LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

WARDS: ALL

REPORT TITLE:

2024 School Place Planning Report

REPORT OF:

Director of Education and Inclusion

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

Schools Forum

Children Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee

DATE:

5 November 2024 11 November 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT:

Over the last 5 years there has been a significant reduction in demand for school places within Camden and the wider London area. Forecasts of pupil demand have also been created in times of unprecedented change and challenge for families in Camden. Specifically, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have fundamentally altered people's lives and changed patterns of migration within central London and Camden Borough specifically. The impacts of these have reduced the anticipated level of demand for school places across the Borough.

Since 2018 the Council, in partnership with its family of schools, has removed 10 forms of entry from our reception intake, responding to a reduction in birth rates of over 30% across the borough. These difficult decisions including four school closures, the most recent being the closure of St Dominic's Catholic Primary School, ensure that our family schools remain both sustainable and responsive to the needs of their communities.

The forecast data continues show supressed birth rates within London and Camden alongside the continued effect of reductions in families moving into Camden during the COVID period. Whilst the peak of surplus anticipated from last year is not forecast to increase our new forecasts indicate that Camden will reach that peak sooner, and that the marginal increases towards the end of the planning period will not be realised to the same extent.

Primary:

The surplus over the reception year admission number is estimated to rise 6.7% in 2023 to 28% by 2032/33.

Secondary:

The Secondary Year 7 surplus is estimated to increase from 12% in 2023 to 21% by 2032/3.

This level of anticipated surplus provision within both phases does require responses overtime to ensure the sustainability of our school offer. The Council in collaboration with schools has established a School Place Planning Group of

school leaders to develop a school place planning strategy with aligned implementation plan focused on schools most acutely impacted by falling roles.

Ensuring Camden has the right number of school places is both the Council's statutory responsibility and aligns with our We Make Camden principals and are fundamental to the implementation of the Councils Education Strategy 'Building Back Stronger'. Preventing schools becoming financially vulnerable and thus subject to unplanned change, helps maintain strong, safe and open communities. Good and outstanding schools promote independent healthy lives and support robust growth and jobs.

The data and forecasts of the demand for school places within Camden is reviewed annually by the authority and made publicly available. Our review incorporates all underlying demographic data including: existing provision and capacity, actual registered births and fertility, the latest Greater London Authority (GLA) forecasts for births and their relationship to school rolls, together with the additional pupils associated with new housing developments. The analysis is used to help us make informed decisions about the future organisation of school places.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Schools Forum is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.

The Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.

Signed by:

Vikram Hansrani, Director of Education and Inclusion

Date: 30 October 2024

1. Introduction

1.1. The authority, in its role as commissioner of school places, has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places in the borough for every child who wants one. The Council also has to ensure that there are not too many school places which would affect the viability of schools now or in the future. This report including appendices A to D provide the demographic context and the Council's understanding of future demand for school places, and therefore an important piece of information for school organisation decisions that may need to be taken in future.

Detail

- 1.2. The changing face of school provision over the past decade has added complexity to the Local Authority role. Specifically, changes to education legislation through the Academies Act 2010, introducing academies/free schools across all sectors, and allowing existing schools to convert to academy status has led to a fragmentation of the education system. Almost uniquely within England, Camden has not had any converter academies during this period, and with the inception of Camden Learning, the education community has collectively supported the Camden family of schools.
- 1.3. The education landscape and demand for pupil places has changed considerably over the past decade. Initially, this has impacted on our primary schools following a significant and sustained fall in registered births. The COVID-19 pandemic has added further complexity, significantly impacting on families lives, patterns of migration and our assumptions about future birth rates. These are national and London wide issues, not just impacting on Camden, with effects being experienced across the education landscape.
- 1.4. The Council has continued working closely with schools, providing ongoing support to those whose viability is put at risk by falling numbers. As part of this process the Council has, with the support of our schools, taken a number of difficult decisions to reduce the number of available school places. Since 2018 this has resulted in the removal of 10 forms (classes) of entry across the Primary estate and further supported reductions in the admission number within the Secondary sector.
- 1.5. The significant issues identified within this paper were also central to the development of the Council' education strategy. Building Back Stronger is a comprehensive, 10-year education strategy for Camden and helps inform our approach to school organisation.
- 1.6. Financial pressures are also becoming more significant throughout our schools. Camden schools have seen their real terms income decrease by almost 25% since 2010. The impact of COVID-19 on school rolls and response to the crisis has put additional pressures on school finances. Significant further pressures resulting from the level of inflation within the economy, specifically impacting upon energy costs, are also being felt acutely by Camden Schools. Furthermore, the increased proportionality of pupils with additional need, alongside an increase in acute and complex need puts a further strain on funding. Within Camden for example we have, in common with national trends, seen an increase in the number of pupils

- with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) alongside the significant reduction in overall pupil numbers.
- 1.7. In addition to the Councils SEND strategy and implementation plan, and in response to changing Special Education Needs (SEN) demands, the Council confirmed a first round of capital allocations in June. This is supporting over 25 schools with funding to complete immediate SEN alterations within buildings, enhancing existing inclusive practise. Over £2m has been approved with common projects including the provision of high quality,
 - Intervention spaces
 - Hygiene spaces
 - Multi-sensory spaces
- 1.8. To support future SEN forecasting the Borough is undertaking a review of SEN projections. This work, including the insight gained from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a detailed understanding of school assets including those under-utilised by falling school rolls, will support our SEND sufficiency planning and be overseen by the work of the High Needs Sub-Group of Headteachers and the wider review of High Needs Block funding allocations.

Schools Finance

- 1.9. The Council's school financial strategy has a number of key aspects:
 - Trying to secure stability of school funding at a time of real terms' reduction in Camden school budgets of 25% since 2011
 - A gradual move over time to the local formula being broadly in line with the anticipated national funding formula
 - Management of reserves to ensure support against future unexpected pressures
 - As part of education strategy, a focus on collaboration to help ensure future sustainability of schools
- 1.10. Following the July General election and change of government detailed proposals for 2025/26 Schools funding have not yet been released. The Chancellors announced on 29th July that as a part of a multi-year budget spending review due to be finalised in spring 2025 final budgets for this year and budgets for next year 2025/26 will be set out alongside the Budget on 30th October with detailed school and borough level information following in December. We know however that the significant driver of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is derived from pupil numbers and consequently the overall reduction in pupils in Camden leads to a significant in fall in global DSG allocations to our Borough.
- 1.11. The overall level of reserves held by Camden schools has however levelled resulting in a final balance of £20.377m at the end of the financial year 2023/24. Whilst most schools remain in surplus (85%) the number in a deficit position at the end of the year was increased to 8 compared to 5 from last year. A total of 22 (40.7%) of schools needed to make use of and reduce their reserves, up from 17 (32%) last year. Also, the average balance held by those schools has now decreased by £0.027m (9%) from £0.318m in the previous year to £0.0.291m. All schools will be asked to

provide an update on their planned use of balances where these are more than 10% of the school's annual budget. The authority's policy has been to reserve the right to take back funding if a school cannot demonstrate a planned use of the excess over the 10%.

1.12. To support financial management within schools, as part of the School Place planning group the Council is piloting the use of school-based consultancy support within schools of concern. This will work with schools to, where appropriate, provide tangible options to evidence savings within schools.

2. Summary Data Analysis

Births

- 2.1 Camden actual registered births reached a high in 2012 at 3,084, but have followed a downward trend to their latest low in 2022 at 2,072. Whilst falls in birth were reported across London and nationwide between 2012 and 2022, Camden at a 34% reduction, has experienced a greater fall compared to London and England at 17%, although similar to some inner-London Authorities such as Westminster. The most recent, GLA 2023 birth forecasts have **not increased** from those received last year. Additionally, where increases were anticipated towards the end of the planning period, these updated forecasts indicate a stabilisation of birth rates at current levels.
- 2.2 Total Fertility Rate (TFR the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime) in the Borough is very low. Camden at 1.02 was second to only Westminster out of any local authority area, with Inner London at 1.28 and England and Wales at 1.61. All of these have reduced from 2018, and over the last decade, and are below 2.1, the number that is required to retain existing levels of population without any additional inward migration.

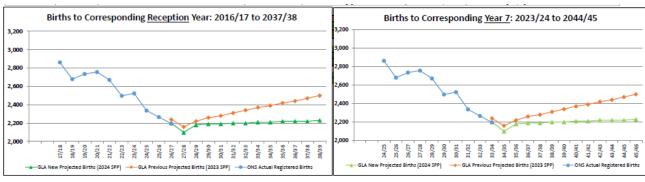


Fig 1: Chart showing reduction in forecast future birth rates

Latest Housing and Estimated Child Yield

2.3 New housing has the potential to increase demand for school places as new families move into new homes. Historically we have been conscious that the effect of new build on pupil numbers can be over-estimated. We work closely with our planning teams to assess housing type, mix and affordability and the impact that this has on future anticipated pupil yield. However, additional Camden housing units anticipated to 2037/38 are estimated at 13,637 and represent a positive net gain that is included within this analysis but a reduction by 3,000 from last year's report. For the

purposes of analysis, we arrange schools into five planning areas (PAs) of roughly equal size that reflect local geography. Camden's planning areas and school locations are identified in Appendix D. The greatest additional housing development is anticipated in our central area PA3 (4,364), with the lowest in the central PA4 (874).

School Roll projections Primary and Secondary

2.4 The Primary 2023 borough forecast, shown on the next page continues to report surplus capacity anticipated over the planning period. Previous forecasts indicated demand increasing marginally to 2032/33, the new analysis does not show increased demand rather a stabilisation of demand at the lower levels. We need to be cautious of interpretation data at the end of the 10-year planning period, for which pupils will not yet have been born. however the anticipated surplus before Council decisions now ranges from 16% to 21%. Identified potential changes reducing surplus rates to current levels over the medium term.

Reception Entry Pupil Demand Forecasts in Camden

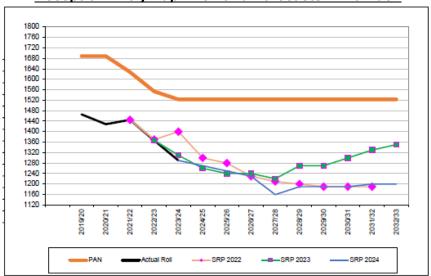
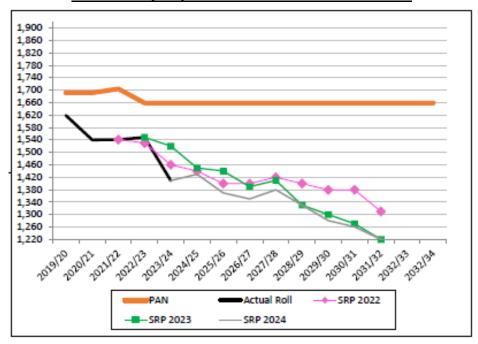


Fig 2: chart showing latest GLA P School Roll Projections (SRP) 2024, and previous historic GLA SRP 2023 and 2022 forecasts with planned admission number (PAN)

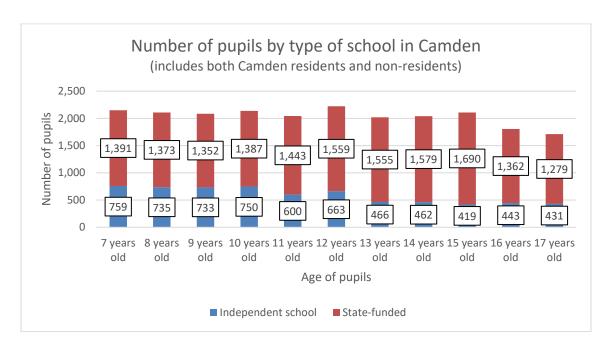
- 2.5 Our secondary school population, reflecting the location of Camden's secondary schools, is different to that or our Primary cohort, therefore the future population profile does not track directly to that of the Camden primary schools. Camden is also a 'net importer' of pupils from other boroughs at secondary age. More non-Camden borough residents attend Camden schools (2,686), than Camden residents attend out-borough schools (1,979). The GLA SRP for Camden are buoyed by this considerable number of non-residents attracted to our excellent Camden schools.
- 2.6 Secondary borough forecasts, shown below, reflect very closely the report from 2023. Surplus capacity is anticipated to increase in the period up to 2033/34 with Year 7 PAN surplus capacity forecast to increase from 15% in 2023/24 to 28% 2033/34, equating to over 10 forms of entry (FE) of school places. Potential identified action reduces this to 20% over the planning period.

Year 7 Entry Pupil Demand Forecasts in Camden



<u>Fig 3:</u> — chart showing latest GLA SRP 2024, and previous historic GLA SRP 2023 and 2022 forecasts with planned admission number (PAN):

- 2.6 Falling school rolls are not unique to Camden and are discussed widely across London due to the sudden and significant falls in actual registered births impacting on most authorities. Together with London Councils Camden has been active in raising this issue at a local and national level. Specifically, we have been involved in a cross London programme of identifying the acute level of surplus school provision within the capital and lobbying central government to address contributory concerns including support for falling roll funding.
- 2.7 At primary level all local neighbours reported reduced demand for reception offers 2024/25 from an already low base, with most showing high surplus in reception for the current academic year. At secondary the majority reported reduced demand at year 7 offers for 24/25. A number of Camden's neighbouring authorities and inner London authorities are under-taking widescale reviews of primary provision including Islington, Haringey and Lambeth.
- 2.8 The proportion of Camden pupils attending Independent schools and has been estimated based on updated underlying data and latest resident forecasts. The Council has undertaken further analysis during this period included within the graph below. Our time-based indicators show that on average 30% of Camden's resident population being educated within private provision. Officers are monitoring the situation relating to the implementation of Value Added Tax (VAT) against school fees from January 2025. Whilst currently have not seen a significant upturn in applications or requests for transfer from this sector, the Council is confident of its ability to offer school places to all applicants impacted by this policy change.



2.9 Two other key developments are also incorporated within school places planning analysis: (i) new Camden 2022 wards, and retrofitting of existing data to new ward boundaries, (ii) 2011 Office of National Statistics (ONS) Census data underpinning analysis was updated with 2021 ONS Census data in spring/summer 2022. These changes to baseline data have meant that the Council has had to alter school planning areas in order to effectively report information to the Department for Education. Data for the new planning areas is incorporated within this paper.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL

3. PRIMARY

- 3.1.1 Camden has reviewed provision at a number of schools with unsustainable levels of surplus places. The Council has, with the support of schools, taken a number of difficult decisions to remove or reduce pupil numbers.
 - St Aloysius Roman Catholic (RC) 2FE primary school (PA4) closed in December 2019, the school had 63% surplus reception places in 2018/19. St Aloysius pupils were accommodated at the nearby Our Lady's RC primary (PA4) in available school places and a temporary classroom, whilst others took up school offers in other local schools.
 - Following significant consultation Carlton primary school (PA2) closed as a legal entity in July 2021, the school had 72% reception surplus in 2020/21, merging under the leadership of nearby 2FE Rhyl primary (PA3), the Carlton site remains open for education and community use.
 - In addition, Kingsgate (PA1) has reduced by 1FE.
 - From 2023 the effect of the closures at St Michael's (PA4) and St Dominic's Primary (PA3) is also reflected in future capacity forecast.
- 3.1.2 This brings the total reduction in the period up to 2023 of 10FE across all Camden Primary Schools. Further reductions in PAN have also been

- identified and are being implemented in 2025/6 formally reducing intakes by a further 2 forms of entry.
- 3.1.3 To support individual schools and the wider system and enable the efficient use of resources the Council has also introduced temporary caps in admission at 3 primary schools for entry in September reducing the operational level of surplus for the Reception year.

3.2 **SECONDARY**

- 3.2.1 The Council and Schools have taken a number of actions to alter pupil capacity with the secondary phase.
 - Haverstock school permanently reduced PAN by 1FE from 2018/19 due to changes in parental/student preferences resulting in lower school rolls; the school currently operates as 6FE provision.
 Consultation has been undertaken to remove a further 1.5FE taking effect from 2022.
 - A further **2FE** has been removed from La Sainte Union with consideration of reduction by **1FE** to the west of the Borough.
 - This would relate to a total reduction of 5.5FE from 2018.
- 3.2.2 The Council is working with the Secondary sector through the School Place Planning Group to consider the existing pattern of school provision and will bring forward, where appropriate, proposals to reduce provision to take account of the existing forecasts, migration and school preference patterns.

4 DETAIL OF ANALYSIS AND AREA COMMENTARY

- 4.1 Effective planning analyses an array of information. In reviewing current and anticipated future trends, this report has been derived from the latest available date from August 2024 including:
 - Latest actuals, including the capacity of schools, surplus places and/or immediate increasing or decreasing pressures, births, school rolls.
 - Projected future 'need', including the latest planned housing development trajectory, feeding into: births, population and school roll projections produced by the GLA.
 - Local variances and updated intelligence within the borough.
 - Latest school places planning summaries in neighbouring authorities.
 - 4.2 The analysis of school places is considered for the borough as a whole for both primary and secondary, with further analysis completed at primary by five smaller localised borough planning areas (PAs). Planning areas are considered helpful for analytical purposes only, and this analysis model is similar to other local authorities. Planning areas do not provide an indication of catchment areas for admission purposes, and pupils are not constrained by them.
 - 4.3 School roll projections anticipate trends over the next decade, and are updated every year, based on the latest underlying data. This includes actual registered births, GLA birth forecasts, fertility, migration, latest

Camden development, GLA population forecasts, and this year include COVID-19 modelling. Detail is also reported reflecting new boundary and planning area changes.

- 4.4 The majority of London boroughs, including Camden, use the Greater London Authority (GLA) school roll projection service expertise and modelling.
- 4.5 Forecasts are not actuals but are based on the latest known position in boroughs, updated base data, and latest roll trends within schools. They aim to provide an estimate of future 'need' within the borough for the next ten years. Every year background consistency checks are completed as part of the school place planning process, in addition to those already completed by the GLA. The accuracy of GLA forecasts is carefully reviewed against new school rolls, with the aim of continued development, renewal, and improvement.
- 4.6 The GLA school roll projection model is a simplification of complex realworld processes and as with any model there are limitations interpreting output based on a considerable number of changing variables including:
 - changes to future patterns of births or fertility,
 - changes in patterns of migration or anticipated development,
 - changes to parental preferences for schools,
 - capacity constraints of schools, future changes to school provision
 - changes to the future character of local areas,
 - the impact of welfare and VAT reforms,
 - global, national or local events such as COVID 19.
- 4.7 The GLA SRP model calculates the proportion of children attending mainstream state schools by national curriculum year group and gender, based on the GLA population projections and wards of residence. The GLA model explicitly accounts for cross border mobility using information on pupil home ward from the DfE national pupil database (NPD).
- 4.8 The GLA model continually evolves through discussions with borough subscribers and other key stakeholders to identify future enhancements. Enhancing accuracy and robustness of forecasts continues, as new sources of information become available. The GLA continue to negotiate with the DfE regarding the potential use of London School Preferences information submitted nationally in DfE statutory returns for reception and year 7 school offers data.

Planning Area Commentary

Planning Area 1, North West Camden

Situated in the north-west part of the borough, this planning area saw sustained rising pressure for a number of years, with school rolls remaining at higher levels to 2015/16, before falling. Historically this greater demand for school places in PA1 was also affected by rising demand in the immediate area, the western PA3 Swiss Cottage ward. PA1 continued with the lowest levels of reception surplus of any Camden planning area and saw an increase in reception pupils in 2023. PAN capacity has been reduced by 1FE, although PAN surplus is estimated to

increase to a potentially significant 23% or 2FE by 2034/35. This is a change from historic forecasts for this area and links to reductions in births and migration that have not been experienced in this area to this point. Whilst increases are anticipated towards the end of the planning period, we will need to carefully monitor this position.

• Planning Area 2, North East Camden

Situated in the north-east area of Camden. PA2 reception school rolls have fallen from the last relative high in 2015/16, with surplus the highest of any other planning area in 2020/21. In 2022 new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition have altered the forecast position making year to year comparisons problematic. However, actual reception school rolls fell by just under 2.5FE from 2015/16. The Council, after significant consultation took the difficult decision to close Carlton primary school (2FE) in July 2021. The latest forecast indicate a reduction in demand for Reception school places with surplus levels increasing to 25% by 2034/35 equivalent to 3FE.

Planning Area 3, Central Camden

Planning Area 3 comprises of the main east to west central belt of Camden. Demand was historically higher in the western Swiss Cottage ward bordering PA1. Reception school rolls have fallen from the last relative high in 2015/16, and the number of surplus places has increased consequently. In 2022 new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition have altered the forecast position making year to year comparisons problematic. Following detailed consultation, Camden in cooperation with the Westminster Diocese approved the closure of St Dominics Catholic Primary School from 2023. Inclusive of this decision the latest forecasts indicate a slight in demand for Reception school places with surplus levels increasing to 18% or 2FE by 2033/34.

Planning Area 4, South

Situated in the south of the borough between central and far southern areas, including Somers Town, King's Cross and St Pancras areas. This area is of highest anticipated development growth in Camden over the next ten years and beyond, developments are included in all GLA forecasts. In 2022 new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition have altered the forecast position making year to year comparisons problematic. Reception school rolls did however fall sharply from the last high in 2015/16 by over 3FE. The current forecasts however indicate a stabilisation in demand for reception pupils. Reception PAN surplus is anticipated to remain at 20% or 1.5FE throughout the planning period. Caution should be exercised when interpreting PA4 forecasts considering the high anticipated new development, as developments or phasing can change as plans alter through the planning process.

Planning Area 5, South of the Euston Road

Situated in the far south of the borough, and South of the Euston Road. PA5 has the lowest population of any other Camden planning area. Reception population has fallen significantly over the last 5 years. Total reception surplus is however forecast to remain stable at approximately 1.5FE throughout the planning period.

Borough SECONDARY

- 4.9 Future demand for school places is anticipated to fall throughout the planning period. PAN capacity reductions of 3.5FE in 2022/23 have been approved at Haverstock and La Sainte Union with further Schools considering future PAN reductions for local consultation and implementation in 2026/27.
- 4.10 The latest updated GLA SRP 2023 forecasts for borough secondary are reflective of previous forecasts. Year 7 PAN surplus is however estimated to increase from 7% in 2022/23 to 28% in 2034/35 equating to 14FE of school places.
- 4.11 The Council will be working with Secondary Schools to share and understand data. The Council and schools will come forward collectively with proposals, where appropriate, to match demand with a sustainable pattern of school provision.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The conclusions from this report and analysis are based on the latest known position to **August 2024**, fully reflective of newly revised underlying data, derived trends, and information since December 2021.
- 5.2 2022 saw the lowest number of recorded births in Camden in 30 years, with a drop of 34% from 2012 (compared to a 14% drop across London and 17% nationally over the same time period). Last year's forecasts also accounted for the significant reduced inward and increased outward migration experienced during the period of COVID restrictions and the continued impact of Brexit. The continued depressed demographic position gives pause for concern for all our schools especially when set alongside the significant financial pressures being experienced as a response to the cost of living crisis and ongoing inflationary pressures.
- 5.3 The monitoring of school place demand will continue within the borough, linking closely with schools and other colleagues across Camden and other London Boroughs to share and integrate relevant data. In addition, a continued commitment to the aims of Building Back Stronger and supporting the placed based and collaborative response to the existing challenges facing the schools sector will be required.

6 **LEGAL COMMENTS**

- By virtue of sections 13 and 14 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for the children in the borough. In addition, the Council must increase parental choice. The Council needs to undertake a school roll projection to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the need.
- 6.2 The Council must take into account its equality duties when exercising its functions, namely to have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited

under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Under the Duty the relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim only i.e. reducing discrimination etc, the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant. It appears from the report that the Council in undertaking its statutory duty for school planning, acts in accord with its equality's duties.

- 6.3 The updated 2021 Admissions Code, the first major revision since 2014, contains an expanded definition of previously looked after children to include children who were in state care outside of the UK but were subsequently adopted. And the Fair Access Protocol now encompass more children including the unplaced, the vulnerable and those who are unable to secure a school place in-year.
- 6.4 Although there has been no statutory requirement to publish a School Organisation Plan since 2004, it is considered good practice to produce a plan related to pupil place planning. This will show local communities the present and predicted future pupil numbers on roll, together with information about birth rates, school capacity, and new housing. In addition, the plan sets out the statutory framework for making changes such as opening, closing, or enlarging schools in the Borough.

7 FINANCE COMMENTS

The revenue costs of a school (staffing, running costs) are funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is distributed on a formula basis. DSG allocations are on a per pupil basis so the funding received by a school will rise and fall in line with increases or decreases in pupil numbers. National DSG funding allocations have not kept pace with costs which creates a financial pressure for schools. The over-supply of school places exacerbates the financial pressures in the school system as no funding is received for vacant places.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no decisions that result from this report. Ensuring that our school estate best meets the demographic pressures of the area means that our resources are efficiently used. In addition, having school buildings that are embedded in their local area, providing high quality educational outcomes ensures that residents are attracted to local provision avoiding unnecessary journeys.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A: General Data Appendix B: Primary Forecasts Appendix C: Secondary Forecasts

Appendix D: Borough Map Appendix E: Private School Proportion

REPORT ENDS