

Cabinet – 8 June 2011

Provision of Primary School Places

Portfolio: Councillor Rachel Andrew, Children's Services

Service: Walsall Children's Services - Serco

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 The report advises Cabinet of the demand for primary school places in Walsall and sets out proposals for meeting the changing demand for places in the short and medium term.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the schedule of primary school places as set out in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge Caldmore Primary School and increase the intake from 30 to 60 places from 1 September 2012.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge Leighswood Primary School and increase the intake from 75 to 90 places from 1 September 2012.
- 2.4 That Cabinet notes that a further report regarding the provision of primary school places in the Willenhall, Short Heath, Bentley and Darlaston North areas will be brought to a future meeting.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Since this matter was last considered by Cabinet in March 2010, officers have continued to undertake further work to establish the likely demand for primary school places over the next few years. This report provides an update of the position and includes details of proposals to address the demand for additional places.

PUPIL NUMBER FORECASTS

- 3.2 Details of forecast numbers for the primary sector through to 2018/19 were considered by Cabinet on 17 March 2010 as part of a report on the Provision of Primary School Places.

Births

- 3.3.1 Since then, details of births for 2009 have become available, and these together with updated information about admissions to schools and associated trends in the admissions, cross-border pupil movements, cohort survival, and housing developments have been factored into revised projections for the period to the 2015/16 academic year. This planning period is the same as that used by the DfE.
- 3.3.2 Members will be aware that nationally there has recently been an increase in the birth rate and that one of the consequences of this has been an increase in the demand for primary school places. Table 1 below provides details of actual births in Walsall from the 2006/07 school year through to 2009 and birth projections from 2010 onwards. All of this births data has been provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Actual births in 2006/07 totalled 3,475 and have since increased to approx 3,650. The projections produced by the ONS are for births to increase in subsequent years to approximately 3,680 – 3,700. Births data for 2010 will not be available until autumn 2011.

Table 1 Births data for Walsall

| Year of birth | Births | Projected demand for Reception places | Reception admission year | Notes |
|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| 2006/07 | 3,475 | 3,413 | 2011/12 | Actual births from ONS |
| 2007/08 | 3,656 | 3,557 | 2012/13 | Actual births from ONS |
| 2008/09 | 3,637 | 3,539 | 2013/14 | Actual births from ONS |
| 2009/10 | 3,665 | 3,581 | 2014/15 | Part actual and part projected births from ONS |
| 2010/11 | 3,687 | 3,602 | 2015/16 | ONS birth projections |
| 2011/12 | 3,696 | 3,610 | 2016/17 | ONS birth projections |
| 2012/13 | 3,694 | 3,606 | 2017/18 | ONS birth projections |
| 2013/14 | 3,687 | 3,598 | 2018/19 | ONS birth projections |
| 2014/15 | | 3,592 | 2019/20 | ONS birth projections |

ONS: Office for National Statistics

- 3.3.3 Table 1 also provides details of the projected demand for reception places. Demand for places is lower than the number of births and this pattern arises as a result of migration / family relocation and also because of cross-border pupil movement for education. These data include an uplift to allow for pupil yield from residential developments with planning consent.

Trend in Primary Pupil Numbers

- 3.4.1 Details of the actual number of primary pupils on roll at schools in Walsall since the 1996/97 school year to 2011 are provided in Table 2 below. This table also includes projected pupil numbers through to 2019/20 although the DfE planning period only extends to 2015/16. There is, of course, a degree of uncertainty

about projections for 2014/15 and in following years; this uncertainty increases with the number of years ahead because the number of births in future years may be affected by a variety of factors. As children are admitted to reception as rising 5s (ie all have had their 4th birthday), the actual lead-in time is short, especially given the time lag between births and the data being made available.

- 3.4.2 The data also include an uplift for pupil yield associated with residential developments in the borough but, given the economic situation, the rate at which dwellings will be completed over the next few years is very uncertain.

Table 2 Trend in primary pupil numbers in Walsall from 1997 to 2019/20.

| School Year | Number of Primary Pupils (January) | Number of Reception pupils |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1996/97 | 25,451 | 3,766 |
| 1997/98 | 25,261 | 3,534 |
| 1998/99 | 25,115 | 3,451 |
| 1999/2000 | 24,806 | 3,340 |
| 2000/01 | 24,562 | 3,325 |
| 2001/02 | 24,281 | 3,407 |
| 2002/03 | 23,968 | 3,381 |
| 2003/04 | 23,544 | 3,310 |
| 2004/05 | 23,406 | 3,315 |
| 2005/06 | 23,110 | 3,150 |
| 2006/07 | 22,910 | 3,135 |
| 2007/08 | 22,855 | 3,257 |
| 2008/09 | 22,654 | 3,266 |
| 2009/10 | 22,683 | 3,336 |
| 2010/11 | 22,943 | 3,511 |
| 2011/12 | 23,092* | 3,413* |
| 2012/13 | 23,557* | 3,557* |
| 2013/14 | 23,973* | 3,539* |
| 2014/15 | 24,323* | 3,581* |
| 2015/16 | 24,612* | 3,602* |
| 2016/17 | 24,864* | 3,610* |
| 2017/18 | 24,934* | 3,606* |
| 2018/19 | 25,118* | 3,598* |
| 2019/20 | 25,113* | 3,592* |

*Projected

Shaded cells indicate DfE planning period

- 3.4.3 Following a period of reducing rolls in the primary sector from 1996/97 through to 2008/09, the total number of pupils on roll is forecast to increase in 2009/10 as a result of an increase in reception admissions. This will mark the start of a trend of increasing numbers following a period of decline when pupil numbers fell by 2,800 over a 12 year period and during which a number of primary schools became unviable and were closed as part of the Council's strategy to reduce the high level of surplus places in the primary sector. By 2013/14, the projected number of primary pupils is similar to numbers in 2002/03. Projected numbers beyond this date are less secure as they are progressively based on projected births rather than actual births; however, they do indicate further increases although totals are forecast to still be below the higher levels of the mid1990s.

- 3.4.4 Admissions to reception in September 2012 are forecast to be in the region of 3,560 and this higher level of admissions is forecast to be sustained for the next five years or so.

SUPPLY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

- 3.5.1 The number of primary school places was reduced significantly between 2003 and 2007. The level of surplus places in the primary sector was unacceptably high during this period and a number of schools were becoming unviable educationally, financially and socially. Many of the reductions in places were achieved through the 'amalgamation' of infant and junior schools to create more viable schools with fewer surplus places. Since then, in response to an increasing demand, additional places have been created at Leighswood Primary School (admission number increased from 70 to 75 from September 2010) and Birchills CE Primary School (admission number increased from 45 to 60) from September 2011. In a number of schools surplus places were removed and the released accommodation used for Children's Centres.
- 3.5.2 Throughout the planning period to 2015/16 the total number of places in Walsall schools in the primary sector is greater than the projected total number of pupils. However, as pupil numbers are projected to continue to increase as a result of the larger cohorts being admitted to reception, this will increasingly place pressures on school accommodation.
- 3.5.3 The total number of places available for reception pupils at schools in Walsall in September 2011 is 3,675 (admission numbers for all schools are provided in **Appendix A**. Admission numbers for primary and infant schools are mostly 30, 60 or 90 or other multiples of 15 in order to comply with legislation on infant class sizes which requires the number of pupils in infant classes not to exceed 30 per teacher. Only in the most limited, very specific and time-limited circumstances can this pupil teacher ratio be exceeded. As a result, it is not possible for admission numbers to be exceeded and for schools to admit a small number of additional pupils. For financial viability reasons it would be necessary to create additional places by increasing admission numbers by 15 (or a multiple thereof) as this would enable additional classes to be run. In some schools this could be accommodated in the short term without the provision of additional classrooms and other facilities. Whilst the creation of additional places may ease pressure in a particular area of the borough, it is possible that the need to create a minimum of 15 additional places may impact on admissions at neighbouring schools.
- 3.5.4 September 2011 admissions: a total of 3,413 Reception offers have been made and 262 places remain available. As in previous years, it is expected that a number of late applications will be received over the coming months as families move into the area and there are sufficient places available to accommodate this.
- 3.5.5 The projected number of pupils for whom a reception place will be required in September 2012 is 3,557 and demand for places in 2013 is expected to be at a similar level. The total number of reception places available is 3,675. The proposals set out below would provide an additional 45 places giving a total of 3,720.

- 3.5.6 Details of the demand for school places at 'natural community' level are set out in **Appendix B**. The main areas of pressure are the town centre, Aldridge (Leighswood) and Willenhall.

PROPOSED SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES

- 3.6 In order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places consideration has been given to a wide range of factors including the pattern of provision of schools in the primary sector, trends in pupil numbers in the various areas, patterns of cross border pupil movements, the relative accessibility of schools, and the pattern of housing developments and sites with planning permission for residential development. As a result of this it is proposed to increase the number of places at two schools.
- 3.7 Demand for places in the town centre, especially the south and east areas, is high with particular pressures in infant year groups and demand is expected to increase further.

Additional places are required for September 2012 and following a detailed option appraisal it is proposed to significantly enlarge Caldmore Primary School and increase the intake from 30 to 60 places from 1 September 2012. The school is well located to meet the increased demand for places in the neighbourhood and this will improve the availability of places in the local area. This increased admission number would apply to the Reception year group in the 2012/13 school year and then progress up through the school.

Cabinet is recommended to approve consultation on this proposal.

- 3.8 It is also proposed to provide additional places at Leighswood Primary School in Aldridge by increasing the admission number from 75 to 90 from 1 September 2012. This is in response to a need to manage pupil numbers at the school and to provide a modest number of additional places in the primary sector in the local area

The number of places at Leighswood was recently increased from 70 to 75 following the provision of some additional classrooms for junior pupils. However, the number of pupils admitted to the school has continued to exceed the admission number as a result of successful appeals

In September 2010, 84 pupils were admitted to the Reception year group; 75 places were offered through the application of the oversubscription criteria and 9 as a result of successful appeals. Such a situation is extremely difficult for the school to manage and in view of the continued popularity of the school and vulnerability to successful appeals, it is proposed to increase the admission number to 90 from 1 September 2012. This increased admission number would apply to the Reception year group in the 2012/13 school year and then progress up through the school.

Cabinet is recommended to approve consultation on this proposal.

- 3.9 Subject to Cabinet's approval of the recommendations in this report, consultation on the proposed enlargement of Caldmore Primary School and Leighswood Primary School will be for a six-week period.
- 3.10 It is not proposed to increase the number of nursery places at either Caldmore or Leighswood Primary Schools.
- 3.11 In the Willenhall area, additional places have been provided at King Charles Primary School which is being significantly enlarged; the intake has been increased from 30 to 45 places from September 2011 and additional places were also offered in September 2010. However, in future years further additional places will be required in the Willenhall, Short Heath, Bentley and Darlaston North areas of the borough and a further report will be brought to a future meeting.
- 3.12 The demand for places in other areas of the borough can be met over the next few years however, work on projections will continue in order to ensure that sufficient places are available across Walsall.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 High levels of surplus places are inefficient and are not cost effective; they also impact adversely on the level of revenue funding all schools receive through the formula.
- 4.1.2 Walsall Council receives modest allocations of capital from the government for the provision of new school places. This is supplemented by S106 developer contributions when the level of school places in an area is considered insufficient to meet the additional demand for school places expected to be generated from housing developments. Recently a number of developers have been able to demonstrate that the profitability of developments is such that these contributions are unaffordable. This has resulted in the loss of some contributions and means that the financial burden of providing school places will fall on the Council and that scarce capital resources will have to be diverted from other education priorities at schools across the borough. Subject to decisions to be taken by Cabinet over the coming months in respect of these enlargement proposals, Members would be recommended to approve the use of any available S 106 developer contributions towards the cost of the associated schemes.
- 4.1.3 Walsall has been advised of capital allocations for the 2011/12 financial year only although the DfE has confirmed that there is no spend deadline on this funding. The funding allocations available to Walsall include allocations for Basic Need and Capital Maintenance and there is an opportunity to use this funding flexibly should this be required.
- 4.1.4 On 8 April 2011, the government published the James Review of Education Capital Report which sets out recommendations for future arrangements for education capital investment and the procurement of schemes. The recommendations are included as an appendix to the report on the Education Capital Programme elsewhere on this agenda. It is understood that the Secretary of State intends to conduct a public consultation on the proposals over

the coming months. No announcement has been made regarding the education capital allocations from 2012 onwards.

- 4.1.3 More detailed proposals to address the priorities identified in this report within the resources available to the Council will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

4.2 **Legal:**

- 4.2.1 All LAs are required to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places in order to secure provision of an efficient and cost effective education service. In the event that LAs do not implement strategies to address imbalances between the supply of and demand for school places, the Secretary of State may direct that action is taken.

- 4.3 **Staffing:** There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

5. **Citizen impact**

- 5.1 The efficient provision of school places enables greater resources to be targeted at teaching and learning thereby contributing to the raising of standards.

6. **Community safety**

There are no safety implications as a result of this report.

7. **Environmental impact**

There are no direct environmental impacts as a result of this report.

8. **Performance and risk management issues**

- 8.1 **Risk:** All LAs are statutorily required to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places in order to secure provision of an efficient and cost effective education service.
- 8.2 **Performance management:** The overall percentage of surplus places and the number of schools with more than 25% surplus places are performance indicators

9. **Equality implications**

The efficient provision of school places enables greater resources to be targeted at teaching and learning thereby enhancing equality of opportunity.

10. **Consultation**

The report has not been subject to any community consultation.

Background papers

Data relating to births, PLASC.

Cabinet report: Supply of School Places; 16 September 2009

Cabinet report: Provision of Primary School Places; 17 March 2010.

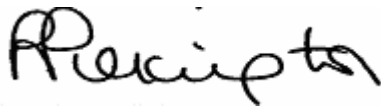
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Signed:
Executive Director:
Pauline Pilkington
Date: 25 May 2011



Signed:
Interim Managing Director, Walsall
Children's Services - Serco
Date: 20 May 2011



Signed:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Andrew
Date: 25 May 2011

Admission numbers in primary and infant schools

| School | Admission number 2011 | Admission number 2012 | Notes |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Abbey Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Alumwell Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| Barcroft Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Beacon Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Bentley Drive Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Bentley West Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Birchills CE Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Blackwood School | 90 | 90 | |
| Bloxwich CE JMI | 45 | 45 | |
| Blue Coat CE Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| Brownhills West Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Busill Jones Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Butts Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Caldmore Community Primary | 30* | 60* | Increase to 60 proposed from September 2012 |
| Castlefort JMI | 30 | 30 | |
| Christ Church CE Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Chuckery Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Cooper and Jordan CE Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| County Bridge Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Croft Community Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Delves Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| Edgar Stammers Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Elmore Green Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Fibbersley Park Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Green Rock Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Greenfield Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Harden Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Hatherton Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Hillary Primary | 90 | 90 | |
| Holy Trinity CE Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| King Charles Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Kings Hill Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Leamore Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Leighswood Primary | 75* | 90* | Increase to 90 proposed from September 2012 |
| Lindens Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Little Bloxwich CE JMI | 30 | 30 | |
| Lodge Farm Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Lower Farm Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Manor Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Meadow View JMI | 60 | 60 | |
| Millfield Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Moorcroft Wood Primary | 30 | 30 | |

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------|--|
| Mossley Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| New Invention Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| North Walsall Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Old Church CE Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Palfrey Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| Park Hall Infant Academy | 90 | 90 | |
| Pelsall Village Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Pheasey Park Farm Primary | 90 | 90 | |
| Pinfold Street JMI | 60 | 60 | |
| Pool Hayes Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Rosedale CE Infant | 60 | 60 | |
| Rough Hay Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| Rushall JMI | 30 | 30 | |
| Ryders Hayes Primary Academy | 60 | 60 | |
| Salisbury Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| St Anne's Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Bernadette's Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Francis Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Giles CE Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| St James Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St John's CE Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| St Joseph's Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Michael's CE Primary | 45 | 45 | |
| St Patrick's Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Peter's Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Sunshine Infant | 60 | 60 | |
| The Radleys Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Walsall Wood Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Watling Street JMI | 30 | 30 | |
| Whetstone Field Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Whitehall Nursery and Infant | 90 | 90 | |
| Woodlands Primary | 60 | 60 | |
| Total | 3,675 | 3,720 | |

Note

* Proposed change

Overview of demand for school places, by natural communities

| Area / natural community | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | |
| Brownhills | No additional places required. |
| Walsall Wood | Places available in the area and at other nearby schools. |
| Aldridge | Additional places previously created at Leighswood Primary School from September 2010 when admission number was increased from 70 to 75. Demand for places is high and proposal to consult on significant enlargement to 3FE (admission number of 90) from September 2012. |
| Streetly | Demand for places in line with availability. |
| Great Barr | Places available in the area. |
| Pelsall | Places available. |
| Rushall | Places available. |
| Willenhall North | Demand for places has increased. Significant enlargement of King Charles Primary to 1.5 FE agreed from September 2011. Need for further additional places to be assessed. |
| Short Heath | |
| Willenhall South | |
| Bentley and Darlaston North | |
| Darlaston | No additional places required. |
| Town centre: N&W | Demand for places has increased. Implementation date of enlargement at Birchills CE Primary School to 2 FE was brought forward to 2010. |
| Town centre: S&E | Demand for places has increased. Significant enlargement of Hillary Primary School to 3FE agreed from September 2011. Demand for places remains high in the local area and proposal to consult on significant enlargement of Caldmore Primary to 2FE (admission number of 60) from September 2012. |
| Bloxwich and Blakenall | No additional places required. |