

	<h2>Children and Education Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.</h2>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Education Strategies Update - for school and settings improvement and school places plan.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Date of meeting</p>	<p>7th March 2024</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Chris Munday - Executive Director Children’s and Family Services</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Appendices</p>	<p>Appendix A: Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy 2023/24 Appendix B: School Places Plan Update 2023-2027</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Chris Munday, Executive Director, Children and Family Services Chair of Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Board chris.munday@Barnet.gov.uk Telephone: 0208 359 7099</p> <p>Neil Marlow, Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) neil.marlow@Barnet.gov.uk Telephone: 0208 359 7725</p>
<h3>Summary</h3>	
<p>This report seeks approval for the updates to the School and Settings Improvement Strategy for Barnet for the period 2023 to 2024 and to the School Places Plan 2023-2027. The Report is an update of the Strategies that were approved by the Committee in November 2020 as part of the Education Strategy for Barnet for the period 2021 to 2024. The Special Educational Places Plan was approved by the Committee in November 2021.</p> <p>The School and Settings Improvement Strategy sets out the priorities for ensuring that children and young people continue to benefit from an excellent, high quality education offer.</p>	

This second part of this report provides an update on the School Places Plan for 2023-2027, providing updated school roll projections and outlining the past successes and the future challenges to be faced.

Recommendations

1. That the committee approve the updated School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2023-2024.
2. That the committee note the projected future requirements for school places up to 2026/27.
3. That the committee note the progress in delivering sufficient primary, secondary and special school places to date

1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The committee's approval is required for the updates to the strategy and plan shown in the appendices in order to provide a clear vision and clear strategic goals and priorities for the education service in Barnet over the next year.
- 1.2 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.

Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy 2023/24

- 1.3 In 2020, the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee approved the Education Strategy 2021–2024 and the School and Settings Improvement Strategy for the same period. With additional information and data it is now time to review and update this strategy and the priorities within them for the current year where appropriate. Following the publication of achievement data in 2023, the School and Settings Improvement Strategy has been updated to ensure both the priorities and the ways of working with schools are appropriate and relevant.
- 1.4 We are committed to ensuring that Barnet is the most family friendly borough in London. To assist us in achieving this we are focussed on building resilience in children, families and schools.
- 1.5 For some years, Barnet has been among the top performing local authority areas in the country in relation to the achievement of children and young people and the quality of our schools. Barnet Council's aspiration is to be among the top 10% of local authorities in relation to the quality of provision in its schools.
- 1.6 Each year, in the Autumn Term, we analyse the achievement data from Barnet schools as well as the other information we hold e.g. Ofsted Reports, our School Effectiveness Visits etc and look to see whether the priorities within the Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy need to be updated. This year, we had our second set of achievement data for each key stage since 2019 and analysis of this data has led to the removal of some previous priorities, due to improvements in achievement in some areas:
 - Improving Early Years (Rec)
 - Improving Phonics (Year 1)
 - Improving achievement at KS1
 - Improving KS2 Writing

School Places Plan

- 1.7 In 2017 the CES committee approved a School Places Plan for the period 2018 to 2023. Last year CES had an update to the Plan, taking the Plan up to 2027.

- 1.8 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 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.
- 1.9 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. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

- 2.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement to have in place published strategies for all areas of education, having a published strategy ensures the Council sets out its strategic aims and how it is going to achieve these, alongside clear measures and action plans. Whilst the Council could choose not to update its strategies, this is not recommended when there is evidence to demonstrate that a change of focus is required. In addition it is good practice to regularly report to elected members on progress against published strategies to ensure effective member oversight.
- 2.2 The council uses pupil number 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.

3. Post Decision Implementation

- 3.1 Action to deliver the strategic priorities will be overseen by the governance arrangements set out in the strategy/plan.
- 3.2 Priorities will be shared with schools.
- 3.3 Barnet Council's strategy for continuing to deliver high standards in Barnet schools is set out in the Education Strategy 2021-2024, which was approved by the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee in November 2020. Barnet Education and Learning Service will continue to work with schools to address the priorities included in the School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2023/24
- 3.4 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.

4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

4.1 Corporate Plan

[Barnet's Corporate Plan](#)

Family Friendly is a key driver of our corporate planning with the vision of "Creating a Family Friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and young people to achieve their best". The quality of the education offer in Barnet is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet a popular and desirable place with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools. The London Borough of Barnet's Education Strategy 2021-2024 sets out that good leadership and governance is a key driver to the achievement of the improvement of schools and educational outcomes. 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.

Family Friendly Barnet

- Family and Belonging - Families and children can be together and be part of a community that encourages resilience.
- Safe and Secure – Children and young people are safe protected from harm.
- Education and learning – Children and young people can learn about the world around them.
- Life Chances – Children and young people are able to succeed.
- Health and wellbeing – Children are supported to achieve a healthy start in life, enjoy a healthy lifestyle and to build resilience.

4.2 Corporate Parenting

- We know that children and young people across all care groups are much more likely to experience multiple disadvantages. *“Support our children in care and care experienced young people to live their lives successfully”* and *“addressing inequality and driving forward better outcomes for groups that include ethnic minority communities, young people with a learning disability, young carers, looked after children/care leavers and those who come into contact with the justice system”* are key themes in our [children and young people's plan 2023-2027](#)
- As corporate parents it is essential that we understand the challenges and barriers in place to promote equity and improve outcomes for all vulnerable groups including those in social care. As part of our pledge we will ensure that children in our care receive the services they need to flourish and achieve their best.

4.3 Risk Management

4.3.1 The Risk Register for the education service includes a risk that inadequate monitoring of, and support for, schools may result in failure to take rapid and decisive action in relation to poorly performing schools, including using statutory intervention powers with regard to maintained schools and considering alternative structural and operational solutions (non-Academies) leading to poor delivery of education outcomes. To control against this risk, the School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2021 to 2024 includes a 'Monitoring, support, challenge and intervention strategy'. A Schools Review Group of officers from Barnet Education and Learning Services and wider Barnet Council staff monitors individual schools and agrees appropriate actions/interventions. Alternative solutions are considered for all schools that are judged by OfSTED to Require Improvement or are felt to be at risk of such a judgement. Clear systems and procedures are in place to monitor the progress of all 'Schools Causing Concern'.

4.3.2 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 if additional places are required. 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. 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. 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. 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)

5.1 The work to drive the delivery of Barnet Council's contribution to the Education Strategy is delivered from within existing resources paid to Barnet Education and Learning Service Ltd.

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.

6. Legal Implications and Constitution References

6.1 Section 13A of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to secure efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 13A requires local authorities to ensure that their functions are exercised with a view of promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting fulfilment of learning potential for children and young people in its area. Section 14 requires local authorities to secure sufficient schools and sufficient is defined by reference to number, character and equipment to provide appropriate education based on age, ability and aptitude, as well as ensuring diversity of provision. These duties are overarching duties and apply regardless of whether schools are maintained by the local authority or independent of local authority support.

6.2 In relation to academies, local authorities should raise any concerns directly with the DfE Regional Director.

6.3 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.

6.4 The remit of The Children & Education Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee includes performing the overview and scrutiny role and function in relation to all matters which relate to services pertaining to the education and well-being of children and young people, including youth services.

7. Consultation

7.1 A summary of the key changes from the previous School and Settings Improvement Strategy was discussed and agreed at the Schools Review Group, consisting of BELS and wider Barnet council officers, in October 2023 and the School and Settings Standards Partnership Board (consisting of BELS and wider Barnet Council officers and headteachers) in November 2023.

7.2 Schools are engaged with the strategic approach to planning school places through the School Organisation and Place Planning Board (SOPPB), which last convened on 9th November 2023. 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

8. Equalities and Diversity

8.1 Barnet Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

8.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. School improvement monitoring, supporting and challenging arrangements ensure that the quality of education in Barnet is maintained and improved. Outcomes for all groups of children and young people are monitored including children with special educational needs and disabilities and disadvantaged children (those in receipt of free school meals and children looked after). Barnet's Children and Young People Plan, the Education

Strategy 2021-2024 and the School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2021 to 2024 all have a strong focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups of children and young people.

9. Background Papers

9.1 Key education strategies, including the Schools and Settings Education Strategy 2021 to 2024 were considered and approved by the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee at its meeting on 30th November 2020. These have been published on Barnet Council's website and can be seen here:

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-support-information>

9.2 At this meeting the Report on Education Standards in Barnet for the academic year 2022 to 2023 is being reported to this committee.

9.3 Updates to the Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy have previously been reported annually to the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee. The last one was reported to that committee on 17th

November 2022 and can be found here: [Agenda for Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee on Thursday 17th November, 2022, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

9.4 Planning for new school places Update and School Places Plan 2023-2027 - Agenda Item

[Agenda for Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee on Thursday 20th October, 2022, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)