

This appendix contains a fuller statement of the planning principles or propositions summarised in Section 3 of this document.

## The Planning Principles

### *Educational Achievement*

<b>Proposition 1</b>	<i>That the School Organisation Plan establishes a framework that encourages all schools in Southwark to become centres of excellence, including where appropriate the introduction of academies and specialist schools.</i>
<b>Proposition 2</b>	<i>That in principle, and where circumstances permit, consideration is given to the expansion of high performing and popular schools.</i>
<b>Proposition 3</b>	<i>That where it is unlikely that a school can be removed from the categories of special measures or serious weaknesses through the policy and time frame set out in the EDP, closure or a “fresh start” is considered.</i>

- 1.1 Raising standards is the LEA's core objective. The framework for supporting educational achievement is the Council's Educational Development Plan and a principal tenet of the SOP is to support the aims and objectives of the EDP. It is therefore important that the SOP puts forward a planning framework that will encourage all schools in Southwark to become high performing centres of excellence.
- 1.2 While this constitutes the overall aim of the SOP, it is realistic to recognise that at any one time there are likely to be some schools that are more successful or more popular than others. One option in planning terms therefore must be to consider whether the number of places in popular and high achieving schools could be increased. Usually, this will also meet a clearly expressed parental demand. In practice, however, this option is not always easy to achieve. There are likely to be capital costs involved and many schools will not have sites or accommodation suitable for expansion. Consideration must also be given to the consequences for other local schools where accommodation may become underused and where it may be increasingly difficult to recruit a balanced intake, putting their own educational standards at risk. The new DfES initiatives London Challenge (with its focus on Southwark and emphasis on the provision of new academies) and Building Schools for the Future (with its emphasis on new specialist secondary schools) offer fresh opportunities to transform Southwark's secondary schools.
- 1.3 In July 2003, five schools were on special measures and one school was identified as having serious weaknesses that still require remedial action. It is the LEA's objective to have no such schools. Southwark's EDP sets out the arrangements by which the LEA will identify schools causing concern so that the appropriate level of intervention and support can be offered – including the issue of a Formal Warning where this is considered necessary. The EDP also sets clear target dates for improvement, for removal from special measures or serious weaknesses. In each case where Ofsted judges a school as having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures, the Council will initially consider the options for the future of that school. This will include an assessment as to whether the school should be closed, taking into account the

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availability of places in better performing schools to which pupils could transfer. Where Church schools are concerned it would be necessary to work closely with the Diocesan authorities.

- 1.4 The alternative to closure is to work with the school on an agreed action plan to remove the cause of the serious weaknesses within one year or to remove it from special measures within two years. This process will be closely monitored and if the school has not made the expected progress within six months (for schools with serious weaknesses) or by the fourth term (for those on special measures), consideration will again need to be given to closure or to a “fresh start”. Under fresh start, closure of a school is followed immediately by the opening of a new school on the same site with the same pupils. The Council has implemented one fresh start proposal: Grove Vale school closed at Easter 2000 and re-opened as Goose Green school. The application of fresh start nationally has not always been successful and it has now been supplemented – for secondary schools at least – by the Academy initiative. Under this scheme, an existing school can be closed and a new independent academy, run in partnership with business or voluntary sector partners, opened in its place. (The opening of academies need not, however, be related to the closing of a failing school, as the two academies – see paragraph 4.34 - in Southwark demonstrate).
- 1.5 The Authority’s preference in addressing the needs of schools on special measures or with serious weaknesses has been to work with them to ensure that the necessary improvements are made within the required timescale. This has in most cases proved to be an effective strategy. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary in appropriate circumstances to take decisive action on closure or fresh start. It should also be noted that the Secretary of State has powers to direct LEAs to close schools if satisfactory progress is not made.

### ***Surplus Places***

<b><i>Proposition 4</i></b>	<i>That, in line with Audit Commission recommendations, the Council adopts a target for the removal of surplus places in primary schools over the period of this School Organisation Plan.</i>
<b><i>Proposition 5</i></b>	<i>That, in line with Audit Commission recommendations, there should be no schools with more than 25% surplus places – other than new schools where initial recruitment is limited to specific year groups.</i>
<b><i>Proposition 6</i></b>	<i>That where there is a continuing need for a school, surplus places are addressed by securing alternative complementary uses for space not required by the school.</i>
<b><i>Proposition 7</i></b>	<i>That in appropriate cases, closure or amalgamation may need to be considered to address surplus places.</i>
<b><i>Proposition 8</i></b>	<i>That school place planning should seek to reduce the need for schools to accommodate more pupils than their capacity assessment allows.</i>

- 1.6 The tables in Appendices 5 and 7 compare actual and projected rolls with the number of places available in Southwark schools and indicate the percentage of surplus places based on the Net Capacity (NC) calculation. There are two methods for assessing school capacity. The basis used by the DfES in its national assessment of LEA surplus places is the NC method. This is based on an assessment of physical capacity and is used here as the defining measure for assessing the overall number of surplus places. It should be noted that Southwark's primary school capacity has increased due to the NC assessment.
- 1.7 Nationally, the DfES and the Audit Commission are both concerned that there should not be a higher than necessary level of surplus places. The Audit Commission in its report "Trading Places" recommended that LEAs set a target for the removal of surplus places and that particular attention is given to schools with a surplus of 25% or more. Each LEA is required to make a return to the DfES stating what action it is proposed to take on any school with 25% or more surplus places. LEAs are also required to monitor the number and proportion of their surplus places and these are monitored nationally as Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). The overall level of surplus places in Southwark is within acceptable limits. The main issue as far as secondary schools is concerned is the sufficiency of places to meet future demand. This is addressed in Section 4 of this Plan.
- 1.9 For **secondary** schools, the percentage of surplus places has steadily reduced since 1994 from nearly 19% to a current level of 6.9%. However, this includes a considerable number of "nominal" surplus places, because The Charter school opened with a capacity of 900 but only recruited (as approved) Year 7,8 and 9 pupils in September 2002. Because of the phased opening of The Charter school, the overall secondary surplus is expected to fall over the coming years. There are no other secondary schools with more than 25% surplus places.
- 1.10 For **primary** schools, the net number of surplus places overall has continued to fall from 21% in 1992 to 11% at present as rolls have risen, as shown in Appendix 5. Similarly, the number of primary schools with more than 25% surplus places has fallen from 16 in 1994 (the first year in which a return to the DfES was required) to 5 in 2003. Four of these schools have rolls of over 210, clearly meeting a local need. Some serve well defined geographical areas, where a local school is likely to continue to be needed but where there is a mis-match between the actual size of the premises and the size required for local demand. For this reason the Council agreed the temporary reduction of Langbourne's admission number from 60 to 30 from September 2004.
- 1.11 The Audit Commission publication, "Trading Places", contains a suggested method for calculating the number of surplus places that should be removed in an LEA. It takes the current surplus, the projected surplus in four years' time and calculates the number of places that could be removed by reference to the number of unfilled places in schools below 75% occupancy. This means of assessment in Southwark produces a figure of 455 primary places to be removed. This would, if implemented, reduce the total number of surplus places in Southwark to 1176 places (below 5%) by 2007/08. It is appropriate for this Plan to set its own target for removal of surplus places. In order to keep an acceptable planning margin and in the light of the projected pressure on the Reception rolls (plus the projected deficit in some planning areas and the compensatory surplus places in the adjacent area) it is not proposed that any primary places are removed. This issue is discussed further in section 4 of this document.

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- 1.12 As well as considering surplus spaces, it is also necessary to consider those schools where there are pupils on roll in excess of the school's capacity based on the Net Capacity assessment. There is discretion to publish an admission number that is higher than the Indicated Admission Number based on the Net Capacity of the building, therefore some schools may have more pupils than would be provided for under the NC calculation of capacity. In the primary sector, this is the case with a relatively small number of schools (7) and the proportion of pupils affected is small (0.4%). Plans are under way to remedy the situation in a number of these schools. In the secondary sector, seven schools are affected, with 1.6% of pupils and an increasing trend. Given the pressure on secondary school places, this trend is not surprising and is likely to increase in the short term for reasons that are discussed in Part 4 of this Plan. This is a significant issue and accordingly the aim of reducing the proportion of pupils in excess of school capacity is reflected in Proposition 8.

### **Parental Preference**

**Proposition 9** *That Southwark continues to provide a network of accessible local schools, with parents having a primary school within reasonable walking distance.*

**Proposition 10** *That school provision is planned to take account of an increasing proportion of Southwark parents seeking Southwark schools for their children.*

- 1.14 Parents can apply to any school regardless of where they live. If there are too many applicants, community schools apply the admissions criteria decided by the Authority, which are reviewed each year. Currently, places are offered in the following order of priority:
- i) children with SEN statements whose statements name the school
  - ii) brothers and sisters of children already on roll (except those in nursery classes)
  - iii) children with special medical or social needs which the school is best placed to meet
  - iv) children who live nearest the school measured by the shortest walking distance (for secondary schools) *or* children for whom it is the nearest community school, measured by the shortest walking distance with priority within this category normally given to those living nearest the school (for primary schools).
  - v) children who live nearest the school measured by the shortest safe distance (for primary schools).
- 1.15 For the exercise of parental preference to be sufficiently effective, there need to be unfilled places within the overall system and at a local level – to provide enough flexibility to be able to cope with, for example, unforeseen surges in demand. Also, although all schools must deliver the National Curriculum, many variations are possible in terms of size, site and buildings, specific strengths, overall ethos and whether the school is purely secular or aided by a religious or other foundation. The neighbourhood primary school serving an identifiable population has many attractions,

but if it is the only provision available, parental preference is effectively limited. In Southwark there are few locations where there is not a choice of primary schools within walking distance. For secondary schools, parental preference takes place in a wider context, as choices will frequently be made between schools in Southwark, and those in neighbouring LEAs. The development of specialisms at individual schools, such as the new technology colleges at Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Geoffrey Chaucer schools, the Business and Enterprise College at St Michael's, the two Language specialist schools and the new academies, will also influence parental decisions.

- 1.16 Many Southwark parents choose schools located in other boroughs for their children. This is often a reflection of local geography or transport links whereby the nearest or most accessible school happens to be across the borough boundary. In other cases, however, it is because parents have made a conscious decision on educational or other grounds that a more distant school offers a better choice for their child. Sometimes it may be because more local schools are full and cannot offer a place. On the same basis, many parents outside the borough choose a Southwark school for their children.
- 1.17 The issue of cross-borough movement at secondary level is discussed further in paragraph 4.37. PLASC data shows that the number of pupils going outside the borough at age 11 is greater than those coming in from elsewhere. There will always be those who choose a school in a neighbouring LEA for geographic or transport reasons. It is, however, appropriate that Southwark should seek to ensure that increasing parental confidence in the educational standards of Southwark schools should be reflected in an increase in the number of Southwark parents choosing Southwark schools (as confirmed in the London Challenge). In planning terms this means ensuring that the future provision of school places takes account of such increased demand.

### ***Gender and Denominational Balance***

***Proposition 11***      *That the broad proportions between denominational and non-denominational schools that exist at present is retained.*

***Proposition 12***      *That the Council aims for a broad balance between the numbers of boys and of girls in mixed schools.*

- 1.18 Southwark offers a diverse range of denominational and non-denominational provision and of mixed and single-sex schools. The current balance across primary schools (in terms of pupil numbers) remains broadly the same as in 2002/2003: 72% non-denominational, 12% Church of England and 16% Roman Catholic. At secondary level the proportions are 61%, 15% and 24% respectively. The intention is broadly to retain these ratios.
- 1.19 The planning principles which guide the provision of school places by the Southwark Diocesan Board (CE) and the Archdiocesan Commission (RC) are given in Appendices 13 and 14. They are broadly in line with the general principles set out in this Plan.
- 1.20 For gender balance in secondary schools, the situation is complex. This was one of the major issues of the 11-19 Review carried out in 1998. Across the community

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mixed schools, boys outnumber girls by more than two to one. In some year groups, the ratio is four to one. Such an imbalance is not desirable and it is doubtful that it truly meets parental expectations of a mixed school. Furthermore, over recent years, the trend has been worsening. This is likely to have the effect of making mixed schools less attractive to girls and, consequently, increasing the imbalance still further. One promising indication however is that at The Charter school, the first three years' recruitment has seen a more balanced intake of 59% boys and 41% girls.

- 1.21 A number of measures have been pursued at mixed schools to make them more attractive to girls. However, the major factor remains that across Southwark's maintained schools there are four single-sex girls' schools and only one boys' school. Significantly, in the Roman Catholic sector there is a balance of provision with one boys', one girls' and two mixed schools: in these mixed schools there is a more acceptable balance between boys and girls.
- 1.22 It is clear that further work will need to be done to address the gender imbalance and to make our secondary schools more attractive to girls. A study is currently under way to assess the feasibility of providing a small secondary boys' school on the Waverley Lower site, which would increase the amount of provision for boys in the borough.

### **Size of School**

**Proposition 13** *That, in principle, primary schools are based on a full, rather than ½, form entry arrangement.*

**Proposition 14** *That, while recognising the positive contribution made by many one form entry schools, primary schools of two form entry and above may potentially be better placed to meet curriculum, organisational and financial demands placed on them. Consequently, where appropriate, this factor is to be considered in future proposals for extension or new build primary schools.*

- 1.23 The Audit Commission recommends a minimum size of secondary school of 600 pupils (i.e. four forms of entry if 11-16) or of 90 pupils for a primary school. With the exception of The Charter, secondary schools range in size (at January 2003) between 620 and 1195 pupils and it is considered that this represents a reasonable range which, taken with other factors such as denominational status or gender provision, contribute to the diversity offered by Southwark schools.
- 1.24 Primary schools in Southwark range between 158 and 735 pupils (excluding nursery). Southwark has:
- 21 primary schools at 210 places (1 form entry)
  - 17 primary schools at 315 places (1 ½ forms of entry)
  - 22 primary schools at 420 places (2 forms of entry)
  - 5 primary schools at 525 or 630 places (2 ½ or 3 forms of entry)
  - 1 primary school at 840 places (4 forms of entry)

In addition, there are 2 infant schools at 180 places (2 forms of entry) and one infant school at 270 places (3 forms of entry). There are 2 junior schools at 240 places (2 forms of entry) and one junior school at 360 places (3 forms of entry). All these figures refer to places available rather than actual pupils on roll.



- 1.25 Small primary schools have attractions as parents often feel that they provide the most suitable environment for young children. In some areas they offer the best opportunity for local provision in accordance with Proposition 9, where a larger school could not be sustained and/or accommodated. There are many examples of successful 1 form entry primary schools, including many denominational schools. However, larger primary schools can spread the curriculum management workload and be more flexible in their inclusion class placements. Resources are also limited in the smaller primary schools, particularly when numbers fall below 200, and there are no opportunities to take advantage of economies of scale or bulk purchasing discounts. Many schools of this size have restricted sites and accommodation, which may make them unsuitable for wider community use or even to have a nursery class.
- 1.26 At 1½ forms of entry (315 places), schools are less constrained by some of the factors mentioned above, but this size range brings with it some potentially difficult organisational issues in managing an intake of 40-45 children. Often this results in vertical grouping of classes with mixed ages, which can present difficulties for the school and individual teachers. Alternatively, provision has to be made for an additional teacher, so that the intake can be divided into two small classes, although this is expensive in terms of staff deployment. Again, there are many examples of successful schools in this size range, but the potential difficulties are real.
- 1.27 While recognising that there are many successful 1 form entry – and 1½ form entry – schools and that such schools contribute to the diversity of provision sought by parents, and acknowledging the value placed by the C.E. Diocesan Board on this size of school in its Statement of Planning Principles (Appendix 13), it is considered that on balance there may be advantage in schools with an admission figure based on a multiple of 30 rather than 15 and in larger rather than smaller schools. It is proposed to adopt these principles as a long term planning basis, for implementation as opportunities arise and when circumstances are appropriate when extending or building new primary schools.

### **Class Size**

<p><b>Proposition 15</b>      <i>That a maximum class size of 30 is adopted for junior classes as well as infants.</i></p>
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- 1.28 Regulations made under the School Standards and Framework Act require both LEAs and governing bodies to ensure that, by September 2001, infant classes do not contain more than 30 pupils taught by a single teacher in an ordinary teaching session. Each LEA has a duty to prepare a statement setting out the arrangements to be adopted to secure the limit on class size. Southwark's Class Size Plan was approved by the Secretary of State in 1999.
- 1.29 The number of infant classes over 30 has declined from 23 in January 1998 (containing 735 pupils) to zero in May 2003. This process will continue to be closely monitored, both by the Council and the DfES to ensure there continues to be no infant classes with more than 30 pupils.
- 1.30 Although the legislation refers only to infant classes, it is clear that the variations to admissions numbers should – as the new admission age groups work their way through the school – bring junior classes into line with this new limit as well. While

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there can be no compulsion on governing bodies to restrict the size of the junior classes, it is considered that a maximum of 30 per class throughout primary schools should be adopted as a planning principle.

### 16-19 Provision

**Proposition 16** *That 16-19 provision in Southwark is offered to meet a rising staying-on rate on the basis of diversity within a coherent framework, agreed by the Learning and Skills Council after consultation with school and FE partners in Southwark's 14-19 Forum.*

- 1.31 The percentage of pupils in Southwark remaining in full time education beyond the statutory leaving age increased in stages from 50.3% in 1994 to 68.9% in 1999 before falling back slightly to 66.9% in 2000. It is the Council's aim that the staying-on rate should increase to 75% by 2004. However, progression at 16 in Southwark remains unsystematic. There is variation in the current 16+ provision for students from different Southwark establishments. Progression from the Roman Catholic schools has tended to be higher, with their link to St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Clapham. Some 2000 students aged 16 – 18 were studying at Southwark College in 2000/01 following a significant increase in enrolments at the College. Other colleges attended by Southwark students include those in Lambeth, Lewisham, Croydon and Westminster. The two C.E secondary schools have sixth forms and The Charter school will have a sixth form, open for pupils to transfer from other secondary schools at the age of 16. The two academies in Bermondsey and Peckham will have sixth forms. Three special schools cater for 16-19 year olds. Southwark's Adult Education and Vocational Training strategy also includes provision for 16-19 year olds not attending school or college, especially action that can be taken to reintegrate these young people into the system. Information on current provision for those aged 16+ is given in Appendix 10.
- 1.32 It is acknowledged that sixth forms often provide excellent provision for 16-19 year olds. However, it is apparent from national studies undertaken by the Audit Commission that sixth forms below 150 students are unlikely to be financially viable and more likely to require subsidy from the remainder of the school budget. The Government has decided to channel sixth form funding to LEAs from April 2002 via the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Sixth form planning and funding will be integrated with the rest of post-16 learning and decisions will now be taken by the London Central LSC after consultation in Southwark's 14-19 Forum with school and FE partners and in the context of overall resourcing for the FE sector. Southwark College has a post 16 centre at its Waterloo branch. Successful collaboration has also taken place between secondary schools and the college in relation to 14-16 courses. The new Government initiative London Challenge emphasises the benefits of the provision of new sixth forms.
- 1.33 Pupils at the age of 16 have many different needs and aspirations and it is appropriate that the provision made for them reflects that diversity. However, it is also important that the provision forms a comprehensive and coherent framework within which each student can make informed choices. The prospects for closer college/school co-operation in the context of the locally agreed 14-19 curriculum are being explored.



These objectives will also be pursued through the Council's participation in the new London Central Learning Forum.

### **Early Years Provision**

**Proposition 17** *That primary schools and other early years providers have a significant role in contributing to the Council's Early Years Development and Childcare Plan and that this be taken forward in conjunction with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.*

- 1.34 Children's Services – Education & Culture Directorate, which covers early years education and Southwark Children First (the local EYDCP) believe that high quality early education offered to children of 3 and 4 years, provides the foundation for a successful start into mainstream schools when children reach statutory school age.
- 1.35 Of the 72 Southwark Primary Schools, 55 (76%) have nursery classes. These provide places for 2560 children. Nursery classes provide for a mixture of three year old children and those four year olds not yet old enough for admission to reception classes. Children are normally admitted to LEA nursery school/classes at the beginning of the school year in which they reach four years of age. Children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September and 28 February normally start in reception classes at the beginning of September, and the remaining four year olds join reception the following January.
- 1.36 Southwark has met the government's target of a free part-time early years education place for every three and four year old and has provision for 96% of three and four year olds in the maintained, voluntary, private and independent sectors as shown in Appendix 15.

### Related Strategies and Priorities

- 1.37 There are six Council priorities, one of which is: "Raising standards in our schools". Southwark Children First's vision is "that all children and young people in Southwark, whatever their needs, are entitled to a good quality of life with their family and community, supported by the range and quality of services provided for them." In addition two of the outcomes the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board wishes to achieve for children are that "Children are ready for school" and that "Children succeed in school". These visions and outcomes for children are all key to the success of high quality early years education.
- 1.38 Clearly a significant proportion of parents choose nursery provision within a primary school in preference to other early years providers. Consultation with parents in Southwark has found that reasons include the place being free, the school being within walking distance, and a wish for continuity with children being able to build relationships which last from nursery to primary school. Securing a place in a primary school with a good reputation is also an important goal, although there is no guarantee that all children in a nursery class will get a place in the primary school.

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- 1.39 However primary schools do not meet the needs or wishes of all parents. Some may prefer a home-based care setting (e.g. childminder), particularly if their child has an additional need. Some may prefer a pre-school with opportunities for parental involvement, or a day nursery offering longer hours of care than most schools provide. In some circumstances, primary school nursery expansion may affect the viability of other kinds of local provision, reducing diversity and the potential for parental choice.
- 1.40 It is the view of the Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership that choice and diversity is fundamental to any expansion.

### Future Growth & Developments

- 1.41 Currently figures suggest that all 3 and 4 year olds who want an early years education place have access to provision – albeit it may not be in their most preferred location. However there is an anticipated rise in child population of 752 children aged 3 and 4 over the next three years, therefore it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall of places and plans for expansion should take account of this.
- 1.42 The local authority and Southwark Children First are charged with developing Children's Centres over the next three years. These centres are combined early year's childcare and education projects that link with family support, out reach work and health programmes. Within each centre Southwark Children First and the LEA have planned that either teachers will be involved in the delivery of the early years education element, or that an advisor would be linked closely with the centre to ensure the highest quality of education is delivered in these multi-agency centres. In the case of Southwark's five nursery schools it is planned that each school is either already modelled on a children's centre or will become a children's centre through the future funding available through government.

### Criteria for Expansion

- 1.43 When considering the expansion of future early years education, the LEA and Southwark Children First will use the following criteria:
- Provision is located in an area where there are low levels of nursery education places;
  - Provision has the support of local parents for expansion, and will not make a significant negative impact on other local quality providers;
  - Provision has a record of quality delivery of the Foundation Stage
  - Provision if school based is linked to other Council priority initiatives such as Extended Schools
  - Provision is in a priority neighbourhood or a regeneration area where capital funds can be drawn down to support expansion
  - Provision is part of the Children Centre Strategy
  - Provision will indicate that the majority of new places will be full time;
  - Provision is committed to developing childcare outside of school hours (extended day and holiday care);

### Nursery Education Planning Group

- 1.44 An internal NEG Planning Group meets termly to look at issues of expansion and planning. This group represents Southwark Children First, LEA Planning and Resourcing and the Early Years Service within the Council.

***Special Educational Needs and Inclusion***

***Proposition 18*** *That the principle of inclusion where appropriate in mainstream provision for pupils with special educational needs is followed.*

- 1.45 The LEA's policy and arrangements for the special needs education of children and young people in Southwark are set out in the document "Policy Statement for Special Educational Needs." The document set out the Council's central belief that all children have a right to realise their full potential and to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities they need to grow into independent adults. It proposes a set of principles to inform strategy and practice. The key objectives for SEN strategy are identified as:

- To raise the educational, social and personal achievement of children with special educational needs so that by 2005 progress for children in Southwark compares with other LEAS who are our statistical neighbours.
- To promote inclusive education for children with special educational needs so that by 2004 at least 60% of provision is provided within a mainstream setting.
- To promote effective partnership with parents/carers and children with SEN and to involve them fully in all decisions that are made about their educational provision.
- To ensure that Southwark LEA meets all its statutory duties with regard to special educational needs.
- To establish positive and constructive working relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies
- To ensure that children with special educational needs are identified and receive provision appropriate to their needs in a timely and effective manner.
- To develop the capacity of schools to make high quality provision for special educational needs.
- To establish a continuum of high quality non-statements and statemented provision for children with special educational needs.

- 1.46 The following are the main points that arise as far as school organisation is concerned:

- access to mainstream schools needs to be promoted, working to promote inclusion wherever possible.

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- increasing the number of resourced bases in mainstream schools.
  - maximising the role of special schools to support mainstream schools through training, advice and facilitating the inclusion policy.
  - ensuring a continuum of high quality provision reflecting the needs and preferences of children and their families
  - ensuring that the approved admission numbers at all special schools are in line with building capacity and the needs of the specialism provided.
  - responding to increasing needs in the areas of severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.
  - considering options for improving provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties, arising from unsatisfactory accommodation at Cherry Gardens school.
  - increasing access to appropriate local provision and thereby reduce the costs of transport and of out-borough provision.
- 1.47 Full implementation of the proposals – particularly the improvements required for Cherry Gardens – are reflected in the Council’s capital investment strategy. This issue is referred to in the section on Fitness for Purpose below.
- 1.48 The funding of special schools operates on the basis of the number of planned places and type of need rather than the number of pupils on roll. Each year the LEA reviews through a moderation process the actual placements against its view of the number and type of places that are planned for. Current special school rolls and capacities are included in Appendix 11.
- 1.49 A number of units are attached to mainstream schools and provide education for pupils with needs that include speech and language difficulties and sensory needs. Further units are being planned and developed under the SEN Policy.
- 1.50 New legislation requires the LEA to plan systematically to increase the accessibility of schools for disabled children. In Southwark there is already a history of planning for disability access, so that each area has within it a school or schools that can meet the needs of disabled young people. Planning for disabled access is reflected in the LEA’s capital programme. The Authority has recently published an Accessibility Strategy, which summarises strategic activity to date in terms of SEN and Inclusion Policy, the management of Schools Access Initiative (SAI) funds and the projects undertaken to improve access to educational opportunities for disabled pupils. The Strategy sets out the Authority’s proposals for the next three years including the continuation of plans already initiated and the development of new projects.
- 1.52 Increasingly the LEA is seeking to secure social inclusion of children and young people. Plans are set out in the LEA’s Behaviour Support Plan. The mainstay of Southwark’s direct provision for pupils excluded from school is through its three Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). The provision offered by the PRUs is identified in Appendix 12.
- 1.53 The LEA is committed to reducing the numbers of children permanently excluded from schools and its targets represent a reduction over the next 3 years. All secondary schools have individual annual targets that are monitored and reviewed. This planned

reduction in the number of permanent exclusions will play a significant part in the strategy for securing full-time education for all excluded pupils.

- 1.54 Parents have the right to educate their children other than by attendance at school and the LEA has published guidance and advice in this area.

### ***Wider Community Needs***

***Proposition 19*** *That schools including specialist schools constitute a local community resource and their potential for meeting a wide range of local needs should be developed. This will be progressed where possible through joint projects in support of the borough's strategies for regeneration, social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal.*

- 1.55 Because of their local nature and the way they involve a significant number of the people living in the area they serve, schools can often become the focus for a community. This is particularly so for primary schools: even in an inner city setting, strong echoes of the 'village school' can be found. Many schools in Southwark have a long history of service to local people and the newer schools have generally been provided in areas where redevelopment has created new communities, which need a social infrastructure as well as appropriate educational facilities. An increasing number of schools have well-developed home-school liaison arrangements, which have been shown to have both educational and social benefits.
- 1.56 Additionally, parents who are working or actively seeking employment need access to good quality childcare outside the normal school day and in holiday periods. Primary schools are well situated to provide such care in a setting familiar to the children and convenient to parents where it can easily be integrated with homework clubs and other after-school educational, computing and sporting activities. Funding from the Lottery New Opportunities Fund is being made available to support such developments.
- 1.57 All of these potential developments are likely to be reinforced by the continuing growth of partnership initiatives. In Southwark there have been major regeneration initiatives in Peckham, and there are proposals for Bermondsey Spa, Canada Water, Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury Estate. Such initiatives will change both the quantity and the quality of housing across the borough, developing new neighbourhoods and supporting improved school and community facilities. An Education Action Zone is established in the northern part of the borough. All of these initiatives have in common a view that education is a key component in social and economic regeneration. They all offer the potential or opportunity to consider how schools can develop a broader or more "holistic" role working with other agencies to meet a range of educational, vocational, health and social needs in tackling issues of social exclusion. The SureStart programme focuses on supporting families with children under 5 on the Aylesbury Estate and five smaller surrounding estates which make up most of Faraday ward, and also the Brunswick ward. SureStart will help to raise achievement, improve readiness for school and contribute to improvements in the local economy through a programme of play, learning and children's services. Primary and secondary schools may also be able to gain Lottery Sports or Arts funding for school and community facilities.



## Appendix 1

- 1.58 It will be important to ensure that wherever redevelopment and regeneration takes place in the borough, consideration is given to the opportunities this can provide for improved and/or different educational provision, even where there will not be population growth which would require additional places. Schools could be incorporated in, or linked to, other appropriate community facilities, which make possible some mutually beneficial sharing of accommodation and would enhance perceptions of the school as a community resource. Education is at the heart of regeneration strategies, as the key to employment and future economic growth, and the related educational provision should reflect this level of priority.
- 1.59 To support developments of the kind outlined above would involve a significant shift in providers. There would need to be substantial changes in the amount and design of accommodation, to provide for dual use for care and education in some cases, and for accommodation and furniture suitable for adult use in others. Security aspects would need to be carefully considered. Where major redevelopment is occurring, there could be opportunities to rebuild schools which are unsuitable for adaptation, and to integrate them with other 'core' community facilities such as health centres, doctors' surgeries or libraries. This would constitute an exciting challenge for the rôle of the school in the 21st Century.

### ***Fitness for Purpose***

**Proposition 20** *That the Council's Asset Management Plan supports the policies and principles contained in the School Organisation Plan.*

**Proposition 21** *That the need to make Southwark schools fit for purpose is central to delivery of the School Organisation Plan.*

- 1.60 Under the School Standards and Framework Act, LEAs are required to establish an Asset Management Plan in consultation with schools. This involves a review of their buildings against the three criteria of:
- **Condition.** This is to ensure that schools are well maintained and in good repair.
  - **Sufficiency.** Sufficiency focuses on the physical capacity of schools, and on the quantity and organisation of pupil places within and across schools in relation to demand. The sufficiency of places against current and projected demand will be reviewed each year as part of the School Organisation Plan.
  - **Suitability.** Having ensured that there is sufficient accommodation to meet demand and that it is maintained in a satisfactory condition, this third criterion addresses the question as to whether the premises meet the needs of the pupils, are attractive to parents, encourage the recruitment and retention of staff and help raise standards of achievement. In short, it aims to make schools fit for purpose.
- 1.61 Investment of over £45 million has been made in education buildings over the last five years. Approximately half of that investment has been on planned maintenance projects (i.e. repairing the fabric of school buildings under the Department's planned maintenance strategy) and the remainder on providing additional schools places or on curriculum and health and safety related work. As a result of this investment, there is no substantial backlog of essential maintenance work.
- 1.62 It is the third area of the Asset Management Plan – suitability – that now needs the same level of attention that has been given in the past to the themes of condition and

sufficiency. Although much has been done from limited resources, (particularly in secondary schools), there is much more that needs to be done across both phases. There is a continuing need to improve and replace the building stock. Many of these buildings have served Southwark children well over the past 100 years or more. They have shown themselves capable of adaptation to meet changing needs and should not be automatically thought of as needing immediate replacement. Indeed, many are still functioning well: better, in some cases, than more recent provision. But the effectiveness of all the buildings needs to be reviewed, using new guidance to be issued by the DfES on suitability for purpose. Opportunities must be taken to resolve long-standing accommodation or organisational problems.

1.63 There are very real and pressing needs for major investment in primary and secondary schools, particularly if the propositions around potential enlargement of schools, early years and SEN inclusion and community usage contained in this Plan are to be implemented. Implementation of an ambitious programme to address these issues will require:

- identification of priorities. This is being done through the Asset Management Plan and in accordance with the LEA Capital Strategy.
- securing the necessary resources. This involves maximising opportunities arising from Government sources, particularly London Challenge (with its focus on academies) and Building Schools for the Future (with its emphasis on the total transformation of secondary schools in the borough, with new and upgraded secondary schools), from regeneration initiatives, from disposal of surplus properties, and from the Councils' own corporate capital programme.