

SCHOOL PLACES WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on 13 November 2014

Present:

Councillor Judi Ellis (Chairman)
Councillors Teresa Ball, Nicholas Bennett J.P. and
Neil Reddin FCCA

Also Present:

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education
Jane Bailey, Assistant Director: Education
Robert Bollen, Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning
Iain Johncock, Interim Head of Governance
Kerry Nicholls, Democratic Services Officer
Max Winters, Principal Research and Statistics Officer (ECHS)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Judi Ellis was appointed Chairman of the Working Group for the 2014/15 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alexa Michael.

Apologies for absence were also received from Gill Slater, Planner (Planning Strategy).

3 REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members considered projected demand for primary school places across the Borough.

For the school year 2014/15, applicants for reception class places exceeded previous forecasts and it had been necessary to supplement the agreed changes by 225 places to ensure that every on-time applicant received a valid offer. The total number of places originally available for 2014/15 had been 4023. This was subsequently increased to 4204 places by the addition of eight bulge classes, with 76% of on-time applicants securing their first preference of school in Bromley, which was unchanged from the previous year.

Increased demand for primary places was expected to continue in the long term, with the Greater London Authority forecast projecting a rise of the total number of places in the Borough to 4041 by 2018, and remaining at that level to 2031. With 5% uplift, this would equate to 4264 total places by 2022 and 4351 by 2031. 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. In addition, it

was recommended that a margin of 5% be agreed above the Greater London Authority projection to provide for parental choice and improve the rate of first choice allocations across the Borough. To support this, the overall strategy was to meet forecast growth through a combination of existing surplus capacity, permanent expansion of existing provision, new schools and bulge classes. Work would also be undertaken around secondary place planning to ensure that there were sufficient secondary places across the Borough as the increasing number of pupils at Bromley primary schools moved towards Key Stage 3.

In discussion, Members noted that they had recently been contacted by a member of the public who had raised concerns around the level of demand for primary school places in Kelsey and Eden Park ward. The Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning confirmed that the Local Authority used the most robust data provided by the Greater London Authority which included projections on the likely demand for pupil places caused by housing development, inward migration and other contributory factors used to determine local need. Ward-based data could be misleading as school place planning was undertaken on a planning area rather than a ward basis, with the provision in each planning area impacting surrounding areas. The Interim Head of Governance was requested to draft a response to the member of the public which outlined the work undertaken by the Local Authority when undertaking pupil place planning. The Chairman noted that there was also a demand to accommodate older siblings in Year 1 and above who had moved into the Borough, and that capacity must be made available in local schools to support this.

In considering a recent planning application that had been granted for Keston C.E. Primary School to construct a single storey Early Years Foundation Stage classroom extension with enclosed play area, it was noted that the Plans Sub Committee No. 3. had approved the application, but had placed a condition that the number of classes at the school should not exceed a maximum of eight and the number of pupils should not exceed 256 at any one time. Members queried if Plans Sub-Committees were able to place restrictions on the number of pupils or classes at a school, and underlined that expansion at a school should be a matter for the Governing Body as prescribed by the recent statutory guidance, 'School Organisation – Maintained Schools Guidance' produced by the Department for Education. Legal advice was currently being sought to clarify the legal position with regard to any future school planning application. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted that traffic studies undertaken as part of the planning application process for schools proposing to expand should recognise that traffic volumes would reduce as more children were supported to attend a school in their local community.

The Chairman underlined the importance of ensuring schools were provided with clear guidance when the Local Authority was investigating, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis, and noted that work to secure planning permission for permanent expansion should be initiated when a school was in its second bulge year. Particular emphasis should be given to the capacity of shared spaces, such as school halls, dining facilities and outside space. The Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning confirmed that feasibility work was now initiated after a school had accepted a first bulge year to identify if

permanent expansion would be possible, and that in certain instances planning applications had been made before a first bulge class had been accepted. Members requested that the pathway and timeline to permanent expansion of schools be provided to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee on 27th January 2015. It was also requested that a chart be provided illustrating the current position of each primary school in the Borough with regard to spare capacity, bulge classes and permanent expansion.

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 approximately 2 FE above the total admissions numbers of the schools and there was a history of migration to schools in the neighbouring Planning Area 2 and bordering Local Authorities. To meet the demand for additional places for the 2014/15 academic year, bulge classes were added at James Dixon Primary School and The Pioneer Academy, Stewart Fleming Primary School. Churchfields Primary School and Harris Primary Academy Crystal Palace had both recently been permanently expanded to 2 FE. There was the potential to increase capacity on a permanent basis by 2 FE to 3 FE at James Dixon Primary School, which had originally been designed as a secondary school. A family contact centre was currently based on the school site which might be relocated to an alternate location if required. There was potential to increase capacity on a permanent basis by 2 FE to 3 FE at The Pioneer Academy, Stewart Fleming Primary School, if sufficient outside space could be identified. In considering Crystal Palace Primary School, which was a 2 FE of entry primary school expected to open for 2015/16, Members noted that the final location of the school had not yet been confirmed but as it would be located close to or over the Borough boundary, it was likely to provide only a limited number of places to Bromley pupils.

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 3 FE at James Dixon Primary School. It was agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of a further bulge class for 2015/16 and of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2FE at The Pioneer Academy, Stewart Fleming Primary School. It was also agreed to consider scope for other schools to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 2 indicated that there would be an increase in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. To meet the demand for additional places for the 2014/15 academic year, Unicorn Primary School had been permanently expanded to 2 FE from the 2012/13 academic year and Clare House School had been permanently expanded to 2 FE from the 2014/15 academic year. A bulge class had also been added at Unicorn Primary School which ensured that sufficient places were available to meet the increased demand as well as making a contribution to the place needs in Planning Area 1. The Harris Primary Academy Beckenham School was expected to open in 2015/16, which would provide more places and therefore more choice for parents in the area. A re-application was also proposed by Langley Boys and Girls

Schools which had previously been unsuccessful in a joint application to establish a 2 FE primary school serving both Planning Areas 2 and 3. The Portfolio Holder for Education noted that there was likely to be significant additional demand for pupil places in the vicinity of Worsley Bridge Primary School caused by a major residential development on the Dylon site. Consultation on expanding Worsley Bridge Primary School from 2 FE to 3FE was currently underway.

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 3 FE at Worsley Bridge Primary School. It was noted that Governors had recently agreed to increase the 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 School.

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 3 indicated that there would be a slight increase in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. The opening of Harris Primary Academy Shortlands in 2014/15 offered an additional 2 FE, which ensured sufficient provision to meet the needs of the area. In the past there had been a close match of places to demand, and although there was now a forecast margin of over 100 places in 2015/16, this was taken up with demand from neighbouring planning areas. The Chairman noted that Harris Primary Academy Shortlands offered an additional 2 FE in central Bromley which would enable children resident in Shortlands to attend a local school in their own community and reduce the number of children commuting to schools in neighbouring planning areas.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to keep school organisation and size in the area under review and to consider medium term options for enlargements. It was also agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity by 1 FE to 3 FE at St Mark's C.E. Primary School to meet the needs in the medium term.

Planning Area 4 continued to have a deficit of between 2 to 3 FE, taking into account 5% uplift, but the Greater London Authority projections indicated that there would be a slight decrease in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. There was a history of movement to schools in neighbouring planning areas, and when taken with Planning Area 3, there was a broad balance in the number of places available and demand for places until 2019/20. The expansion of Parish C.E. Primary School by 1 FE to 3 FE was underway. A further bulge class had also been added at Scotts Park Primary School for the 2014/15 academic year and detailed design work was being undertaken with a view to permanent expansion to 3 FE. The Portfolio Holder for Education underlined his concerns with the deficit of places in Planning Area 4.

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 3 FE at Scotts Park Primary School. It was also 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.

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 5 indicated that there would be a slight decrease in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. Although some places remained available in 2014/15, the forecast growth in the area was strong and it was predicted that the Planning Area would move into deficit after 2017/18 when 5% uplift was applied, indicating that 1 to 2 FE may be required in the medium term. Princes Plan Primary School had been expanded by 2 FE to 4 FE. A permanent site was currently being sought for La Fontaine Academy, which provided 2 FE in Planning Area 5 from its temporary location at the Educational Development Centre, although the school's permanent destination was intended to be Planning Area 4. Feasibility work was being carried out at Farnborough Primary School, in part due to the impact extra places would have on Planning Area 8.

Members discussed a range of options and agreed to keep school organisation and size in the area under review and to consider medium term options for enlargements.

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 6 indicated that there would be a slight increase in demand in the 2015/16 academic year, which reflected the additional demand caused by a major residential development on the site of the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design. 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 by 1 FE. 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 of the pupils moving up from these local infant schools. This was considered unsustainable in the medium term and alternative proposals were being developed to ensure that more assurance could be given to the parents at the two 'stand alone' infant schools around the Year 3 transfer process.

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

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 7 indicated that there would be a slight decrease in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. Although the projections in the previous year were for steady growth, there was a need to provide additional places in order to meet the demand in April 2014 and subsequently with late applications. To meet the demand for additional places for the 2014/15 academic year, a bulge class was added at Leeson's Primary School. Leeson's Primary School, St Mary Cray Primary School, Midfield Primary School, Poverest Primary School and St Paul's Cray C.E. Primary School had been built to accommodate 1.5 FE and reduced to 1 FE when pupil rolls were lower. These schools could therefore be expanded at relatively modest cost as required.

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, Leeson's Primary School, Poverest Primary School and St Mary Cray Primary School. Governors at Midfield Primary School had also agreed in principle to the expansion of the school on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE, subject to planning approval and consultation.

The Greater London Authority projections for Planning Area 8 indicated that there would be a slight decrease in demand in the 2015/16 academic year. To meet the demand for additional places for the 2014/15 academic year, a bulge class was added at Blenheim Primary School. Although some pupils who had accepted a place at Blenheim Primary School did not enrol in September 2014, the bulge class had now filled with late applicants.

Following discussion, it was agreed to investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Blenheim Primary School. It was also agreed to consider scope for other schools to temporarily expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Demand for pupil places in Planning Area 9 had been greater than forecast for 2014/15, although Reception rolls had shown a slight fall. There was an ongoing surplus of pupil places in this planning area which was forecast to remain until the mid-2020s, on the basis of 5% uplift.

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

In considering the overall projected demand for school places in the Borough, Members discussed if work should be undertaken to identify potential sites suitable for education use across the Borough and whether free school proposers should be encouraged to locate within the areas of the Borough where there was the greatest demand for pupil places. The impact of additional places on parental preference should also be kept under review.

4 PLANNING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES

Members considered projected demand for secondary school places across the Borough. Over recent years there had been a significant increase in the number of primary school places and as these pupils moved into the secondary phase, there was a need to identify how the increase in demand for places would be met, as well as how a range of other changes would impact demand for secondary places, including the increase in the participation age to 18 years from 2015/16, and alternate education options such as University Technical Colleges and Career Colleges.

A comprehensive range of secondary provision was currently delivered across the Borough which offered single sex, faith and selective options in addition to mainstream academies. Whilst some secondary schools currently had capacity, initial projections indicated up to 35 additional forms of entry (FE) might be required by 2030, taking into account 5% uplift.

To meet this projected increased demand for places, two new secondary phase provisions had recently been approved by the Department for Education for the 2016/17 academic year; Beckenham Academy, a 6 FE Year 7-13 provision, and a University Technical College, sponsored by the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, which would offer a 5 FE Year 10-13 provision. Bullers Wood School had recently made an application to the Department for Education to establish a 4 FE boys' secondary school in the Bickley area which was expected to receive a response in Spring 2015. In addition to this, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education was considering whether to resubmit an application to establish a 140 place Year 11-18 Technical School, and work was being undertaken with the R.C. Archdiocese of Southwark around the potential to establish a new 6 FE R.C. secondary provision in the Borough. The existing secondary schools had also been approached around the potential for expansion, which would be supported by the recent reduction in Government space standards in secondary schools by 15% and be applicable to all applications to build and extend schools. Any specific capital projects identified in relation to new schools or the expansion of existing schools would need to be identified from existing resources, as no new Basic Need Capital Grant funding would be available to the Local Authority until the next funding allocation was announced for 2017/18.

In considering the potential for new secondary provisions, the Chairman noted that the Beckenham Academy was likely to be based close to the Borough boundary, which would limit the number of places available to Bromley pupils. The University Technical College, sponsored by the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education would offer a 5 FE Year 10-13 provision, which would not provide additional places for Year 7-9 pupils and could impact the pupil rolls of other secondary schools as Year 10 pupils left to join the University Technical College. Members were concerned that additional secondary schools or the expansion of existing secondary schools would unbalance the current gender balance of provision across the Borough.

The Assistant Director: Education advised Members that work was being undertaken to identify any sites which might be suitable for a new secondary school. The Principal Research and Statistics Officer (ECHS) also suggested that secondary schools in other boroughs had freed up classroom space for expansion by moving their sixth form provision into offices, which provided students with experience of an adult working environment. A similar initiative in Bromley could support additional expansion of existing schools; however the capacity of shared spaces, such as school halls, dining facilities and outside space would be a key limitation to any plans for secondary school expansion.

In considering if there was a need to encourage free school proposers to locate within the areas of the Borough where there was the greatest demand for secondary pupil places in future years, Members requested that further information mapping details of secondary catchment areas against a range of expansion and new school proposals to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee on 27th January 2015.

5 COST OPTIONS FOR NEW SECONDARY PROVISION

Members considered a report outlining cost options for new secondary provision in the Borough.

Basic Need Capital Grant funding was allocated on a two yearly cycle with the next allocation round due to take place for 2017/18. The majority of the current capital fund had been allocated to primary school expansion, however options were now being considered for the first wave of secondary school expansion, which would be required as the increasing number of primary pupils moved into the secondary phase.

The expansion of existing schools was currently being explored. £5m had been identified within the Basic Need Capital Grant to fund capital works for expansion, and secondary schools had been requested to put forward options. A process of evaluation was being undertaken on these options which were expected to provide up to 4 FE across the Borough. Additional places were also expected to be secured through the establishment of new free schools across the Borough, which were funded by the Education Funding Agency and would have little or no cost implications to the Local Authority.

Work continued with the R.C. Archdiocese of Southwark around the potential to establish a new 6 FE R.C. secondary provision in the Borough. If this proposed provision was established as a free school with a faith designation, 50% of the places would have to be available to non-faith applications before over-subscription criteria could be applied. The Archdiocese had indicated that this was not an option the Church would wish to pursue at this stage, so alternate funding streams would need to be identified such as a bid to a future round of the Targeted Basic Need fund.

6 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 permanent basis by 1 FE to 3 FE at James Dixon Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of a further bulge class for 2015/16 and of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 3 FE at The Pioneer Academy, Stewart Fleming Primary School.

To consider scope 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 by 1 FE to 3 FE at Worsley Bridge Primary School.

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

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

Planning Area 3 To keep school organisation and size in the area under review and to consider medium term options for enlargements.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity by 1 FE to 3 FE at St Mark's C.E. Primary School to meet the needs in the medium term.

Planning Area 4 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 3 FE at Scotts Park Primary School.

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 To keep school organisation and size in the area under review and to consider medium term options for enlargements.

Planning Area 6 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of relocating and increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Chislehurst C.E. Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Edgebury Primary School.

Planning Area 7 To move towards the expansion on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Midfield Primary School, which had been agreed in principle by Governors, subject to planning approval and consultation.

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.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Leeson's Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing

capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Poverest Primary School.

To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at St Mary Cray Primary School.

Planning Area 8 To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at Blenheim Primary School.

To consider scope for other schools to temporarily expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 9 No additional places required.

RESOLVED that it be recommended that:

- 1) The projections for primary need be noted;**
- 2) A margin of 5% be agreed above the Greater London Authority projection for primary place planning to provide for local variations in need and to meet parental preferences;**
- 3) That discussions be undertaken with primary schools identified for expansion with a view to reporting the outcome to a future meeting of Education PDS Committee;**
- 4) That feasibility studies be undertaken in consultation with identified primary schools to assess the scope and cost of school enlargement;**
- 5) Where primary school expansion is agreed, implementation be funded through the Education Capital Programme, subject to the availability of funds;**
- 6) That the Secondary School Place Planning report be recommended to the Education PDS Committee as the basis for secondary school place planning to 2031; and,**
- 7) That the proposals for the expansion of existing secondary schools be brought forward to the Executive for approval.**

7 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

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

The Local Development Framework Advisory Panel was overseeing the production of the Bromley Local Plan, which would involve bringing forward planning policies, land designations and site allocations to steer development and support infrastructure in the Borough up to 2030. This would include draft policies

and designations to facilitate the provision of increased education infrastructure, and during the Local Plan process it became clear that the designation of approximately one third of school sites as either Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land presented a significant barrier to future school expansions as schools were considered 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.

At the meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel on 22nd April 2014, it was requested that a review of both primary and secondary school sites located within the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land be undertaken around the potential to re-designate school sites as 'Urban Open Space' as part of the site allocation process where appropriate to ensure that future applications for new or expansion of existing education provision on these sites could be considered.

The results of this review were reported to the meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel on 27th October 2014, where Members recommended that consultation be undertaken as part of the Local Plan process to change the designation of 12 school sites to Urban Open Space (in addition to the existing designation of 'Education Land') to seek to address immediate pressures and allow for future flexibility in the use of this land for education purposes. These sites comprised:

- Castlecombe Primary School;
- Edgebury Primary School;
- James Dixon Primary School;
- Mead Road Infant School;
- Midfield Primary School, Grovelands PRU and the Link Youth Centre;
- Oaklands Primary School, Biggin Hill.
- Scotts Park Primary School
- St Mary Cray Primary School
- St James' R.C. Primary School
- Wickham Common Primary
- Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools;
- The Bromley Trust Alternative Provision Academy – Hayes Campus

It was noted that further school sites might also come forward through the "Call for Sites" process. Following robust site assessments in accordance with National and Regional policy, recommendations on any such school sites would be considered by the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel in due course.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No future meeting date was set.

The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman