is a projected shortfall of places in this planning area of approximately one form of entry. This could be accommodated by the expansion of Edgebury Primary School in time.

Issues for consideration

- Feasibility of relocation and expansion of Chislehurst CE
- Feasibility of admitting additional pupils or expanding Edgebury

PLANNING AREA 7

Wards: Cray Valley West and Cray Valley East

There is a close relationship between this Planning Area 7 and Area 8. In response to lower rolls in recent years, from 2008 the PANs of St. Mary Cray Primary School, Leeson's Primary, Midfield Primary, Poverest Primary and St Paul's Cray Primary had been reduced from 1.5 FE to 1 FE. However, with rolls starting to rise again and with the accommodation substantially in place there is scope to consider expansion of these schools by whole forms of entry. In 2012/13 places had to be added to St. Mary Cray and to Midfield. Midfield in 2013/14 admitted an further extra form of entry and discussions on permanent enlargement are pending the outcome of a feasibility study. There is a history of mobility between schools in this area, partly accounted for by the significant resident Traveller population. In order to meet the required numbers it would be necessary for St. Paul's Cray or Leeson's to admit a bulge class. Discussions are in hand with the schools concerned.

Issues for consideration:

- To secure the permanent increase of PAN at Midfield to 60.
- To consider the expansion of St Pauls Cray CE Primary School on the basis of the feasibility currently underway
- To review with the Governors in this planning area, the feasibility of increasing capacity.

PLANNING AREA 8

Wards: Orpington, Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom

There is a close relationship between PA8 and PA7. Capacity in this planning area has been reduced in recent years in line with need, e.g. Blenheim Infant and Junior merging to form Blenheim Primary and reducing by 1 FE , Warren Road increased from 3 to 4 FE and Holy Innocents Catholic Primary reduced from 2 to 1 FE. In practice, Hillside has admitted 60 although the PAN is 54. Although rolls are forecast to remain broadly stable in the area, it may be necessary to consider temporary expansions based on future demand.

Issues for consideration:

- There should be no current change to school organisation or size in this planning area
- Continue to monitor demand and consider temporary expansions if required.

PLANNING AREA 9

Wards: Biggin Hill and Darwin

Both Biggin Hill and Oaklands recently amalgamated and Cudham Primary School had its PAN of 15 reduced from 19 from September 2012. Capacity in this planning area is closely matched to projected need and shows a margin of between 0.5 and 1FE to the end of the planning period.

Issues for consideration:

- That there should be no current change to school organisation or size in this planning area.

All Planning Areas

With the opening of new schools and the action that has been taken to enlarge existing schools a significant step has been taken towards meeting the increasing demand for places. Although in crude terms there is an overall shortfall across the borough as a whole of between 3.5 and 6 forms of entry between 2015 and 2020, when local factors are taken into account, i.e. the need to provide places with reasonable travelling distance, this could be higher. When all the individual surpluses and deficits are accumulated this could be as high as 10E although

dependent upon very local factors, i.e. the ongoing margin in the south of the borough is unlikely to be able to offset more than a small amount of need elsewhere. Additional capacity may also be needed to increase parental choice, depending on the outcome of the 2% uplift.

Action is still needed to identify the scope for growth in existing schools to meet local shortfalls, consistent with schools' agreement. There remains the potential for further enlargement although the capital costs would need to be carefully considered. It is for this reason that the detailed feasibility of each sites needs to be examined so that all options are able to be considered in an objectively. There remains scope for new entrants to join the existing pattern of schools, although it would be desirable for the Council to be able to shape those in order for school development and capital investment in the borough to best meet the identified shortfall and to secure the greatest value for money from public investment.

Issues for consideration

- To identify potential sites suitable for education provision across the Borough.
- To encourage potential free school proposers to locate in areas with the greatest need
- To keep under review the impact of additional places on parental choice

8 Appendix: Index of Papers for Member/Officer Working Party

Evidence and Background Papers

- Item 1 The Projection Process (GLA)
- Item 2 Bromley Primary Schools capacity and forecasts to 2030
- Item 3 Birth data 2001-2012 by local authority
- Item 4 Map of primary planning areas
- Item 5 Graphs showing growth by planning areas to 2022
- Item 6 Admissions limits - Bromley primary schools 1996-2013
- Item 7 Primary School Expansion 2010-2013
- Item 8 Number of pupils in Bromley primary schools in Spring Term 2013
- Item 9 Independent primary school rolls - Bromley 1996-2013
- Item 10 School Roll Projections 0-18 to 2030, standard and alternate
- Item 11 Whole population projections 0-18 to 2030 standard and alternate