

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: November 24 2009	Meeting Name: Executive
Report title:		Review of Primary School Places	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Whole borough	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the Executive notes that the projected pressure for Reception places in the south of the borough will be met by the addition of a combination of temporary and permanent reception places.
- 2 That the Executive notes that the position in the centre and the north of the borough will be kept under review by the Strategic Director of Children's Services with the addition of temporary and permanent reception places to be agreed with schools in the area based on the outcome of the 2010 admissions round.
- 3 That initial consultation on the permanent enlargement of Lyndhurst primary school from 1.5 to 2 form entry from September 2010 is agreed and notes that Executive as decision maker will receive a further report on this proposal.
- 4 That the Executive thanks Crampton, Goodrich and Lyndhurst primary schools for opening additional reception classes in 2009/10 and offers their thanks to the other primary schools who have offered to open additional reception classes in 2010/11.
- 5 That the Executive welcomes the offer of St Anthony's RC primary school governing body to increase their admission number to 60 in September 2010 and receives a report back on the options appraisal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 6 Executive agreed to the incorporation of the Primary Capital Programme (PCP) into the Council's 10 year capital programme on 17 March 2009. The Executive Member for Children's Services had previously agreed the Council's Primary Strategy for Change, which identified the proposed PCP to the DCSF.
- 7 There have been subsequent reports on the Primary Capital Programme. On 29 July 2009 the Executive agreed to the incorporation of the Surrey Square dining pavilion project into the programme.
- 8 On 29 September 2009 Executive agreed to initial consultation on the proposal to increase Cherry Garden Primary School in size from 45 to 66 places and to relocate the school to part of the existing Gloucester primary school site. The Executive also noted that the consequential refurbishment of Gloucester primary school should be brought forward into the PCP and agreed that in the light of the pressure for additional places in the south of the borough that any released resources are reallocated to provide additional primary places.

- 9 A report reviewing primary places in East Dulwich was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 October 2009. The recommendations from the Committee are included in a report elsewhere on the agenda.
- 10 This report now provides details on the pupil place planning position for the whole borough and proposes how the projected pressure for places may be met.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Projections

- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 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).
- 14 There are two key factors influencing the numbers of 4 year olds forecast to attend Southwark schools this year. The first is an increase in the projected number of 4 year olds in the borough. This is as a result of a number of factors, including
 - an underlying increase in the birth rate; and,
 - the dramatically reduced migration of parents out of London.
- 15 Statistics show that many Londoners who would normally have moved to the adjacent regions are opting to remain living in the borough, partly because of the sluggish property market. The gross inflow to London has been the highest since 1984; the net loss from London is the lowest since 1999. As a consequence the GLA population projections for the 4 year old population in the borough have increased dramatically, with a knock on effect on the school roll projections.
- 16 In addition the number of these increased 4 year olds who are projected to take a place at Southwark's schools is increasing. This is because of a number of factors including:
 - that Southwark's primary schools are improving;
 - schools in neighbouring authorities are filling; and,
 - the economic downturn is encouraging parents to choose state education over private.
- 17 The initial 2009 projections were revised by the GLA in the light of the additional demand for reception places which had materialised in 2009. The revised projections have been used this year as they more closely reflect the current increased pressure for reception places in the borough.

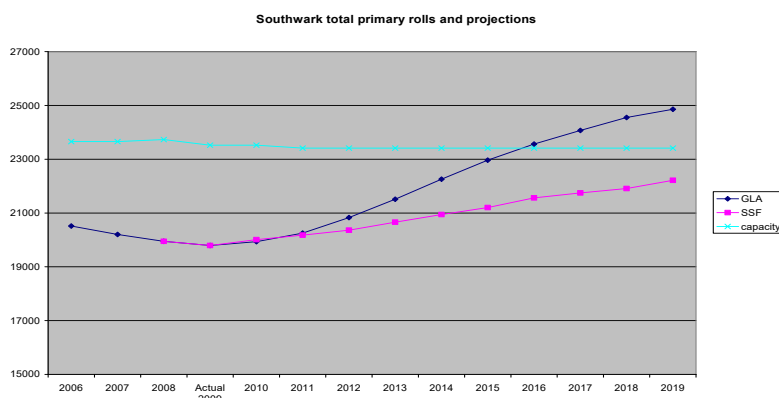
- 18 However, because the current projections are influenced by factors like the recession, which are not permanent variables, it would therefore be wise to take a cautious but flexible response to meeting the projected pressure for places.
- 19 As a check on the GLA model, a second set of projections 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. The SSF projections are again included in this analysis as a comparison with the GLA projections.
- 20 Both sets of projections are initially based on the previous years' rolls. Both project down to the 8 primary planning areas (same as the community council areas), but not at individual school level.

Validating the projections

- 21 There are a number of ways to cross check the projections. These include considering the pattern of parental preferences for places. The number of first preference applications for reception places at Southwark schools has increased by 7% between 2007 and 2009. However, across the borough the position is that there are sufficient reception places to meet the number of first preferences. Although there is underlying surplus capacity of some 16%, the pressure is first met at reception class level.
- 22 However, the picture varies in different parts of the borough. In the north of the borough the numbers of first preferences has remained fairly constant; in the centre of the borough numbers have fluctuated, with an overall increase of 3% from 2007 to 2009; in the south of the borough there has been a considerable increase of nearly 16% from 2007 to 2009, to the extent that there are now more first preferences than there are reception places at schools in this area. This supports the picture in the current projections.
- 23 In addition there has been an increase in children in early years settings over this same period, which would support the underlying growth in the projections.
- 24 The accuracy of the GLA projections is checked every year. The overall borough projections have been generally accurate; but, as would be expected, the individual planning area projections are less so.
- 25 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.
- 26 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.

Projected whole school pressure: total rolls

27 It should be noted that overall there is not forecast to be a shortfall of places when considering the projected total rolls until September 2015 (Table 1). This is because there are currently surplus places in the older age groups at primary schools. It would therefore be possible in the short term to ask schools with surplus places in older age groups to open additional reception classes; however, the longer term impact on these schools of such a change would need to be kept under close review.



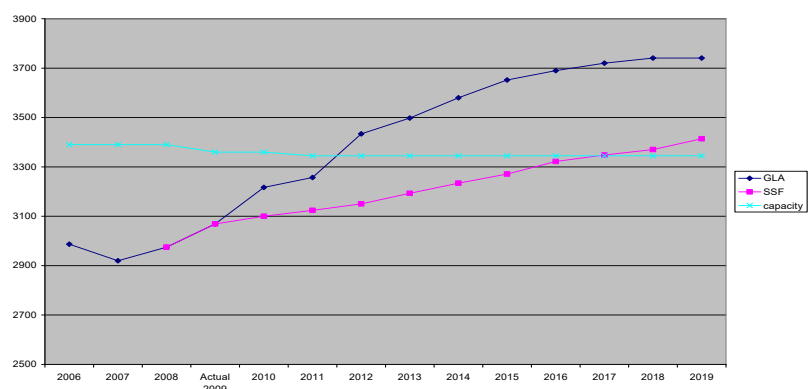
January	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Additional Total FE school places- GLA projection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5.5	7
Additional Total FE school places- SSF projection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Projected Reception pressure

28 An increased and unexpected pressure on reception class places has been felt in 2009 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 Enfield filled all available places and are adding more. As a result of this pressure the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) invited bids for £200m of new capital funds to provide additional places in areas of need.

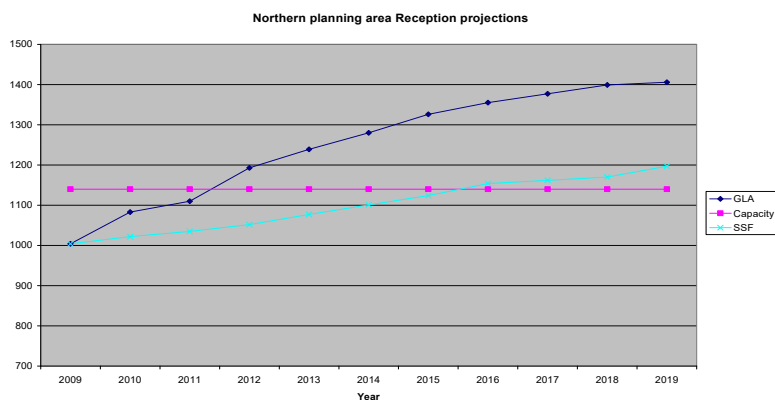
29 In Southwark the 2009 primary admissions round was characterised by an unprecedented degree of concern about reception class places from residents in the East Dulwich area in the south of the borough. This problem had not been predicted by the projections available at the time. After the first round 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 therefore responded to this pressure by adding half a class at Lyndhurst and a class at Goodrich and Crampton Primary Schools to meet the additional demand.

30 The projections for Reception places in the borough as a whole (Table 2) show that there is a predicted pressure for places from September 2011.



January	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Additional reception FE – GLA	0	0	0	3	5	8	10	11.5	12.5	13	13
Additional reception FE SSF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2.5

In the north of the borough (Table 3) pressure for Reception places is predicted from September 2011.



January	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Additional Reception FE – GLA projection	0	0	0	2	3.5	4.5	6.5	7.5	8	9	9
Additional Reception FE - SSF projection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	1	1	2

Council strategy

- 31 As discussed above there are many variables that influence the projections, including the economic slowdown that should end before the 10 year projection time frame. While it is difficult to predict when this is likely to occur it is proposed that in the interim the Council opens a combination of temporary and permanent reception classes to meet the needs of the next few years and that the position is kept under close review.
- 32 Southwark is therefore proposing an incremental approach based on both temporary additional reception classes for one year and some permanent increases. It is proposed to look to enlarge schools with half forms of entry where it is appropriate, in line with the planning principles that were agreed in the Primary Strategy for Change. 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 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.

Action already taken to meet the need for additional reception places

- 33 The current projections for the south of the borough (Table 5 above) show a demand for between three and four forms of entry in the wider area south of Peckham Road. This demand peaks in 2015 before declining to about one form above the current capacity. This would suggest that additional places are required locally in the south of the borough but mostly to accommodate a population bulge, with only a small permanent increase in numbers. This approach is recommended now, for the reasons set out below.

Benefits of making increases to existing schools

- 34 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.

- 35 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. 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.
- 36 As a result of the pressure for places in 2009 Southwark has opened three additional reception classes – two temporary classes for one year at Crampton and Goodrich primary schools and a half form of additional reception places at Lyndhurst primary. The latter is on a temporary basis but it is proposed that initial consultation is undertaken on a permanent enlargement of the school to a full two forms of entry, which would be consistent with the PCP planning principles and would provide a permanent additional half form of entry in the south of the borough.
- 37 Because the trend looks set to continue for a few years with pressure initially in the south of the borough followed in a few years by possible pressure in the north, schools in the south of the borough are being consulted on opening additional temporary classes in the next few years.
- 38 The new places for 2010 will be decided in the light of the numbers of admission application preferences received by the deadline of the end of January 2010.
- 39 In the meantime the governing body of St Anthony' RC Primary School has agreed to expand to 2FE. An options appraisal is currently being undertaken on temporary and permanent options for the school's expansion.
- 40 The position in the north and the centre of the borough will also be kept under review in the light of the January applications position.

Possible temporary increases at existing schools in the south of the borough

- 41 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.
- 42 The options would include Heber, St. Johns and St. Clements CE, Bessemer Grange, Ivydale, Rye Oak, Dulwich Village and Dulwich Hamlet and Dog Kennel Hill. Both Anglican and Catholic partners have indicated a willingness to support this approach to managing bulge numbers.
- 43 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.
- 44 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, but as for this year, this would not be done without appropriate consultation.

Possible permanent increases of existing schools in the south of the borough

- 45 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.
- 46 Schools which may be considered to address the current issues in the East Dulwich area would include:
- Lyndhurst (from 1.5 to 2FE – requires extension see paragraph 35)
 - St. Anthony's RC (from 1.5 to 2FE – requires extension see paragraph 38 above)
 - Bellenden (from 1 to 2FE – requires extension)
- 47 In addition in the context of wider pressures on the south of the borough there would be the potential in the future to expand Langbourne and Oliver Goldsmith schools both by one form of entry in their existing accommodation. This would not, however, be an option to meet the current pressure in the East Dulwich /Peckham Rye area. The Primary Strategy also indicated that Hollydale should reduce from 1.5 to 1FE in consideration of site and buildings issues, but that would be kept under review.
- 48 Taken together these increases would provide a maximum of 3.5 FE in the south of the borough (4FE less Hollydale), more than sufficient to meet the required increase predicted by the GLA for the medium term. They would also provide a balance between community and voluntary aided places. The capital implications where extensions are required would be substantial.

Community Impact Statement

- 49 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.
- 50 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.

Resource Implications – Capital

- 51 The capital resources to fund the additional classrooms in 2009 have been found from the resources set aside in the PCP for all schools plant and modernisation work.

- 52 It is proposed that the costs of works in 2010 and part of the costs of enlarging Lyndhurst School will be met from the savings on the Cherry Garden project as a result of relocating the school on to the Gloucester site. A recommendation to this effect will be included in the capital programme 2008-16 Monitoring report to be reported to the December Executive.
- 53 The balance of the cost of Lyndhurst's enlargement will need to be met from capital resources under the DCSF Basic Need Safety Valve. The DCSF made available some £200m nationally in a special bid round in summer 2009 in response to this unexpected pressure for places, and the Council submitted an application. The outcome of the bid is still awaited.

Resource Implications – Revenue

- 54 Revenue funding for school places comes 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.
- 55 For each school accepting a bulge class in 2009-10, additional short term revenue costs have been agreed in consultation with Schools Forum. In the next year, the increased school rolls will drive an increase in the total level of DSG receivable by the Council, and a higher budget share for each of the schools involved.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

- 56 Members of the Executive are asked to note that there is a need to meet the pressure for reception places in the south of the borough. It is proposed that to meet this demand there will be temporary and permanent increases to reception places. Lyndhurst Primary School has been identified as the site at which the proposed permanent increase could take place.
- 57 Members of the Executive have also been asked to note that the reception places in the north and centre of the borough will be kept under review.
- 58 The Executive is advised that a temporary increase in school places is a matter for the Admissions Authority to determine.
- 59 With regard to the proposal to enlarge Lyndhurst School, Members will note that the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (hereafter 'The Regulations') require that a proposal to enlarge the premises of a school by 25% must follow the process set out in The Regulations. This means that the Lyndhurst School proposals must be published and consulted on in accordance with The Regulations.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
DCFS Regulations and Guidelines	160 Tooley Street, London SE1	Martin Wilcox 020 7525 5018

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
Report Author	Martin Wilcox, Education Planning Officer	
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Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	No
Executive Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team		November 13 2009