

PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP

Draft Minutes of the meeting held at 5.00 pm on 2 September 2013

Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA

Also Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P., Chairman, Education PDS Committee
Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

Robert Bollen, Education Strategic Capital Manager
Iain Johncock, Head of Strategic Place Planning
Dr Tessa Moore, Assistant Director: Education
Gill Slater, Planner (Planning Strategy and Heritage Team)
Max Winters, Principal Research of Statistics Officer (ECHS)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Sarah Phillips was appointed Chairman of the Working Group for the 2013/14 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Peter Fortune.

3 ANALYSIS BY PLANNING AREA

Members considered projected demand for primary school places across the Borough. For the school year 2013/14, applicants for reception class places exceeded previous forecasts and it had been necessary to supplement the agreed changes by 90 places, which included bringing forward a reorganisation of Worsley Bridge Community Junior School to become a 2 form of entry (FE) primary school from 2013/14, to ensure that every on-time applicant received a valid offer. The total number of places originally available for 2013/14 was 3733. This was subsequently increased to 3823 places, and 3820 on-time applicants were made an offer in April 2013, of which 76% secured their first choice of school and 89% secured one of their first three choices of school which represented a slight fall on the previous year, reflecting the increasing pressure on places.

Increased demand for primary places was expected to continue in the long term, with the Greater London Authority forecast projecting a rise of total numbers to

4041 which would be sustained to at least 2030. This was due to a higher level of birth rate than expected, as well as through migration to the Borough and increased occupancy levels of existing homes. The Head of Strategic Place Planning advised Members that the proximity distance of many primary schools had shrunk considerably and it was important to encourage parents and carers to apply for a place at their nearest school to ensure as many children as possible secured a school place in their local community.

It was recommended that the higher Greater London Authority (GLA) alternate roll projection methodology be adopted as the basis of primary school planning for 2014/15 and beyond. It was also recommended that a margin of 2% be considered above projection to provide for parental choice and improve the rate of first choice allocations. To support the expected increase in demand for pupil places, there was a need to consider all schools across the Borough to identify which schools could be expanded on a temporary or permanent basis. A review of secondary provision would also follow, taking account of the future demand for secondary places as the increasing number of pupils at Bromley schools moved towards Key Stage 3. The Portfolio Holder for Education underlined the need to increase overall capacity in the Borough by encouraging new free schools and academies, with temporary and permanent expansions of existing schools used more flexibly to support fluctuation in the school population. The Chairman of Education PDS Committee also noted the importance of identifying the increases in demand experienced by neighbouring Boroughs and how this was being managed.

New academies or free schools could be established if sufficient demand could be evidenced, although the Local Authority was no longer able to establish a new maintained school, and it was noted that three new free schools were due to open within the Borough in 2014/15 which would make additional reception class places available. These comprised the Harris Beckenham and Harris Bromley Free Primary Schools, which were each expected to provide 2 FE (60 places) in the north of the Borough, and a Bilingual School located in central Bromley which would offer 50 places and was expected to recruit pupils from across the Borough. Further free school applications were currently being considered by a number of other providers for submission to the Department for Education, and consultation had commenced on a joint application sponsored by Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools to provide a 2 FE primary school on their grounds to serve Planning Areas 2 and 3.

Members went on to analyse the future demand for primary places by planning area.

Planning Area 1 continued to be a volatile area in pupil place planning terms. The number of 4 year olds in this area remained above that of the total admissions numbers for the schools and there was a history of migration to schools in the neighbouring Planning Area 2 and bordering Local Authorities. When the proposed 2% margin was included, the area analysis currently showed a projected shortfall of approximately 3 to 4 FE, falling back to 2 FE by 2030. To meet the demand for additional places, Churchfields Primary School had been permanently expanded from 1 FE to 2 FE, and Harris Crystal Palace would be permanently

expanded to 2FE from 2014/15. Balgowan Primary School would offer a bulge class for 2014-15, taking its total to 4 FE (120 places) for one year. A 2 FE deficit had also been met by neighbouring areas.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 3 FE at James Dixon Primary School for reception in 2014/15 as well as on a permanent basis. It was agreed to consult with Harris Federation around the feasibility of increasing capacity of Harris Primary Academy Kent House by 1 FE to 3 FE in 2015/16 and beyond. It was also agreed to consider scope for other schools to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 2 currently had a very close match of places to demand and had seen an increase in projected reception numbers. There were three significant housing developments in the area and when the proposed 2% margin was included, the area analysis currently showed a projected shortfall of approximately 1 FE for 2014/15 across Planning Areas 1 and 2. The opening of Harris Beckenham Free Primary School in 2014/15 would provide more places and therefore more choice for parents in the area. The permanent expansion of Unicorn Primary School to 2 FE and the additional form of entry at Clare House Primary School in 2012/13 and 2013/14 had ensured sufficient places to meet the current increased demand, as well as making a contribution to the needs in Planning Area 1. Following consultation it had been agreed to extend the age range of Bromley Road Infant School to become a 1 FE Primary School from 2014/15, and Worsley Bridge Junior School to become a 2 FE Primary School from 2013/14 with the potential to expand to 3 FE in future. Bromley Road Infant School would have two classrooms available from 2014/15 which might be utilised to support future bulge classes where needed.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Clare House Primary School. It was also agreed to await the outcome of the free school submission proposed by Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools. Members also agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 3 FE at Worsley Bridge Community Primary School in the medium term.

Planning Area 3 currently had a close match of places to demand, with a forecast margin of 111 places in 2014/15 and a 2 FE capacity remaining in the area to 2030. The opening of Harris Bromley Free Primary School in 2014/15 would offer an additional 60 places (2 FE), which would ensure more than sufficient provision to meet the needs of the area, however it was recognised that the school would also draw pupils from Planning Area 2 and 4. There was scope for enlargement at St Mark's C.E. Primary School to reduce the pressure for pupil places on neighbouring planning areas because of its location, and discussions with the school were in progress.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to keep school organisation and size in the area under review. It was also agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on either a temporary or

permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at St Mark's C.E. Primary School if future demand was sufficient.

Planning Area 4 capacity had been closely matched to need for several years. However, when the proposed 2% margin was included, the area analysis currently showed a projected shortfall of approximately 77 places for 2014/15 rising to 137 places by 2030. Both Valley and Parish C.E. Primary Schools had accepted an extra form of entry in 2011/12 and 2012/13, and it had been agreed to consult on the permanent expansion of Parish Primary School from 2 FE to 3 FE. Scotts Park Primary School had admitted an additional form of entry in 2012/13 and would repeat this in 2013/14 with a view to permanent expansion, although Members noted that highways issues had been identified around access to the school that would need to be addressed. The proposed Bilingual School located in central Bromley was also likely to make a contribution to the choice and availability of pupil placements within the Planning Area.

Members confirmed support for a permanent increase by 30 places at both Scotts Park and Parish Primary Schools. Members agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of consolidating the PAN (Pupil Admission Number) for St George's C.E. Primary School to 2 FE.

Planning Area 5 was experiencing increased demand for places, in part due to a significant housing development on the 'Blue Circle' site. To meet the demand for additional places, proposals had been made for the temporary expansion of Princes Plain Primary School by 2 FE in 2014/15, making use of the former Education Development Centre campus for which a feasibility study was being undertaken. Any permanent expansion of the school would require capital works to enlarge the school buildings. Keston C.E. Primary School had admitted an additional form of entry in 2012/13 but any further expansion of the school would be subject to planning permission for a small extension to provide accommodation for a bulge class. With the proposed expansion to Princes Plain Primary School, sufficient places would be available to meet local demand for 2014/15 and 2015/16, after which the area analysis currently showed a projected shortfall of approximately 0.5 FE rising to 1 FE.

Members confirmed their support for permanent expansion of Princes Plain Primary School by 2FE and to consider a bulge class at Keston C.E. Primary School, subject to planning permission. Members also agreed to consider other options to meet the ongoing deficit of places in the Planning Area from 2016/17.

Planning Area 6 currently had a projected shortfall of places of approximately 1 FE. There was also a major residential development on the site of the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design which had the potential to further increase demand for places. Members noted that Chislehurst C.E. Primary School and the Diocese of Rochester had been in discussions with the Local Authority concerning the feasibility of relocating the school to a new site in Chislehurst and of expanding it. There were two 'stand alone' infant schools in this planning area and the planning for this area assumed that Red Hill Primary School and Mottingham Primary School would admit additional pupils at Key Stage 2 to accommodate some or all of the pupils moving up from these local infant schools.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to pursue the feasibility of relocating and expanding Chislehurst C.E. Primary School. Following discussion, it was also agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary or permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Edgebury Primary School.

Planning Area 7 capacity had been reduced from 400 places to 328 from 2008/09 in response to lower demand for pupil places, with a reduction in the PANs of St. Mary Cray Primary School, Leasons Primary School, Midfield Primary School, Poverest Primary School and St Paul's Cray C.E. Primary School from 1.5 FE to 1 FE. The demand for pupil places was now starting to increase and, with accommodation substantially in place, there was scope to consider expansion of any of these schools by whole forms of entry as required. Midfield Primary School had accepted an additional form of entry in 2012/13, and it had been agreed to consult on the permanent expansion of Midfield Primary School from 1 FE to 2 FE, for which a feasibility study was being undertaken.

Following discussion, it was agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at St Paul's Cray C.E. Primary School for reception in 2014/15. It was agreed to consider scope for other schools to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 8 had a close match between capacity and current need. Following previous primary school reviews, it might be necessary to consider temporary expansions of other schools in this Planning Area if future demand was sufficient.

Members agreed that there should be no current change to school organisation or size in this planning area.

Planning Area 9 had a close match between capacity and current need and showed a margin of between 0.5 FE and 1 FE capacity remaining to the end of the planning period.

Members agreed that there should be no current change to school organisation or size in this planning area.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members summarised the Working Party's initial recommendations, the feasibility of which would be considered in partnership with school representatives:

Planning Area 1 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at James Dixon Primary School for reception in 2014/15 as well as on a permanent basis.

To consult with Harris Federation around the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at

Harris Primary Academy Kent House for reception in 2015/16 as well as on a permanent basis.

To consider the potential for other schools to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 2 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Clare House Primary School.

To await the outcome of the free school submission proposed by Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Worsley Bridge Community Primary School in the medium term.

Planning Area 3 To keep school organisation and size in the area under review.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on either a temporary or permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at St Mark's C.E. Primary School if future demand was sufficient.

Planning Area 4 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Scotts Park Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Parish C.E. Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of consolidating the PAN for St George's C.E. Primary School to 2 FE (from 1.5 FE).

Planning Area 5 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 4 FE (from 2 FE) at Princes Plain Primary School on the Education Development Centre campus.

To consider other options to meet the ongoing deficit of places in the Planning Area from 2016/17.

Planning Area 6 To investigate, with Chislehurst C.E. Primary School and the Diocese of Rochester, the feasibility of relocating and expanding Chislehurst C.E. Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary or permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Edgebury Primary School.

Planning Area 7 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Midfield Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at St Paul's Cray C.E. Primary School for reception in 2014/15.

To consider scope for other schools in the Planning Area to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 8 No additional places required.

Planning Area 9 No additional places required.

RESOLVED that it be recommended that:

- 1) The higher Greater London Authority (GLA) alternate roll projection methodology be adopted as the basis of primary school planning for 2014/15 and into the future;**
- 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 the Primary School Development Plan Working Group be renamed the School Place Working Group to reflect the need to consider Secondary place planning into the future;**
- 4) That discussions be undertaken with schools identified for expansion with a view to reporting the outcome to a future meeting of Education PDS Committee; and**
- 5) That feasibility studies be undertaken in consultation with identified schools to assess the scope and cost of school enlargement.**

5 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on the development of the Local Plan for Bromley.

The Local Plan would shape the development over the Borough for the next 15-20 years. Consultation on the Options and Preferred Strategy stage of the Local Plan had closed on 15th April 2013, and the next stage was to prepare policies and site allocations in line with the strategy and consultation responses which would include education matters. There would be a further consultation later in 2013 regarding draft development policies and site allocations within the emerging Local Plan and Members were asked to contribute to these consultations where appropriate. It was expected that the draft Local Plan would be published in early 2014, and that the final Local Plan would be agreed by Autumn 2014.

The Planner (Planning Strategy and Heritage Team) advised Members that a meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel would be held on 25th September 2013 where some aspects of the Local Plan relating to education would be considered. Policies within the Local Plan would reflect recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, which was supportive of necessary development, for example in meeting a community's education needs, whilst still protecting residents from inappropriate or over development in their local area. The use of site allocations would ensure that sites were designated for education use where appropriate to support the availability of land to meet longer term education pressures. This would not replace green belt designation, but would ensure that land designated for education purposes would not be lost to non-education development. It was noted that a number of changes had already been made to permitted development for free schools, and it was important to support free schools to identify the most suitable sites for both primary and secondary education provision across the Borough.

Members were advised that work had also been undertaken to more clearly define school site boundaries in commercial transfer agreements as Local Authority maintained schools moved to academy status. This would ensure that large tracts of land were not automatically transferred to academies and could be utilised for other education purposes in future, such as for free schools where appropriate.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A meeting of the School Places Working Group would be held at 5.00pm on Monday 25th November 2013.

The Meeting ended at 7.13 pm

Chairman