

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday October 12 2009 - 7.00 pm

East Dulwich Community Centre, 46-64 Darrell Road, East Dulwich, London
SE22 9NL

Membership

Councillor Fiona Colley (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Toby Eckersley
Councillor John Friary
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Adedokun Lasaki
Councillor Richard Thomas
Councillor Veronica Ward
Councillor Lorraine Zuleta

Reserves

Councillor James Barber
Councillor Denise Capstick
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle
Councillor David Hubber
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Chris Page
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Bob Skelly
Councillor Nick Vineall

Education representatives

Reverend Nicholas Elder, Church of England Diocese
Colin Elliott, Parent Governor
Jane Hole, Parent Governor

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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Contact

Peter Roberts on 020 7525 4350 or email: peter.roberts@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Annie Shepperd

Chief Executive

Date: Friday October 2 2009



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday October 12 2009

7.00 pm

East Dulwich Community Centre, 46-64 Darrell Road, East Dulwich, London SE22
9NL

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
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PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR
DEEMS URGENT**

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.

3. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

Members to declare any personal interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

4. **MINUTES**

1 - 11

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on September 14 2009.

5. **PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN DULWICH AND EAST DULWICH**

12 - 19

**DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE
START OF THE MEETING.**

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

**DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE
START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS
URGENT.**

Date: Friday October 2 2009



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday September 14 2009 at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Fiona Colley (Chair)
 Councillor Jane Salmon
 Councillor Toby Eckersley
 Councillor John Friary
 Councillor Barrie Hargrove
 Councillor David Hubber
 Councillor Adedokun Lasaki
 Councillor Veronica Ward
 Councillor Lorraine Zuleta

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Tim McNally, Executive Member for Resources

OFFICER SUPPORT: Simon Chambers, Performance Officer
 Doreen Forrester-Brown, Legal Services
 Stephen Gaskell, Head of Corporate Planning and Performance
 Robin Rogers, Locality Programme Manager
 Duncan Whitfield, Finance Director
 Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Thomas and Mr Colin Elliott, Education Representative.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

- 2.1 The chair reported that it was necessary for the committee to reconsider a scrutiny review of the Downtown planning decision and that the legal representative would provide a verbal update at the end of the meeting.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were none at this point in the meeting.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the open sections of the meetings held on July 13 and 27 2009 be agreed as a correct record.

5. EXECUTIVE MEMBER INTERVIEW - COUNCILLOR NICK STANTON, LEADER

5.1 *Please would the Leader give us an update on the council's response to the fire at Lakanal House? (Question 1)*

5.2 The Leader reported on the assistance offered to displaced residents. One hundred and fifty-seven offers of accommodation had been made out of which fifty-seven had been accepted. The Leader stated that over eight hundred counselling sessions had been taken up and confirmed that counselling had been offered within a week or so of the fire. He also reported on work being undertaken on blocks of similar design to Lakanal House - including high degrees of fire safety work – and that the investigation into the causes and spread of the fire remained ongoing. The Leader underlined the need for the council to take a view on fire and safety issues across its whole housing stock, perhaps to consider the viability of fire practices in blocks. He stressed the extent of the issue in view of the size of the council's housing stock and that, despite significant investment, the general condition of estates was still not where the council would wish it to be.

5.3 In response to questions from members, the Leader explained the difficulties some residents had experienced in signing on without having access to the relevant documents. He could not give a reason for the London Fire Brigade's decision to serve enforcement notices on the council, particularly as the council was happy to do any necessary works. In terms of insurance the Leader explained that there was an ongoing claim and, because this was in the hands of lawyers, this could not be discussed at present. However he confirmed that any costs that could not be recovered from insurance would have to be found from within the Housing Revenue Account and not the General Fund.

5.4 Some members were concerned that the council's emergency response had not met best practice and asked whether staff had received training in advance of the fire. The Leader indicated that a number of simulation exercises had been carried out and that most people affected by the fire had commented positively on officers' reactions on the first weekend, including the reactions of community wardens. The use of the Cator Street office had helped in meeting the demands of displaced residents. The Leader commented on the impact of the bureaucratic process necessary following the decision to decant Lakanal in order to begin making accommodation offers.

5.5 Members asked the Leader whether he was confident that the council was on top of general fire risk assessments. The Leader confirmed that a programme was in

place but that assessments only covered communal areas and not individual flats. Members wondered whether it would be possible to include more rigorous fire assessments as part of the decent homes works. The Leader commented that some of this work already included alarms, re-wiring and the fitting of fire safety doors. In conclusion he emphasised that it was still not clear what went wrong in the flat in which the fire originated and why the fire in Lakanal House had spread so quickly, whether it reflected the design, structure or construction of the block. The London Fire Brigade had yet to draw its conclusions.

- 5.6 *Please would the Leader provide us with an update on the progress of the Integrated Waste Management Centre? When will the Centre open?* (Question 2)
- 5.7 *Has the Leader any plans to improve Southwark's recycling & composting rate currently tenth worst in the country, other than to wait until the Integrated Waste Centre finally becomes operational?* (Question 3)
- 5.8 *In a 2008 Communities and Local Government "Place Survey" Southwark fared badly in public satisfaction with recycling. What changes does the Leader intend to make to improve the Southwark public's satisfaction with: [a] doorstep recycling (Southwark 66.3%, London 68.6%) and, [b] local tips/recycling centres (Southwark 54.6%, London 62.3%)?* (Question 4)
- 5.9 The Leader reported that the Planning Committee had given permission for the waste management centre which he expected to be operational in 2011. In terms of satisfaction rates he referred to the Mori Survey which suggested an 84% satisfaction rating, as opposed to the Place Survey, but at the same time stressed the importance of the Old Kent Road centre. While Southwark was tenth worst in respect of recycling and composting it was only forty-ninth worst if composting was removed from the figures. The Leader hoped for an improvement in recycling rates from 20% to 30% by the end of the year. This depended on increased participation which the council would have to facilitate, including looking at storage facilities on all housing estates.
- 5.10 A member suggested that, if the movement of private vehicles became a problem around the new waste site, then perhaps the council could consider a resident permit scheme as used in other boroughs.
- 5.11 Members asked when clear bag recycling schemes would be introduced on private estates. The Leader responded that this was being trialled in parts of Chaucer and Cathedrals Wards but that problems were sometimes encountered with managing agents. Members advocated that appropriate action be taken against managing agents who would not participate in separated out recycling.
- 5.12 *How will the council's plans for appointing five major works contract packages impact on leaseholders?* (Question 5)
- 5.13 The Leader was not able to respond as the procurement process was not complete. The aim was a better and more efficient procurement. In response to concerns raised by members he indicated that he would look into special dispensation required as a result of any inability to follow full section twenty rules.

- 5.14 *What is the Leader's current take on the chances of the Elephant & Castle development agreement with LendLease being signed by the end of the year?* (Question 6)
- 5.15 *How many tenants and leaseholders are still living on the Heygate Estate?* (Question 7)
- 5.16 *What consultation is the council conducting regarding plans to build on Nursery Row Park?* (Question 8)
- 5.17 The Leader expressed cautious optimism that a development agreement would be signed with LendLease by the end of the year. The council and LendLease were engaged in financial modelling of the project. He reported that one hundred and thirty tenants remained on the estate, most of whom had received an offer. Thirty-two leaseholders remained, some of whom had offers and others of whom were surrendering their leasehold and bidding for council tenancies. Lastly the Leader confirmed that there were no plans to build on Nursery Row Park. The outstanding question regarded provision of the church hall. One option was replacement of the building on the park but this was least desirable and there were the options of use of other buildings. Some members were disappointed that no definite answer had been reached on this matter.
- 5.18 Members asked whether tenants and residents were satisfied with the security on the Heygate Estate. The Leader replied that, while statistics were very good around safety and crime on the estate, the aim was to decant everyone from the estate as quickly as possible. He added that valuable lessons had been learned in the past about the management of people and properties in such situations and that there were no squatters on the estate.
- 5.19 A member asked whether there were any plans to preserve the grove of trees at the north-east corner of the estate, at the corner of Heygate Street and the Walworth Road. The Leader indicated that no detailed discussion had taken place on this issue and that he was happy to take it up as a concern.
- 5.20 *How does the council's communications spend break down between recruitment and non-recruitment related expenditure?* (Question 9)
- 5.21 The Leader stated that this information was available on the council's website – spend on recruitment amounted to £800K of a total £3.2m communications budget. This was a saving of £600K on the previous year.
- 5.22 *Does performance data belong to the Executive or the Council as a whole?* (Question 10)
- 5.23 The Leader confirmed that performance data belonged to the council as a whole with the executive responsible for the context of the data.
- 5.24 *When will the council appoint a permanent Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods? Does the Leader intend to recruit a new Director of Major Projects or will the projects be permanently reallocated to other departments?* (Question 11)

- 5.25 The Leader indicated that any decision was partly dependent on what happened in respect of negotiations with LendLease about the Elephant & Castle. The result of the negotiations might call for different skill sets from any permanent post-holder. He also drew attention to the fact that a previous advertisement process had proved unsuccessful. Members of the committee were concerned at the relative cost of employing interim directors rather than making a permanent appointment. The Leader agreed to look into the annual cost of interim directors, as opposed to permanent, and report back to members.
- 5.26 *What is the Leader's view on public safety in Burgess Park? (Question 12)*
- 5.27 *Do you feel it is appropriate that South Council erect enormous billboards around Burgess Park stating that Southwark is investing in Burgess Park, when the lions-share of the money for the refurbishment came from (a) The Aylesbury New Deal for Communities, and (b) the Mayor for London? (Question 13)*
- 5.28 The Leader took the view that one of the biggest problems was the amount of people using the park and that a greater volume of users would make the park safer. Improving lighting in the park would also have an impact. He also stressed that the fear of crime was greater than the risk of being a victim of crime within the park. In terms of the billboards the Leader stated that the council had bid and lobbied for the funding and that due recognition was given to the sources of the funds.
- 5.29 Members asked the Leader if he would advise cyclists to go through the park at dusk. The Leader repeated that often there were very few people in the park but that there was a relatively low risk of crime. On the other hand, women or the elderly might not feel as confident as he did in crossing the park at certain times of the day. Some members of the committee drew attention to statistics about the level of robberies in the park last year, the extent of attacks on cyclists and three shootings reported by a local newspaper. Members were concerned that the council was not responding adequately or addressing the problems.
- 5.30 The Leader stressed that no-one at the council was complacent. Members and officers were devoting a lot of time, energy and resources to Burgess Park and the Leader was happy to look into a suggestion from members that wardens be given a more visible presence in the park. He explained that most of the current funding would ensure the proper landscaping of the park with the hope that this would attract new activities into the park.
- 5.31 *Has the Leader noticed that the "To let" signs on the former toilet site on Peckham Rye Common have been removed? Does he think that a shop was ever an appropriate purpose for that particular site? (Question 14)*
- 5.32 The Leader informed the committee that discussions were still taking place with a party wishing to rent the building for use as a shop – subject to planning permission. He was of the view that it would be good to bring the building back into use. The chair reported that complaints had been made by the Friends of Peckham Rye and other community groups about the commercial use of a property on common land. The Leader responded that he was checking into this issue and

stressed that objections could be raised as part of the planning process.

- 5.33 *Does the Leader think the Council could do more to urge Boris Johnson to take up the Government's offer of £7m towards the building of a new station at Surrey Canal Road? (Question 15)*
- 5.34 The Leader stated that nothing more could be done to urge Boris Johnson and that he felt that it was important to prioritise issues raised with the mayor, for instance to prioritise the Cross River Tram against a new station at Surrey Canal Road. Some members stressed that a new station would be well-used and that it was important to find a way to take up the government's offer of £7m funding. The Leader was of the view that TfL was advising the mayor against the station and that pressure could more usefully be brought to bear on other projects in Southwark which could make use of the government's funding.
- 5.35 *During the Leader's time as Chair of the Cross River Partnership, what significant contributions did he make towards bringing the Tram to Southwark? Are there any examples of where he worked constructively with the former Mayor of London on behalf of the people of Southwark? (Question 16)*
- 5.36 The Leader reported that he had pursued the Cross River Tram very aggressively but had been unsuccessful in securing funding. Members asked whether he had an understanding of the mayor's plans for transport in Southwark. The Leader was of the view that TfL had a clear plan until 2017 which focused on Cross-rail and upgrades to the tube system. New bids for funding might be possible after this date. The Leader hoped that the option of a tram was still open and that it would be possible to make an argument for this based on the increasing numbers of people who would need transport between north and central London and south London.

6. END OF YEAR BUSINESS REPORT

- 6.1 The chair expressed concern about the timeliness of the report under consideration and the lack of availability of performance data over the past year and a half. She underlined that the Corporate Assessment had raised issues around overview and scrutiny being able to take account of performance data during its work programming process and asked why the data had taken six months to be made available. Officers explained that the data had been subject to further audit and requirements to ensure its robustness. In consequence the report had been deferred from the summer. In addition, the national indicators had been subject to change in 2008/09. The Leader shared concerns that the data looked as if it was six months out of date and agreed that it would have been useful to have received the report before the council recess. At the same time he stressed that this did not reflect any unwillingness to produce the performance data.
- 6.2 The chair also expressed concern that no past data was provided which made it difficult to judge whether performance was improving or getting worse. Officers explained that this was unique to the current financial year. The desire to reduce the number of indicators and the changes made resulted in a break in comparative

information. Some indicators were no longer being measured. Members remained concerned that the final tables of national indicators were not complete and suggested that it would have been useful to continue measuring previous indicators, in order to allow some continuity of monitoring.

- 6.3 In response to further questions, officers confirmed that comparative data from other boroughs would be included in the report in December. The chair emphasised that the Corporate Assessment had flagged up the importance of considering value for money and that comparisons with the spend of other boroughs was essential. Officers commented that one of the national indicators reflected value for money but that it was important to look in detail at comparative spend by other boroughs to determine how meaningful this was. The committee asked that the current figures be retained in the December report for purposes of comparison and that some comparison with other boroughs be attempted.

- 6.3 The committee considered the draft end of year business report 2008/09:

Places where people love to live

- 6.4 In response to questions, officers clarified the targets for number of affordable homes to be delivered. Members asked when work was likely to begin on the Wooddene. The Leader hoped that a report on negotiations with developers would be presented to the executive in the autumn.

- 6.5 Members highlighted the first sentence of paragraph 16 and were concerned that this appeared to rule out tenants and resident management organisations (TRMOs). The Leader suggested the addition of the words, "where it is the wish of tenants". In response to questions the Leader also clarified that the exclusivity agreement with LendLease referred to at paragraph 20 was a new agreement even though broadly along the same lines of the original one. He also explained that plans for regeneration of Camberwell, referred to in the same paragraph, included the leisure centre and two refurbished secondary schools.

Everyone achieving their potential

- 6.6 The chair asked officers to confirm the meaning of the target for national indicator 062, Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement. Members commented that, generally, it would be useful to provide readers with simple explanations of each indicator.
- 6.7 The chair was of the view that none of the statistics threw any light on the adequacy of primary school provision in the North Dulwich area. The Leader stated that a report on this issue would be presented to the executive in November.
- 6.8 Members highlighted national indicators 108ie and 108iid in respect of key stage 4 level 4+ English and maths, any other white background and any other mixed background. Officers agreed to provide clarification of which children this applied to, the level of targets set and why these were not met and any planned action.

Promoting healthy and independent living

- 6.9 Members queried whether paragraph 60 did not sufficiently reflect the level of concern at the rate of teenage conceptions. The Leader emphasised that this was an issue across south east London and affected Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. Despite the input of a lot of time, effort and money, none of the boroughs had made an impact on the conception rate. The Leader drew attention to statistics which indicated that the majority of girls becoming pregnant were over the age of sixteen. He and other members were unclear what this might imply about whether the girls involved were making informed choices and about the attitudes amongst the girls and their families. The Leader commented that other issues needed to be equally prioritised, for instance the dangers of clinical obesity. Other members took the view that the high proportion of pregnancies being terminated suggested that the pregnancies were not planned and that consequently the rate of teenage pregnancies remained a concern for the council. The committee asked that the word "some" be deleted from the first sentence of paragraph 60.

Valuing the environment

- 6.10 In response to questions, officers agreed to clarify the comments in respect of national indicator 196, Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping (DEFRA rating: "Not effective"). Officers also agreed to provide further information as to how figures for air quality were being provided and monitored in the borough.

Tackling the crimes which concern people the most

- 6.11 Members asked that paragraph 86 make reference to cross-borough work.

Transforming public services

- 6.12 In response to questions, officers agreed to confirm the figures relating to the value for money target of £15.5m and the actual of £11.5m. Some members of the committee remained concerned that savings expected from the move of council offices to Tooley Street would not be achieved.

7. THREE TOWN HALLS AND RESIDUAL ESTATE ASSET STRATEGY AND LOCALITIES PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 7.1 Councillor Tim McNally introduced the report. He commented that the move of officers to the administrative headquarters at Tooley Street had been large and complex. The finance director stated that the aim was to improve service delivery and efficiency. At the same time it freed up buildings and led to a number of options. Councillor McNally explained that financial modelling was necessary to inform decisions about use of buildings and any property disposals. The finance director emphasised the complexity of the localities programme which presented many possible financing options, in contrast to the Tooley Street which involved a single building and a single set of costs to be recovered.
- 7.2 The committee went into closed session in order for Councillor McNally to give details of completed disposals and offers currently being negotiated. He confirmed that the register office was no longer to be sold as the value of a sale would only

be a fraction of the cost of re-locating the facility. He clarified that the council was seeking not to affect Lucas Gardens in any sale of South House. Councillor McNally also explained that plans were in discussion to expand the library at the Walworth Town Hall site. Subject to affordability these included bringing the upstairs reference library back into use.

- 7.3 In response to questions, Councillor McNally informed the committee that plans for Walworth and Peckham Town Halls to be respectively the civic and ceremonial centres were still ongoing. There was no timescale as possible plans had to be reviewed against available budgets. Public meetings would continue to be held at Peckham Town Hall but some meetings, where appropriate, would be held at Tooley Street. Councillor McNally stated that there were no plans to sell off Peckham Town Hall after May 2010.
- 7.4 Members asked whether disposals were on track to meet the council's initial targets. Councillor McNally reported that the move to Tooley Street had been brought in under budget and that, in the first phase, the receipt from disposals was ahead of the business case and targets. The finance director added that the council had been very prudent in terms of its original estimates. He also commented that a different type of buyer was being attracted, often with a greater community interface.
- 7.5 Members of the committee highlighted the aim of introducing a local office into each community council area. In some wards no public building was in existence and members asked whether it might be necessary for the council to acquire premises. Councillor McNally indicated that this would have to be considered alongside other options in order to achieve local service delivery offices across the borough.

8. FINAL SCRUTINY REPORTS

Burgess Park – Scrutiny Sub-Committee A

- 8.1 Councillor John Friary introduced the report. In response to questions he clarified the sub-committee's thinking in respect of the park warden/ranger service.

RESOLVED: That the scrutiny review be agreed and submitted to the executive for consideration.

Southwark's Enterprise and Employment Strategy – Scrutiny Sub-Committee A

- 8.2 Councillor John Friary introduced the report.

RESOLVED: That the scrutiny review be agreed and submitted to the executive for consideration.

Bus Services in Southwark – Scrutiny Sub-Committee B

- 8.3 Councillor David Hubber introduced the report. Councillor Fiona Colley declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as a result of working for Val Shawcross,

deputy chair of the GLA Transport Committee and Labour Spokesperson for Transport. The committee also noted that several members had given evidence to the scrutiny review.

- 8.4 Members of the committee were concerned that recommendation 6.2 should include commitment to both extension of the Bakerloo Line and the provision of additional bus services (rather than “and/or”). Members also suggested that reference to Nunhead be included in recommendation 6.3.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the inclusion of issues raised at 8.4 above, the scrutiny review be agreed and submitted to the executive for consideration.

Population and Migration – Reviewing Preparations for the 2011 Census – Scrutiny Sub-Committee C

- 8.5 Councillor Toby Eckersley introduced the report and drew attention to typographical errors at paragraphs 3.2 and 3.5. Members of the committee suggested that the consideration of appropriate publicity and awareness raising be included at paragraph 5 of the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the inclusion of issues raised at 8.5 above, the scrutiny review be agreed and submitted to the executive for consideration.

Southwark’s Safer Schools Partnership Review – Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 8.6 Councillor Barrie Hargrove introduced the report. It was noted that the issue of bullying had not been raised within the report but that this had been the subject of an earlier scrutiny review. The committee suggested that the issue of action taken in response to the earlier review be raised by the sub-committee with the Leader at his executive interview.

RESOLVED: That the scrutiny review be agreed and submitted to the executive for consideration.

9. DOWNTOWN SCRUTINY REVIEW

- 9.1 Councillors Toby Eckersley and John Friary declared an interest as members of the planning committee which had considered the Downtown planning application and took no part in the subsequent discussion. The legal representative briefed the committee and it was agreed that the scrutiny review be deferred until after the upcoming planning decision and the exhaustion of any review period.
- 9.2 The chair proposed that the committee use its October meeting to respond to local concern about admissions to primary schools and the provision of places in Dulwich and East Dulwich.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the closed section of the meeting held on July 27 2009 be agreed as a correct record.

The meeting ended at 10.35 pm

Item No.: 5	Classification: OPEN	12 October 2009
To	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Report title	Review of primary places in East Dulwich	
Ward(s) or groups affected	East Dulwich, Village, College, South Camberwell, The Lane, Nunhead	
From	Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Scrutiny Committee notes the issues around reception places in the wider East Dulwich area and the actions underway to address the need of the growing population of the wider East Dulwich area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1 An increased and unexpected pressure on reception class places has been felt right across London and elsewhere in England. Significant numbers of places are being added in existing schools as a result. Lambeth and Lewisham have each added 5 forms of entry and other authorities such as Kingston and Richmond filled all available places and are adding more. One form of entry (FE) is equivalent to 30 places. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) invited bids for £200m of new capital funds to provide additional places in areas of need.
- 2 In Southwark the 2009 primary admissions round was characterised by an unprecedented degree of concern about reception class places from residents in the East Dulwich area. This problem had not been anticipated on the basis of projections available at the time. After the first round of applications a very small number of concerns emerged and these were mostly addressed in the final round of allocation. However, a very large number of late applications were received for this area and gave rise to the need to add places at short notice. The Council responded by adding half a class at Lyndhurst and a class at Goodrich Primary Schools to meet this additional demand.
- 3 The area of focus has been taken to be the SE22 postcode which covers three primary planning areas, Dulwich, Camberwell and Nunhead/Peckham Rye. In strategic terms it is necessary to consider a wider area which is bounded by Herne Hill, Denmark Hill, Peckham Road and the borough boundary to the south and east. This would include most of the schools which may be considered as alternatives for people living in the area where pressure has been most acute.
- 4 Primary School projections are provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA) on an agency basis using school rolls supplied by the participating authorities. These forecasts are used by the Council to determine the need for places in each planning area, and were revised in the light of this additional demand.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5 Actions taken by the Council

The very high number of late applications meant that there was a risk that some of those applicants would not be able to be offered a place within 2 miles of the application address, the Council's aim, although the intention is to offer all a place within reasonable walking or public transport distance. The very high demand for places in and around East Dulwich suggested further places might be required. Two schools in the area were identified with scope to take additional places at short notice – Lyndhurst, where 0.5FE, (up to 15 places) was proposed and Goodrich (1FE, up to 30). 1FE was also added at Crampton in the north of the borough to address a specific local issue. Both Crampton and Goodrich are for one year only, whereas Lyndhurst is being considered for permanent enlargement from 1.5 to 2FE.

These places were opened after consultation with headteachers and chairs of governors, and commitments were given about the funding of the necessary capital works as well as additional revenue costs.

As of 1st October, across the borough, a little over 100 children have not arrived at the school of their allocation, including around 24 in the area covered by this report. This group, known as 'Children Missing Education' or CME form an important risk group. Most will be elsewhere in the education system – in other boroughs or in places in independent schools – and a dedicated team are tracking their whereabouts with the help of headteachers. The actual situation will only become clear when the January starters appear. ,

6 Appeals

As of 21st September, 2009, around 120 appeals have been logged. Of these, eight have so far been successful. Typically, appeals were based on applicants not receiving the school of their choice as they felt they lived within a 'notional catchment area'.

This would not of itself be grounds for appeal. Fixed catchment areas were abolished in the 1980s when open enrolment was introduced giving parents the right to apply to the school of their choice. With priority now given to applicants living nearest, (excluding sibling and other priority categories) this 'notional catchment area' varies from year to year depending on demand.

7 Admission Processes

A review of the admissions process, including benchmarking against neighbouring Councils revealed the admissions team to be around half the size of the equivalent team in Lewisham, for example. Steps have been taken to increase this size of the section in order to ensure parents are better informed about their options prior to completing their application forms, and that better quality information is provided to parents on receipt of their allocation so as to improve the number of on time applications and reduce appeals. It was noted that whereas in Lambeth 45% of admissions forms are completed on-line, in Southwark it is only 20%. A small scale pilot is being undertaken in order to get that percentage up with the ambition within two years to have the vast majority of applications completed on-line.

8 Primary School Projections – 2009 onwards

The initial GLA school roll projections were received in April 2009. Given the concern about sharp rises in reception numbers across London, further work was done leading to a reissue in May 2009. These have yet to be formally adopted by Southwark Council and will form the basis of a paper to November's Executive meeting.

The increase in demand for primary school places is seen to be as a result of the rapidly rising birth rate. But other factors in London are also contributing to the increase in demand for places. These include -

- the sluggish property market has meant fewer families are moving to areas outside the capital;
- the changing nature of the housing market has resulted in an increase in children living in 1 and 2 bedroom properties, thereby increasing the overall number of young children in many areas;
- increases in cross borough applications for primary places from neighbouring authorities with capacity issues;
- parental recognition of improving local schools; and,
- the economic downturn, which appears to have increased demand for state school places compared to the independent sector.

As a check on the GLA model, a second set of projections is available. These projections underpinned the Southwark Schools for the Future programme. ('SSF primary projections') and were used to support decisions within the primary capital programme.

Both sets of projections are initially based on the previous years' rolls. Both project down to the 8 primary planning areas, but not at individual school level. The planning areas are coterminous with the community areas.

9 GLA Primary projections

The GLA projections combine a number of factors to produce a forecast of demand for school places including:

- school rolls;
- births and deaths;
- the migration of London's population; and ,
- additional population as a result of changes to housing.

To forecast the numbers coming into the system, the reception projections are based on the GLA population projections for 4 year olds, which start from the birth data provided by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

10 Accuracy

Historically, GLA projections have been considered sufficiently accurate for planning purposes in the past. Because there are so many variables, a number of different projections are produced before a forecast can be made.

The projection model was contained in the submission to the DCSF as the basis of the Primary Capital Programme, originally approved by Council in May 2008 and finally agreed with the DCSF in May of this year. In that paper, the GLA combined projections forecast that capacity would be reached in 2014 although other projections showed that capacity might be sufficient to 2018..However, at that stage there was thought to have been sufficient capacity in the short term.

11 Policy Implications

That there is an increase in numbers of young children requiring a maintained school place in the wider East Dulwich area is clear. However, the pattern of that growth is important.

The most recent roll projections reflect the changes in patterns of property occupation in the area. This may be characterised by large Victorian villas being converted back from flats into family houses and with the families occupying those houses electing to stay in the area and raise their children, an aim of this Council. There is very little new family housing being built.

Accordingly, the projections show a very small increase in demand in the Dulwich area, but between three and four forms of entry required in the wider area south of Peckham Road. The same projections show this demands peaks in 2015 before declining to about one form above the current capacity. This would suggest that additional places are required locally but mostly to accommodate a population bulge, with only a small permanent increase in numbers. Local Authorities historically manage such a bulge by opening additional classes in existing schools, mopping-up the present surplus capacity in a few but also utilising the additional space available in others. This approach is recommended now, for the reasons set out below.

12 Benefits of making increases to existing schools

The benefits of managing this growth through introducing so-called 'bulge years' into schools are:

- The Council can be more flexible in the way in which it responds from year to year to parental demand ;
- Popular schools can be expanded;
- Surplus capacity can be reduced from the system providing good value for money for residents;

- Once the population bulge passes through and the numbers of reception aged children stabilises, there is a reduced risk that schools might have to be closed or suffer budget difficulties; and,
- Schools benefit from increased budgets and are helped to carry out improvements with investment in the fabric and buildings.

In the past, local authorities had more freedom to manage admissions from year to year but this has been reduced in recent years with fixed admission numbers. It enabled them to be more responsive to local demand without making commitments to permanent increases in capacity which may have led to surplus places in time.

However, many schools have been using spare capacity to provide additional space, for example for a specialised art room or drama space, or as meeting rooms,. There is also the risk that temporary accommodation might remain on the sites for many years, taking up playspace and becoming a potential drain on resources. However, the use of temporary classrooms would be avoided wherever possible in preference to permanent improvements which revert to normal uses after the peak is past.

13 Community Impact Statement

The stated aim of the Council is to ensure all parents have a choice of good schools. Southwark schools have never been more successful and are increasing in popularity. The unvalidated Key Stage 2 results for summer 2009 based on the percentage of pupils achieving the new benchmark of a level 4 in both English and maths places Southwark above the national average, not only ahead of all similar inner London Authorities, but also the shire counties of Kent and East Sussex. Around two-thirds of primary schools have been recognised by Ofsted as being good or outstanding, with this number approximately doubling over the last two years.

The Council believes that good maintained schools, serving all the residents of a particular area, are vital to building community cohesion and securing sustainable communities.

14 Resource Implications

Funding for school places comes primarily from government funding known as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Each school has a delegated budget driven by the number of pupils on roll, with additional allowances for special needs or other site specific factors which pays for staff salaries, equipment, ,school meals, energy etc,. Schools also receive devolved capital to enable them to carry out repairs and improvements, which can be used as match funding for larger projects.

For each school accepting a bulge class, additional short term revenue costs have been agreed in consultation with Schools Forum. In the next year, the increased roll drives a higher budget share.

The Council has met the capital costs of the extra classes from its existing primary programme. Local Authorities also receive most of the funding for capital expenditure through grant from central government. The DCSF made

available some £200m in a special bid round in summer 2009 in response to this unexpected pressure for places, and the Council submitted an application. However, the bar was set very high, and many authorities where the need to add places was very clear did not appear to qualify. As a result of pressure from these authorities, many of whom felt that they had a strong case, the original bid round was withdrawn and a revised process is awaited.

15 A New School

A new school would be very costly to build. The Primary Strategy for Change showed that substantial capital investment is needed just to modernise the existing school estate. With only £12m available from DCSF in the first two years of the primary capital programme, progress will be slow. These resources are unlikely to increase in the next Parliament.

A new two form entry primary costs at least £10m to build. No money has been allocated to such a project in the Council's capital programme. At this stage no recommendation could be made for a new school on the available evidence.

No site in the Council's ownership can easily be identified for a new school. All of the potential sites are constrained in some way, for instance being Metropolitan Open Land or subject to other planning issues.

The process to establish a new school is very lengthy and is unlikely to deliver the additional places in the short to medium term. Current legislation requires that once the need for a new school is determined, a competition is opened by which potential promoters make bids to build and run it. This goes through a number of stages and the result is determined by the Schools Adjudicator, not by the Council. This initial procedure takes about a year once all the necessary consultation and evaluation stages are included.

A further statutory process is needed for a community, or voluntary aided school, involving more consultation. If not, it is most likely to be an academy for which a sponsor is required. The scope for potential sponsors is very widely drawn and may include a religious promoter, an existing federation already sponsoring an academy, or a group of parents. It should be noted that an academy would require no further statutory consultation...

Whatever the outcome, it would be the Council's duty to provide the site and meet the cost of buildings, and this would mean that capital resources would have to be diverted from other projects. Even if the DCSF capital bid is successful, it would only provide a contribution to the overall costs.

Introducing a new school could affect existing schools and could have an impact on standards. In the first few years there may be a migration from existing schools risking disruption of their budgets as well as a concern about scarce capital resources being diverted from urgent repair and modernisation.

A new school would not therefore solve the immediate issue and there is the risk that it could also cause real disadvantage to other schools. For these reasons, the Council needs to consider the alternatives very carefully and only come forward with a new school proposal if it is fully satisfied that no other viable option exists to deliver and sustain the required number of primary places to a high standard. No such case yet exists.

16 Proposals for additional places at existing schools

The GLA projections have been used to derive the number of places required in addition to current planned capacity at the schools in the south of the borough.

As set out in paragraph 12 the GLA projections show a likely demand for between three and four additional forms of entry in the south of the borough, peaking in 2015 before declining to one form above current provision by 2019.

The projections also indicate that the largest part of that deficit is not in Dulwich itself but in Camberwell and Nunhead/Peckham Rye. Additional places may thus be identified over a wider area. The local authority has a statutory duty to keep the number of places required under review, using the updated projections, combined with the latest roll and demographic data.

17 Primary Strategy for Change

The Council's Primary Strategy for Change, approved by the DCSF in May 2009 established a number of principles in terms of the planning of primary schools. Agreed by Head Teachers, these include the gradual elimination of half forms of entry where possible, and the recognition that the 2 form entry model was the ideal template, being of sufficient size to drive a budget which provides for a wide curriculum yet retaining the look and feel of a small school. Although that there is excellent practice in all sizes of school, the Council would not actively propose larger schools at this time if there was an alternative.

18 Temporary increases at existing schools

Some consideration has been given to the capacity of existing schools to accommodate additional classes on a one off basis, that is for one year only with the expectation that the class would then take another six years to feed through. For the reasons above these would not be enlarged permanently. The options would include:

- Heber
- St. Johns and St. Clements CE
- Bessemer Grange
- Ivydale
- Rye Oak
- Dulwich Village and Dulwich Hamlet
- Dog Kennel Hill

This list is not in order, neither is it exhaustive nor based on detailed discussions with the schools. However, taken together these would provide enough for 1 additional form of entry for 7 years, equivalent to another one form of entry. There would be capital implications in some cases.

In order to ensure that sufficient places are available, the Council has the right to issue a direction to any community school to increase admissions from year to year. Both Anglican and Catholic partners have indicated a willingness to support this approach to managing bulge numbers.

19 Permanent increases of existing schools

There is some scope to make permanent increases to a number of schools in line with the Primary Strategy for Change. These would include the following, but in each case subject to an invitation to enter into discussions and a closer examination of the building and facilities, along with the associated costs.

Schools which may be considered would include:

- Lyndhurst (from 1.5 to 2FE – requires extension)
- St. Anthony's RC (from 1.5 to 2FE – requires extension)
- Langbourne (from 1 to 2FE – in existing accommodation)
- Oliver Goldsmith (from 2 to 3FE – in existing accommodation but subject to comments above)
- Bellenden (from 1 to 2FE – requires extension)
- St. Mary Magdalene CE (from 1 to 2FE - requires extension)

The Primary Strategy indicated that Hollydale should reduce from 1.5 to 1FE in consideration of site and buildings issues, but that would be kept under review.

Taken together these increases would provide a maximum of 4.5 FE (5FE less Hollydale), more than sufficient to meet the required increase. They would also provide a balance between community and voluntary aided places. The capital implications where extensions are required would be substantial.

20 Report to the Executive

A full report is being prepared for the Executive in November giving consideration to the assessed need for new places across the borough, and it is unlikely that a recommendation will be made for a new school.

The report will take into account the ongoing discussions with schools about additional places in the school year 2010/11 and beyond, and making recommendations accordingly. This will include a further commentary on the projection models being used for place planning purposes.

Options for additional capital expenditure will also be considered in that report.. Further work is required to determine the scope for new projects in the light of the review of capital commitments. This will take into account the changes agreed for Cherry Garden and Gloucester Schools at the September Executive.

Should additional resources be received from the DCSF in response to the additional bid round mentioned above, these will be reported along with proposals for capital investment in local schools. This may include both temporary and permanent enlargements from the list above to ensure that there are sufficient places available in the area in the planning cycle up to 2019.

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