

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 27 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Felicity Bainbridge (Chairman)
Councillor Thomas Turrell (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Jonathan Andrews, Graeme Casey and
Ryan Thomson

Also Present:

Robert Bollen, Head of Strategic Place Planning
Jared Nehra, Director of Education
Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Johnson and Gill Slator from the Planning Division.

2 PLANNING UPDATE (VERBAL)

Representatives from the Planning Division gave apologies. Members noted that, with the Local Plan now in place, there were no pressing planning matters requiring discussion.

3 BROMLEY SCHOOL PLACES PLAN 2022-26

The Working Group considered the draft School Places Plan 2022-26. Although most schools in the borough were now academies, the Council continued to have a statutory duty to ensure that enough school places were available, and this was formally reviewed each year. The final version of the report was due to be submitted to the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee on 13th September 2022.

The report contained a short section on the Schools White Paper and the SEND Green paper, and reviewed school rolls, admission data, demographic and GLA projection data to provide a borough-wide picture of current and future need.

The Working Group considered the analysis of each of the nine school place planning areas. These areas were based on the previous (pre-2022) ward boundaries. Members made the following comments –

10.1 Crystal Palace, Penge and Anerley: Councillor Ryan Thomson requested he be provided the figures for James Dixon School in real numbers and suggested that Clock House should be reflected in the title.

10.2 Beckenham

10.3 Hayes, Keston and West Wickham: the Vice-Chairman commented that Keston was duplicated in section 10.5, and Shortlands was not shown.

10.4 Bickley, Central Bromley and Plaistow: It was noted that Bullers Wood School for Boys did not yet have an Ofsted rating – this would be clarified.

10.5 Bromley Common, Crofton, Farnborough and Petts Wood

10.6 Chislehurst: The Chairman suggested adding Mottingham to the title

10.7 Cray Valley: It was explained that Kemnal Technology College was in the Inadequate Ofsted category, but the description “Serious weaknesses” indicated that leadership did have capacity to improve the school. This would be clarified.

10.8 Orpington

10.9 Biggin Hill: There was no Ofsted rating in the report for Downe Primary School – this would be added. Councillor Jonathan Andrews suggested that the area title should be Biggin Hill and Darwin. Councillor Ryan Thomson suggested that the GP registration table at 10.9.8 should be re-labelled to say less than one, rather than 0. Officers agreed to check that the labelling was consistent with the source data.

In some cases, the Ofsted ratings were quite old and had not been reviewed for some time – some dated from before the schools had changed to academies. Ofsted had stated that they would be inspecting all schools in the next five years, prioritising those with the oldest ratings. Officers agreed to add a column to detail date of last inspection.

Officers explained that conversations were taking place with the DfE about potential changes to planning area boundaries. The current planning areas boundaries were based on pre-2022 ward boundaries. Keeping primary-aged planning areas co-terminus with ward boundaries helped Members, and officers proposed to work with the DfE to amend boundaries to maintain this practice. However, the DfE’s primary concern was that planning areas should relate to travel-to-learn areas. For secondary planning areas, officers were in discussion about a possible change to having more than a single planning area for Bromley. This was because it was not possible for pupils in the north-west of Bromley to access a place in the east of the Borough within a reasonable travel time.

The Chairman considered that ward names should be reflected in the report. Members’ views on this would be helpful in negotiating with the DfE about amending the planning areas.

AGREED -

1. That pupil roll projections and other trend data set out in the report be noted.

- 2. That Members note the continued increase in the number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), above demographic trends.**
- 3. That a planning margin of 5% above the GLA school roll projections continues to be implemented to provide for local variations in need and to meet parental preferences.**
- 4. That Members note the projections indicating a potential future reduction in the need for primary places.**
- 5. That whilst there are, currently, sufficient primary places available or planned to meet current and projected demand for school places, the Council will work with schools to safeguard the existing supply of school places as required.**
- 6. That there are specific pressures for placements for pupils with an Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and that the Council works with local schools, trusts and the DfE to bring proposals forward to increase capacity and improve provision where necessary.**
- 7. That discussions be undertaken with schools, multi academy trusts and the DfE, as outlined in this report, to ensure a sufficient supply of mainstream school places in the Borough, including through expansions and opening new schools.**
- 8. That whilst there has been progress in the delivery of both Harris Kent House and Redwood Academy free schools that there remains a potential delay to both projects and that it is recommended that the Council engages in conversation with both trusts to ensure that there are sufficient school places available until each school opens.**
- 9. Note the SEN strategic estates review that will be developing options to enable the delivery of additional specialist capacity when needed.**
- 10. That the Council should actively seek to increase the capacity of in-Borough specialist provision.**
- 11. Where expansion is agreed, to implement through the education capital programme (subject to the availability of funds).**
- 12. That officers enter dialogue with the DfE on amending the primary and secondary planning areas.**

The Meeting ended at 8.34 pm

Chairman