

	Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee 20 October 2022
Title	Planning for New School Places: Update and School Places Plan 2023-2027
Report of	Chair of the Committee, Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	Appendix A – Planning for new school places: update and School Places Plan 2023-2027
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Summary

This report provides an update on the school places plan for 2023-2027 and compares the five-year forecast projected in September 2017 with the actual demand that has emerged. It sets out the revised projections of pupil places for the next few years and the plan to meet the need for additional places.

Recommendation

1. That the Children, Education, Safeguarding Committee note the projected future requirements for school places up to 2026/27.
2. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note the progress in delivering sufficient primary, secondary and special school places to date

1 WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In 2017 the committee approved a School Places Plan for the period 2018 to 2023.
- 1.2 This year's annual report provides an update on the council's approach in ensuring there are sufficient school places in Barnet. It sets out the projected demand for new school places for a five year period from 2022/23 through to 2026/27 based on the latest pupil projections (summer 2022) provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA). It sets out the plans that are in place and plans that are in progress to meet this demand.
- 1.3 The report focuses on the provision of primary and secondary school places, including places to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Meeting the need for additional early years places is driven by the Early Years strategy which promotes and champions new provision across the private, voluntary and independent providers sectors as well as in the school sector. However, where appropriate, additional early years places are provided as part of the growth in primary school places covered in this report.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The council has a duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The expansion of schools and the development of new free schools over the last five years has enabled the council to fulfil this duty through to 2022/23. It has also helped to maintain the diversity of Barnet's current educational offer. However, due to the complexities outlined in the report, the programme of activity and its associated capital requirements will need to be kept under review.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The council uses pupil projections provided by the Greater London Authority. The council has a statutory duty to provide a school place and the options in providing new places are limited to expanding existing schools or securing a provider to open/build new schools. Site availability for new schools is severely restricted in London. Like all London boroughs, the council's approach is to adopt a mix of strategies, assessing all opportunities and retaining a flexible and adaptable approach.

4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Capital requirements to provide school places are considered by the council's Policy and Resources Committee in the council's annual medium term financial strategy.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1 Ensuring a sufficient supply of good quality school places supports the council's ambition for Barnet to create the right environment to promote responsible growth,

development and success. The reputation and quality of Barnet's schools makes Barnet an attractive place to live and is key to the satisfaction of many residents in the borough.

Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2 Until 2020 the council received an annual capital allocation from central government as a contribution towards meeting the 'basic need' for new school places. Basic need allocations are made to local authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and by establishing new schools. Between 2011 and 2017 the council received £86m in basic need grant, including an element of 'targeted' basic need grant. Like many other London boroughs, Barnet has not received basic need funding for new mainstream places since 2020 because of the falling birth rate across the capital resulting in a sharp fall in the demand for mainstream places. However, the demand for places for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has continued to rise significantly in Barnet, London and nationally. In 2017 the Department for Education launched an additional funding stream in response to the growing need for additional SEND school places (Special Provision Fund). Announcements by the Department for Education in 2017, 2018 & 2020 resulted in an allocation to a total of £8 million. The council has now reviewed its plans for allocating the Special Provision Fund to different projects in light of the increase in the fund from £5.1 million to £8.0 million in 2020 and in light of its needs analysis and Sufficiency Review.

Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Article 7 - Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships of the council's constitution states that the committee has responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools, education and safeguarding.
- 5.3.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure the provision of sufficient schools for primary and secondary education in their area. Under s.14 of the Education Act 1996, a local authority shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in their area. Sufficient means sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. In meeting this duty, a local authority must do so with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice
- 5.3.3 The Council has duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It also has duties under that Act to consult parents, young people and other stakeholders on strategies and policies setting out how it will fulfil its duties
- 5.3.4 State funded schools are split into schools maintained by the Local Authority and

those directly funded by Central Government. The former are split into a number of categories, including foundation, community and voluntary aided schools. The latter encompass Academies and free schools (which are Academies which did not convert from a maintained school). For maintained schools, there are prescribed requirements in order to make specific alterations. This includes expanding existing schools to add additional form groups. The requirements are set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations. Academies do not have to follow the same requirements in order to expand, but are expected to seek the approval of the Secretary of State. Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that local authorities seek proposals for the establishment of an academy if they think that a new school is required in their area. There are only limited circumstances when a local authority will be able to publish proposals to establish a new maintained school.

Risk Management

- 5.4.1 The report assumes that some school and special school places will be funded by central government through the free school programme. Should this not occur, the council will need to identify further resources.
- 5.4.2 With rising costs of construction, some council-funded project budgets may come under pressure. There is a contingency assumed within the capital programme which is kept under review as the programme is delivered.
- 5.4.3 It is assumed that there will be land available to accommodate school expansions and new schools and that the council will not need to purchase additional land.
- 5.4.4 Significant school construction projects usually require planning consent. There is a risk that planning consent is refused. If planning consent is refused for any given project, an alternative project will need to be developed and where the project refused is a central government funded free school, any alternative project may potentially need to be funded by the council.
- 5.4.5 All pupil place planning is based on pupil projections and there is a risk that the projections are inaccurate. The council utilises projections produced by the Greater London Authority and regularly reviews the accuracy of the projections to inform future planning.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

Ensuring a high-quality education offer supports the progress of all children and young people including those with additional needs or at risk of underachievement, for example, children with additional learning needs, young people with poor mental health or those at economic disadvantage. By expanding successful schools, investing in new provision for children with special educational needs and aiming to retain Barnet's diverse educational offer, the council is investing to ensure that Barnet remains a popular place for families to live and study.

5.6 Corporate Parenting Principles

- 5.6.1 The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

5.6.2 Ensuring that our looked after children have quality school provision is essential to supporting positive development and outcomes

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

Schools are engaged with the strategic approach to planning school places through the School Organisation and Place Planning Board (SOPPB), which last convened on 13 July 2022. The SOPPB is attended by the Council, Barnet Education and Learning Service and headteacher representatives. In addition, briefings are provided through the termly Director's meetings with headteachers and chairs of governors. For individual projects that involve the expansion of an existing school or the establishment of a new school or a reduction to a school's published admission number, there is a statutory requirement for a wider, formal consultation.

5.8 Insight

The council sources data from the Greater London Authority's (GLA) school roll projection service which provides projections for the majority of London boroughs. Projections are based on pupil numbers on roll at the termly Census. The projections use the GLA population projections which incorporate actual births, trends in population (migration, fertility trends etc.) and housing development. Each year, the council provides to the GLA the number of housing units projected to be built in each of Barnet's wards for the next ten years, which are then incorporated into the model. To sense check these projections, the council also analyses births by postcode area (data from ONS) and nursery data

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Planning for new school places 2018/19 to 2022/23 - Agenda Item

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=8693&Ver=4>

2. Special Educational Places Plan – November 2021 – Agenda Item

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=10814&Ver=4>