

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING – QUARTERLY UPDATE NOVEMBER 2021

Committee name	Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
Officer reporting	Sarah Phillips – Education, Schools Place Planning
Papers with report	N/A
Ward	All

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

- 1. notes the update and actions underway to support parents and schools.**
- 2. questions officers about the update.**

SUMMARY

1. This report presents to the Select Committee the quarterly School Places Planning updates as this is a key statutory function of the Council as a Local Education Authority (LA) and involves liaison with all schools and Trusts in the borough, and with neighbouring LAs. The duty is to have a sufficiency of school places to meet parental demand. Place planning sets a strategic framework in which the LA and every school can operate, requiring annual review and decisions to be agreed with individual schools and trusts to adjust supply, and to inform commissioning decisions, timely capital investment and negotiations with the DfE.
2. Both the January 2021 and May 2021 census showed rolls had dipped in total since October 2020, before the pandemic, though most schools are full. Since August 2021, the Borough has experienced unprecedented levels of continuing new applications for places in all year groups, creating substantial work in the LA and most schools. It is still unclear if this is just a resettling after the dip of 2020-21 caused by Covid and will stop, or whether it is a new upwards trend. The October census will capture some of the newcomers and help answer this, but will not be ready until December, and analysis will be presented to the January meeting of this Committee.
3. This uncertainty affects place planning and necessitates greater margins of spaces to meet this in-year demand. We have the margin in primary schools but it is currently more difficult to achieve in all areas of the borough for secondary and for all types of special school. Substantial planning and feasibility projects are underway including ongoing discussions with schools, Trusts and DfE.
4. The LA place planning duty to ensure sufficient places to meet demand covers all schools; Community, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Academy. Most

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special and secondary schools and about half of all primary schools are full. The applications for Year 7 in September 2022 are now being assessed and it is clear that as projected, the total number is higher than last year. We will shortly have enough data to review the pattern of preferences from residents for schools in other LAs and from those outside for places in Hillingdon schools. The legal power of parental preferences for any school in any LA adds complexity to planning sufficient places in the borough for residents. Officers have discussions planned with Hillingdon secondary schools to ensure there are sufficient places to meet parental demand. Schools can increase their PAN without consultation, hence extra places have been added to some special and secondary schools over the past few years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. That the Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee:
 - 1) Note the update and actions underway to support parents and schools.
 - 2) Question officers about the update.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Schools reducing their Published Admissions Number (PAN)

6. In order to ensure the best use of resources across and in schools, some schools are consulting on reducing the Published Admission Number (PAN) – their ‘operating figure’, to take effect from 2023. No actual physical buildings will change. If by 2023 in some schools, parental demand has increased again then some of the PAN reductions may not be implemented. A few other London LAs are in the same situation of uncertainty, with proposals to decrease PAN but also monitoring some rise in rolls reflecting the level of parent preferences for different schools. It is important to note that most primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon are larger than the national or London average and most of these reductions are in large schools that had increased PAN ten years ago to meet demand. Now, as happens in a demand -led system, some need to adjust down. It is important to note in Hillingdon this is down to viable sized schools.
7. Ideally, we would have an 8% operating margin of vacancies in the 4,551 total Reception Published Admission Numbers (PAN) and overall and in some schools the figure is higher. This can create funding, staffing and other problems which impact on children’s learning and stability of the class they are in. Following review and discussions with schools, Cabinet in September agreed to start consultation on proposals to reduce the Published Admission Numbers for 4 of the 27 community primary schools, where the LA is the admissions authority:
 - Field End Infant from 120 to 90,
 - Harefield Infant School from 90 to 60,
 - Harefield Junior School from 90 to 60,
 - Harlyn Primary School from 90 to 60.

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8. After the consultation responses have been analysed a report will come to this Select Committee meeting on 5th January 2022 for discussion and also then to Cabinet to decide if the proposals should go ahead. If agreed, the PAN reductions will be published in 2022 to come into effect from 2023. There will be sufficient places to ensure that local residents and siblings can access the school. This reduction will also reduce the distance priority radius from 1250m to 1000 for Field End Infant School and 1000m to 750m for the other three schools in line with our admissions arrangements.
9. In addition, other admissions authorities in Hillingdon are now consulting to reduce PAN in their schools from 2023. Again, the same issues apply, these are mainly large schools with a one form entry reduction in PAN and will still be large. They have most or all of their year groups operating at this level already, with spaces available for siblings and other local pupils. There may be another one or two.
 - Hillside Infants school from 90 to 60
 - Field End Junior school from 120 to 90
 - Wood End Park Primary Academy from 150 to 120
 - Oak Wood Secondary School from 270 to 240
10. Also, other LAs and admissions authorities are currently consulting with Hillingdon on similar PAN reductions and these are being reviewed for any impact on residents and on place planning. None are so far seen.
11. In addition, Holy Trinity CE Primary School is now consulting on a temporary closure of its nursery at the end of this term, December 2021 due to parental demand having fallen to an unviable level. They will review demand for potential reopening in September 2023.
12. The October census data will shortly be complete and will be closely monitored for any overall trends and issues in geographical areas or specific schools.

Changes in School Organisation

13. On 1 September 2021 several permanent changes in school organisation took effect:
 - Oak Farm Primary school opened – amalgamating the previous separate Oak Farm Infants and Junior schools.
 - Lady Bankes Primary school opened – amalgamating the previous separate Lady Bankes Infant and Junior schools.
 - Hermitage Primary School joined the Vanguard Academy Trust
 - Field End Junior School joined the Vanguard Academy Trust
14. Over the summer the LA managed a project at Hedgewood Community Primary Special School to add four classrooms, additional small rooms and improvements

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to the playground, personal care areas and toilets. The roll has now expanded to 193.

15. In Spring 2022 two new Free Schools will open – both replace existing schools which legally close:

- Nanaksar Primary School in the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy Trust
- The Young People’s Academy in the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust.

16. In January a full update on all the 13 DfE funded and managed Free Schools and school building projects will be available and shared with the Committee.

17. The current overview of the total number and types of schools is on the table below.

Type and Number of schools in Hillingdon Statutory Phases	MAINSTREAM					SPECIAL	TOTAL	Maintained by LA	LA Admissions & site	Admission Authority
	Primary YR-Y6	Infant YR-Y2	Junior Y3-Y6	All-through R to Y13	Secondary Y7 - Y13	7 Special & 1 AP	TOTAL YR - Y13			
Community (Mainstream Primary)	17	6	4	0	0	-	27	27	27	1
Community Special (1 Prim & 1 Sec)	1				1	2	2	2	2	
Voluntary Aided CE (all Primary)	4	-	-	-	0	-	4	4	0	4
Voluntary Aided RC (all Primary)	6	-	-	-	0	-	6	6	0	6
Foundation	2	1	1		2	-	6	6	0	6
Academy - Single	1	-	-	-	6	1	8	0	0	8
Academy - in MAT	20	-	2	1	9	5	37	0	0	12
UTC /Studios Y10-Y13 in MATs	-	-	-	-	4		4	0	0	3
TOTALS	51	7	7	1	22	8	94	45	29	40

Schools of all types in each phase: Primary: 70 Secondary : 27

This makes total 97 as both all-through schools are included in each phase, (1 is a Special school). The AP is Secondary

TOTAL PUPILS on all rolls Nursery to sixth form all types of school 51,713 at May 2021, the last census.

Notes

1. Also 1 Community Nursery School – takes total to 95 separate schools of which 30 are Community - 32% - Council owns site, admissions body, employs staff through the Governing Body.
2. Schools vary in size from small (65) to very large (1,850)
3. Free schools are included within MATs.

18. Note that work is underway to update key schools place planning and organisation information into a visual and easy reader format as a *School Classification: Public*

Organisation Plan – not legally necessary since 2010 but useful for Members, staff, schools and parents.

Implications on related Council policies

A role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

None at this stage, pending any findings by the Committee and any recommendations forwarded to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

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Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee – 30 November 2021