

Report of Director of Childrens Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 11th September 2014

Subject: Learning Places for Leeds Overview



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

All children and young people should be able to achieve well at school, from the earliest years through primary and secondary education, no matter what their background. The goal of the education system in Leeds is to enable all young people to have the best opportunities and to gain the right qualifications for rewarding employment and independence as they become young adults. Securing good quality learning places in every community is essential for every young person to have the best start in life.

Leeds City Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of good quality learning places and to secure an appropriate balance locally between education supply, demand, choice and diversity. It is the role of the City Council to plan, organise and commission learning places in Leeds in a way that raises educational standards, manages fluctuations in pupil numbers and creates a diverse community of good schools. The Authority seeks to exercise this function in partnership with children and families, elected members, diocesan education boards, governing bodies of schools, head teachers, local communities and other key stakeholders.

Planning for changes in demand for education places is an important function which can only be fulfilled locally, at a level above the individual schools. Estimating school places is a complex process and rapid shifts in demographic changes, economic conditions, patterns of migration, parental preference patterns, and house building create uncertainties that require robust methodologies and responsive implementation. It is imperative that the best information on housing, access to services, economic development and regeneration are brought together, alongside data held by other agencies, to inform the future needs for school places. Planning for learning needs to take

into account the requirement to provide a learning offer across a wide age spectrum from eligible 2 year olds right up to 17 year olds.

This overview summarises the work undertaken over the last 12 months to ensure this statutory duty is being met and outlines the challenges we must meet in future.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- Note the information contained within this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This overview summarises the work undertaken over the last 12 months to ensure this statutory duty is being met and outlines the challenges we must meet in future.

2 Background information

2.2 Learning Place Pressure

- 2.3 The latest DfE figure of eligible 2 year old places needed in Leeds is 4200 new places. The expectation is that around 80% of families will want to take up a place, especially as this is a new offer so we have set a target of 3360 places to open and filled by January 2015 at the latest. At September 2013 take up of places was 981. At July 2014 take up of places was 1763 and a further 1062 places were in development.
- 2.4 Free early education places, for 3 and 4 year olds, can be accessed in a variety of settings across the city. These include school nurseries, private nurseries, pre-school groups and childminders. The take up of places as at Summer 2013 was 15011, 95% of eligible children. The data for Summer 2014 is not yet available however, take up as at Summer 2013 is consistent with the number of children who have taken up early education places in previous years. The increasing demand for early education places in the last 12 months has been met across a range of provisions in the city. To meet the demand for additional places over the coming year (2014 to 2015), a further 171 places have been approved. This will provide flexibility and offer choice to families.
- 2.5 Following a decade of rapidly increasing birth rates from a low of 7,500 to a peak entering reception this September of 10,202, there is now some fluctuation in the births. There are just around 10,000 due to enter reception in September 2015, 2017 and 2018, however there are 10,350 due to start in September 2016. These fluctuations are taking place in different areas of the city leading to the need for some 'bulge cohorts' where we may not require a permanent increase in places, with some continued permanent increase still necessary in some areas. Additionally in some areas the increases in house building is placing increasing pressure on all year groups and not just those entering reception.
- 2.6 For secondary places, the pressure from current known birth rate began to impact in the South for September 13 admissions to Year 7, and this year schools in the

area offered 135 additional places ahead of the confirmation of the opening of the Ruth Gorse Free school which offered 95 places this year. Once their new building is ready in two years time the intake number will rise to at least 240. A combination of expansion and new schools will be required to meet the rising demand from 2016 when the increases begin to be most notable in our secondary schools.

- 2.7 The following table shows the areas where further bulge primary school places, have taken place this year. These are in addition to any permanent expansions that were also planned for this year, including the two new schools, Nightingale Academy and Lane End Primary.

Table 1

SCHOOL	AREA	Receptio n Bulge cohort	Total admitted in bulge year
Allerton CofE	Alwoodley	30	90
Calverley CE	Calverley	15	60
Carr Manor Primary	Chapel Allerton	30	90
Green Lane Academy	Garforth	10	60
Greenmount Primary	Holbeck	15	75
Grimes Dyke	Swarcliffe Whinmoor	30	60
Guisseley Infants	Guisseley / Yeadon / Rawdon	30	120
Hawksworth CofE	Guisseley / Yeadon / Rawdon	3	18
Hawksworth Wood	Kirkstall	20	50
Hunslet Carr	Hunslet	10	60
Manston St James	Seacroft	30	90
Pudsey Park Spring	Pudsey	15	60
Primrose Hill	Pudsey	15	60
Raynville Primary	Bramley	30	90
Roundhay Through School	Roundhay	30	90
St Bartholowmews	Armley / Wortley	15	90
Thorpe Primary	Ardsley / Tingley	30	60
West End Primary	Horsforth	30	60
Bramley Primary	Bramley	20	60

Beecroft	Kirkstall	15	45
Iveson	Adel / Cookridge	15	60
Boston Spa St Mary's	Boston Spa	4	24

2.8 Specialist places

2.9 Since 2009 there has been an increase in the demand for places for children with SEND (specialist educational need) in both in mainstream and in specialist provision. It is projected that places required in specialist educational provision will continue to rise from 1147 in 2012, to approx. 1600 in 2016. Places in Leeds Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres specifically are projected to increase to 1300 by 2016.

2.10 Most notable rises can be observed in the areas of cognition and learning needs (13.6% rise in 4 years); and complex communication difficulties and ASC (18.7% rise in four years). Increasing numbers are accessing funding for multiple needs (386 in 2012, 252 in 2009, 53% rise). Demand for services is significantly greater in the south and in central Leeds.

2.11 Places approved

2.12 Since the Basic Needs programme began in 2009, 1238 additional reception places have been approved, with a further 105 for which a statutory notice has been published prior to a final decision. In addition, 200 new specialist places have been approved from September 2015, 150 at the North East SILC (Woodhouse) and 50 at the South SILC.

2.13 Childcare Places

2.14 The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents of children up to 1st September after their 14th birthday, or until they reach the age of 18 in the case of children with a disability. This must be sufficient to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

2.15 Childcare is offered in a range of settings across Leeds. This includes governor led provision on school sites, private nurseries and childminders. Whilst childcare is not available on all school sites, the majority of schools offer access to childcare, in some cases provision is shared between a number of schools.

2.16 A survey of provision across all schools is due to be completed by the middle of September. From September 2014, Local Authorities will be required to actively encourage all schools to offer childcare from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. This survey will form the baseline for the first phase of work required to ensure that all families have the opportunity to access childcare.

2.17 Families with disabled children have reported that it is challenging to find a provider with the appropriate expertise to care for their child, therefore making it

difficult for them to access training or work. The Children and Families Act passed in March 2014 makes wide ranging reforms to services for children and young people, including services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The publishing of a 'Local Offer' is one of the requirements of the Act. From September 2014 Local Authorities will be required to publish information about ALL services in the area for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in one website. This will include information about the childcare options available to parents including the range of expertise in settings to support children with SEN (special educational needs).

2.18 To enable the Local Authority to comply with this requirement and gather the information required, all childcare settings have been asked to provide information regarding the range of expertise in their setting to support children with SEN. This will be published along with other information in relation to the Local Offer. A survey of parents of disabled children is also underway, information from this survey will be used to inform work with providers to develop provision to meet any gaps.

2.19 Primary and Secondary Admissions

2.20 There are now national closing dates for applications and for making offers. Secondary applications must be submitted by 31 October and offers are made on 1 March. In Leeds 84% of parents were offered their first preference school (the same as last year) and 95% were offered one of their top three (94% last year). There were 7707 places allocated, a rise from 7568 last year.

2.21 Primary applications must be submitted by 15 January each year and offers are made on 16 April. In Leeds 85% (84% last year) were offered their first preference with 94% (same as last year) offered one of their top three preferences. There were 9355 places allocated which is an increase from 9154 at the same point last year.

2.22 Free Schools

2.23 Currently five Free Schools now operate in Leeds. The Lighthouse School Leeds which offers secondary provision for up to 50 young people aged 11 to 19 with an autistic spectrum condition (ASC) or related communication disorder.

2.23.1 Leeds Jewish Free School is secondary provision established on the site of the existing Brodetsky primary school. It has an Orthodox Jewish designation and provides 25 places per year group. The secondary provision is being supported by Rodillian Academy.

2.23.2 Khalsa Science Academy. The Sikh community have opened a non-faith based 1FE primary school with a Sikh ethos. Initially it has opened on next to the Temple in Chapeltown, but they are working with the Education Funding Agency to find a permanent location for the school.

2.23.3 Schools Partnership Trust (SPT). The proposal is to open one free school, which will be run across three sites, in Doncaster, Grimsby and Leeds. The school will provide alternative provision for students with behavioural needs and some with

mild autism across the 4–19 age range, with 460 places in total across the three sites. The site in Leeds is at Gelderd House.

- 2.23.4 The Ruth Gorse Academy. The plan for the Ruth Gorse Academy is being led by the Leeds Sustainable Development Group (LSDG), in partnership with the Gorse Academies Trust – a charitable company which already oversees the Morley and Farnley Academies in Leeds. The Ruth Gorse Academy will have 1580 pupils when full. In their first year they have 95 year 7 places based in temporary accommodation on the Morley Academy site.

The Gorse Academies Trust has expressed an intention to permanently establish the academy on a site to the South of the city centre at Black Bull Street.

- 2.24 We meet monthly with both the Education Funding Agency and the DfE and receive updates of any applications made to establish further free schools in the city and to coordinate basic need planning with the national Free School programme. We continue to engage potential education providers to work together to ensure that any new provision created is available in those areas of the city with the greatest need and is joined up with our existing place planning.
- 2.25 We have been notified of one potential Free School to open in September 2015 with is the Temple Learning Trust which is considering a through school on the site of the former East Leeds Leisure centre and adjacent land. The reception intake is planned to open in 2015.
- 2.26 Post 16 Provision
- 2.27 The Local Authority are continuing to work closely with schools, colleges and training providers to consider the future configuration of Post 16 provision across Leeds. Increasing funding pressures, improving outcomes for young people and helping to meet basic need are driving the focus to review existing Post 16 provision.
- 2.28 There is no prescription in the approaches being considered and schools and colleges are considering various options that could improve the future economic sustainability, learner outcomes and helping to meet basic need. Options being considered include collaboration on subject delivery, formal and informal joint Sixth Forms, closure of sixth form provision and establishing new separate sixth form provision.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 As birth rates fluctuate there is a need to balance carefully the need for temporary and permanent places. This is for two reasons: firstly to ensure that the limited capital funding available is targeted appropriately, and secondly to minimise the likelihood of over-provision in an area which then leads to less popular schools becoming vulnerable. There is still an anticipated city wide need for a minimum of 405 permanent places required in primary just to meet the birth rate increases. Appendix A describes the pressures moving forward.

- 3.2 As the increases are now beginning to impact on the availability of secondary school places careful consideration is being given to the existing capacity, the potential changes to sixth form provision in the city and the emergence of free schools. The cost of a new secondary school is in the region of £20m or more and where necessary may also require the purchase of suitable land. The annual allocation of funding to meet Basic Need from central government has been in the region of £18m.
- 3.3 Attached at appendix B is the project dashboard from the end of August 2014 which provides costs and status reports on each of the current building projects that are currently underway to meet the need for permanent places. This highlights that costs can vary significantly between projects dependant on the local factors and ease with which some land can be built upon and sites that provide more significant challenges. Contractor costs are rising which is affecting the ability to estimate accurately project costs and projections are being modified to take account of this.

4 Corporate Considerations

- 4.1 Detailed in the 'Learning for Leeds – Setting our strategic direction for ensuring sufficient good quality school places' report which was seen and agreed by the Executive Board in July 2013.
- 4.2 **Consultation and Engagement**
- 4.3 All permanent expansions of school places include a public consultation. The legislation was changed in January 2014 to no longer require a statutory consultation in an effort to speed up the process of school place changes. As a consequence a paper was taken to Executive Board to outline the process of consultation that would take place.
- 4.4 Once the need to increase the number of places has been identified a stakeholder engagement event is held based on the Outcomes Based Accountability methodology. A range of interested stakeholders is invited including ward members, head teachers, governors, early years providers, neighbourhood forum representatives, Diocesan representatives, and local parents. The output from this event is then posted online and a discussion forum is created. From this specific expansion proposals are identified and a short period of public consultation, where face to face drop in sessions are held at the local schools affected, takes place. A summary of this whole range of consultation is then taken in a paper to Executive Board for permission to publish a statutory notice which offers a further 4 week representation phase.
- 4.5 More generally Basic Need workshops have been held for ward members in every Area Committee during the last 12 months to share a wide range of data for their specific wards. This has supported a clearer shared understanding of the issues in each area and later in the autumn term updates will be provided.
- 4.6 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.7 An EDCI screening tool is carried out for every school expansion, and where necessary a full impact assessment.

4.8 **Council policies and City Priorities**

4.9 The proposals are being brought forward to meet the Council's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for all the children in Leeds. Providing places close to where children live allows improved accessibility to local and desirable school places, and thus reduces the risk of non-attendance.

4.10 A key objective within the Best Council Plan 2013-2017 is to build a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through Basic Need is one of the most baseline entitlements of a Child Friendly City. A good quality school place contributes to the achievement of targets within the Children and Young People's Plan such as our obsession to 'improve behaviour, attendance and achievement'. It is therefore important that when bringing any proposal forward, there is a degree of certainty that any change would not have a negative impact on the teaching and learning.

4.11 In addition, "Narrowing the Gap" and "Going up a League" agenda and is fundamental to the Leeds Education Challenge. A key area of monitoring in primary schools is the key stage 1 to 2 value added scores and these are considered in each proposal.

4.12 A further objective of the Best Council Plan 2013-2017 is to ensure high quality public services. We want to promote choice and diversity for parents and families and deliver additional school places in the areas where families need them. Meeting this expectation while demonstrating the five values underpinning all we do is key to the basic need programme.

4.13 **Resources and value for money**

4.14 Funding for new school places is provided by government in the form of an annual basic need capital grant allocation and this has previously been supplemented with bid rounds for targeted funding. The funding provided to local authorities is rationed by government based on the projections of places required nationally and locally. Some funding adjustments are made to the allocations to fund the national Academy and Free School programmes.

4.15 Last year the allocation amounted to £11.3k per primary place and £14.2k per secondary place which would provide £2.38m for 210 primary places (1 one form of entry provision) or £17.85m for 1,260 secondary places (equivalent to a secondary school with six forms of entry). The DfE scorecard which has been issued for the first time this year shows that Leeds which is one of the best performing local authorities for the value for money on basic need schemes spent on average £16.34k per primary place on new build schools (£17.16m on 1,050 places). For all school places provided (including temporary and expanding existing schools) the average cost for Leeds is £8.77k per place.

4.16 The discrepancy between funding provided by government and the cost of new places is most noticeable where new schools or large expansions have to be delivered. This appears to be because the DfE assumes that abnormal costs and

site costs will be met by local authorities and these costs are not generally assumed to be covered by these funding allocations. The DfE has recommended a standardised set of designs for new schools and extensions and will expect council's to adopt these or at least to pursue built solutions which use industry standard low cost elements to reduce the overall cost of new places.

4.17 The basic need programme consists of schemes which are shown in Appendix B

4.18 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.19 The processes that have been and will be followed are in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, and amended by School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

4.20 **Risk Management**

4.21 Projects to deliver new places in schools are routinely carry a range of risks from their inception and it is essential that the council continues to review its approach to ensure the risks can be effectively managed. Risks will arise from a number of causes for example because project delivery timescales are limited, most school sites are constrained, funding is very limited and because new school places must be available from the respective Autumn term (September) to meet the council's statutory duty.

4.22 Timescales on projects tend to be constrained because of the nature of predicting when demand for places (arising from increasing birth rates, net inward migration or increased housing) will be sufficient to justify the permanent school places. The new centralised demographic projections team and a corporate approach to decision making will assist with ensuring there is a pipeline of deliverable schemes.

4.23 Basic need projects can be further complicated by issues with existing school sites or for the need to find sites for new schools in the right locations. An expansion at a school must be planned to minimise disruption on teaching and safeguarding and should be designed so that the operational effectiveness of the school is not degraded. Achieving planning consent for new school places is often complex and requires detailed local consultation, good liaison with planning and highways and innovative designs. In some areas new schools must be planned and where possible this is done using existing council sites but in future it may be necessary to acquire land for new schools. A cross council approach to dealing with site issues is already in place and this will be enhanced through a strategic project management group allowing proper escalation of issues and risks and most importantly to problem solve and deliver solutions when risks materialise.

5 **Conclusions**

5.1 An outline strategic approach and key principles have been agreed by the Executive Board.

- 5.2 Since the Basic Need Programme began in 2009, 1238 additional reception places have been approved, with a further 105 for which a statutory notice has been published prior to a final decision.
- 5.3 The outcome of the latest primary admissions round was positive with 85% of parents (84% last year) offered their first preference and 94% (same as last year) offered one of their top three preferences
- 5.4 The outcome of the latest secondary admissions round was positive with 84% of parents were offered their first preference school (the same as last year) and 95% were offered one of their top three (94% last year).
- 5.5 We are working with the EFA and DfE to coordinate basic need planning with the national Free School programme.

6 Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- Note the information contained within this report.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.