



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

15 March 2011
21 March 2011

Primary School Place Capacities

Report of the Strategic Director, Children

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Recent pupil place planning analysis has confirmed that there is a sustained increase in the annual number of births in the city. In the light of this there is a need to undertake further development work to ensure there will be sufficient places in City primary schools in future years.
- 1.2 This report alerts members to this need, likely pressure points and provides a concise summary of the potential short, medium and long term strategies available to secure sufficient primary place capacity.

2. Recommendations (or Options)

- 2.1 Scrutiny is invited to note and comment upon this report.
- 2.2 Cabinet is requested to note the content of this Report and the need to undertake further development and consultation work upon medium term and longer-term solutions to secure sufficient primary place capacity.
- 2.3 Cabinet is asked to endorse the “next steps” detailed in Section 5 of this Report and agree to receive a more detailed options report in November 2011.

Report

3. Summary of Current Challenge

- 3.1 The need for additional primary school places: An increase in birth numbers in the City of nearly 30% over the last seven years has seen a significant increase in the demand for primary school places.
- 3.2 City primary schools currently provide 4143 Reception class places giving a total overall capacity of some 29,000 places across all primary year groups in City schools.
- 3.3 This September the number of Reception Class (F2) places required is likely to exceed the number of places currently available. While this can be managed in the short term through variations in published Admission Numbers in City Primary Schools longer term solutions are likely to be required.
- 3.4 On current projections an additional 3000-3500 primary school places may be required by 2018. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide every child in the City with a school place and must act to ensure this duty is met.
- 3.5 In addition to current projections the City anticipates further applications from new arrivals to the City and the UK. Pupil places may also be squeezed as a result of the recent Benefits System review and the cap on Housing Benefits. As a result it is anticipated that families may relocate from London Boroughs to Leicester City.
- 3.6 On the basis of current projections the following potential demographic pressure points have been identified.
- City Centre / Highfields
 - Evington Corridor
 - Braunstone
 - Braunstone Gate
 - Hamilton
- 3.7 Parents may of course express a preference for any school of their choice. This means however that simply expanding pupil places in pressure points may not be the straight forward answer to the challenge. Equally so competition requirements also mean that the City Council cannot determine with certainty the nature and ethos of any new school.

4. Summary of Potential Solutions

- 4.1 As a short-term response to pupil place pressures in 2010, discussions took place with a number of schools (Abbey Primary, Braunstone Primary, Eyres Monsell Primary, Kestrels' Field Primary and Scraftoft Primary) in key population growth areas of the City to agree a temporary increase in their admission numbers for September 2010 academic year. The temporary raising of the admission number in these schools has relieved the immediate pressure and resulted in an additional 70 places being available.

- 4.2 A future Cabinet report will present a range of further medium to long-term options to ensure sufficient places. This may include:
- a) Expanding existing schools through either temporary or permanent building solutions, providing additional accommodation close to but outside the current school buildings.
 - b) Utilising existing land to build new schools.
 - c) Purchasing land for new schools.
 - d) Reinstatements of previously closed schools.
 - e) Joining up of County and City provision at the County/City boundary.
 - f) Utilising community buildings and churches to provide learning pods as well as community usage.
- 4.3 The above options are however constrained by the likely available funding envelope and current and future legislation surrounding the establishment of new schools.
- 4.4 The costs of the above options could range from approximately £10m for a full temporary buildings solution (mobiles) to over £100m plus for brand new land and schools. As indicated above, legislation itself may limit the Council's ability to influence the ethos and preferred status or category of any new school.
- 4.5 Currently, the City Council has £6.9m 'Basic Need' funding available to effect change.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 It is proposed to engage in dialogue with the Headteachers and Governing Bodies during April – July 2011 to canvass views on how Leicester might best meet its projected pupil place challenge.
- 5.2 A more detailed report on options will then be brought to Cabinet for their consideration and decision in November 2011.
- 5.3 It is anticipated that following consideration by Cabinet further public consultation on any proposed change will, as required by law, take place during the Admission Consultation in December 2011 – March 2012.
- 5.4 Changes may thereafter be effected from September 2013 or earlier as circumstances allow.

6. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The Government's capital grant to the Council in 2011/12 for Basic Need is expected to be £6.9m. The arrangements and allocations from 2012/13 are not yet known. It is likely that the available resources will have to be prioritised and targeted to ensure that the demand for places can be met. In terms of the Government's on-going revenue funding for the additional pupils, it is expected that the future arrangements for funding schools will continue to be pupil-led.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Investing in Children, ext 29 7750

6.2 Legal

The LA has a duty under s.13 Education Act 1996 to secure provision of school places for children within their population. To meet urgent demand, there are powers vested in the LA (and alluded to in 3.3 of the report) under paragraph 1.19 of the School Admissions Code to admit above the admission number in a school. These powers are however limited, and medium to longer term strategic commissioning of places should be conducted in line with proper consultation.

Kamal Adatia, Barrister, Head of Community Services Law, Leicester City Council, Tel: 0116 252 7044

6.3 Climate Change Implications

Carbon emissions from schools currently account for around 30% of the Council's total carbon emissions. Taking on additional buildings, expanding or building new school buildings would further increase the carbon emissions created by schools which would affect the Council's ability to meet carbon reduction targets. When considering the feasibility of the various options outlined in the paper, carbon must be a priority for consideration and measures should be taken to (through their design, construction and on-going use) reduce the energy demands of these buildings. In addition action should be taken to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils live within walking distance of their schools to ensure that city wide carbon emissions from transport do not increase as a result of pupils having to travel longer distances.

Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement , Tel: 0116 252 6770

7. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph/References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	3.7. The Council has a duty to promote choice and diversity in the provision of school places
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	
Corporate Parenting	No	
Health Inequalities Impact	No	

8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

8.1 None

9. Consultations

9.1 Proposed consultation proposals are detailed at Section 5 of the Report.

10. Report Author

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Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)