



Report title: Need for Secondary School Places 2024 - 2028

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Tuesday 19 December 2023

Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Public or private: Public

Key Decision?: Yes - is likely to lead to significant expenditure or savings within a service area, or one that is likely to have a significant impact on the life of a community within the Borough.

Published on the Forward Plan: No

1. Report summary

1.1 The report details the sufficiency in Secondary school places and is an annual review of current school places and forecasts up to 6 years ahead. Currently the council is awaiting the outcome of the Places for Everyone Strategy which will indicate some of the possible larger housing developments over the next 10-15 year period.

1.2 Because children arrive in-year and at all ages through their Primary school years, consideration must be made to predict the increase in pupil numbers. Because the Secondary pupil number forecast needs to address sufficiency over the next 6 years then Places for Everyone indicative housing allocations have been included to better predict potential growth.

1.3 The report details expenditure needed to manage the schools estate in order to meet the statutory duty of the council to offer a school place to every child living in the borough.

1.4 DfE have indicated that the possible new school in Littleborough is being re-started. However any potential opening date will not be earlier than 2027.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Across the Middleton and Heywood sector more places need to be kept under review to manage late and in-year applications, with up to 40 additional places may be needed for 2024. Approval sought for spend detailed in appendix 1.

2.2 Across the Rochdale and Heywood sector it is estimated an additional 100 places need to be sought to late and in-year applications for 2024. Approval sought for spend detailed in appendix 1.

2.3 In Middleton approval is sought consult and approve in-principal funding to start to expand the Secondary school estate by 30 intake places for 2027. Approval sought for spend detailed in appendix 1.

3. Reason for recommendation

3.1 The council has a statutory duty to provide education and school places to all school aged children living in the borough and consequently has a duty to plan adequately for predicted pupil numbers.

3.2 Under the Education Act 1996, section 14(1) the Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient school places and is also the strategic commissioner for new school places in its area.

3.3 A local authority shall exercise their functions under this legislation to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education and, in the case of a local authority in England, further education, are available to meet the needs of the population of their area

4. Alternatives considered

4.1 Alternatives to recommendations 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 are limited. The Council is required to meet its statutory duty to maintain sufficient places, and consequently must work in partnership with all schools (maintained and non-maintained) to manage sufficiency. Not delivering additional capacity could put the council in danger of not meeting its statutory obligations.

5. Key information

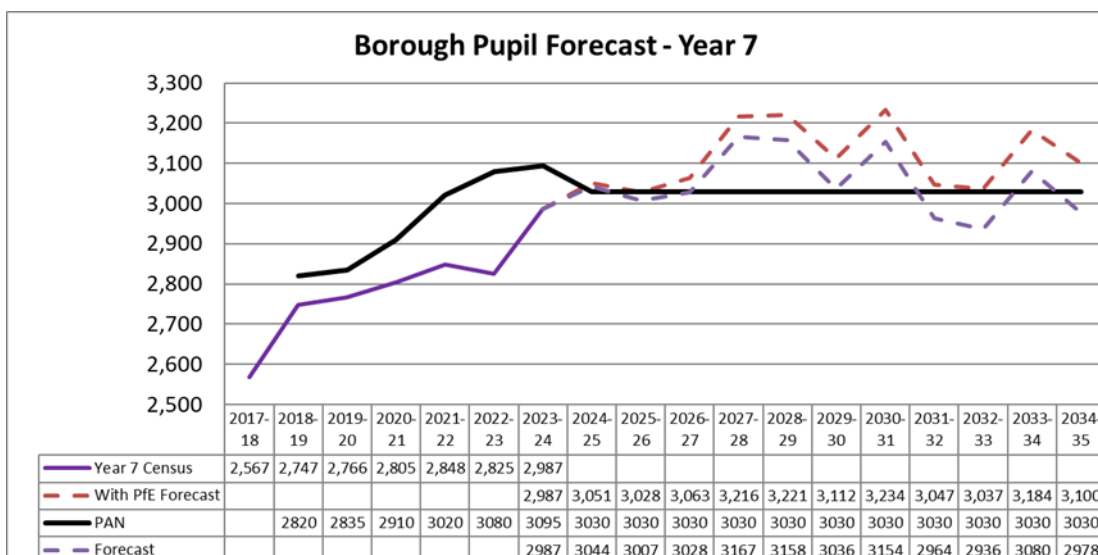
5.1 Over the next 5 years our Secondary schools will start accommodating the peak of the bulge in births that occurred between 2012 and 2016. The current Year-6, with 3,181 pupils, has seen an additional 141 children arrive in borough since birth, and the current Year 5, with 3,091 pupils, has seen an additional 221 children arrive. 221 children amounts to an additional 8 classes of children or almost an 8% increase.

5.2 September 2021 saw the opening of the Edgar Wood Academy which has been oversubscribed in each subsequent year. 2022/23 saw a drop in secondary applications possibly due to poor Ofsted reports in some local schools. 2022 also saw the opening of the new Brian Clarke Academy run by the Blue Coats trust in Oldham.

- 5.3 Over the last few years the borough, on average, loses 6.6% of its Year 6 pupils on transition to high school; with out-of-borough Church of England, Private and Grammar schools making up a large proportion of these pupils. This does however vary year to year, dependent on various factors. In 2021 we saw a net out-flow at Secondary transition of 241 pupils or 8% of the Year 6 cohort. The lowest level of loss was in 2016, when 86 pupils or, 3% net moved out at transition. The difference in movement-out between these two years is five forms of entry or above 150 pupils; which shows the potential year to year unpredictability.
- 5.4 For the Year 7 application round for 2023 school entry the council received a total of 3,081 on time applications from children living in the borough, with a total of 3,080 places available. The previous Need for Secondary School Places 2022 report gave a forecast of 3,022 Year 7 pupils for the 2023 intake. On Secondary Offer Day 2,959 pupils were offered places in Rochdale schools. Of the offers 133 children were offered places in non-preference schools.
- 5.5 The local authority receives a high number of late applications in certain areas across the borough.

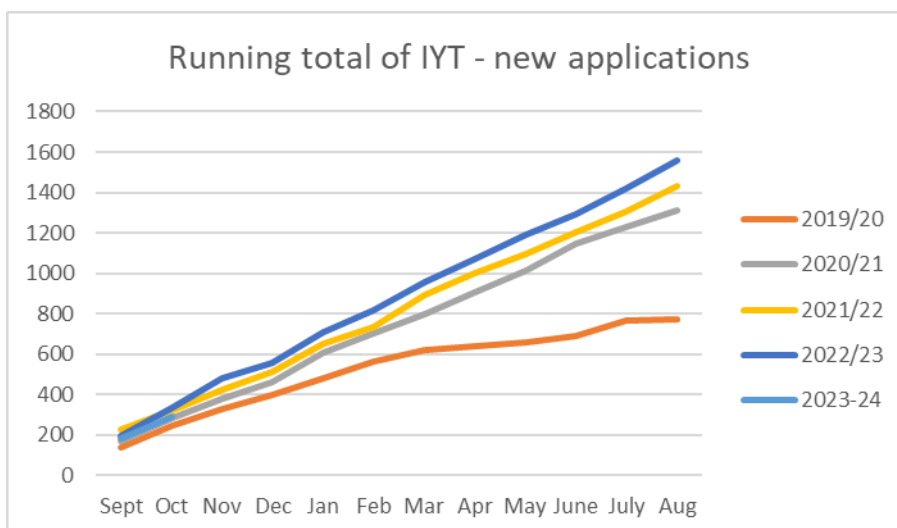
September 2023	Number of Children
On-time Applications	3,081
PAN – Total Places Available	3,080
Forecast for 2023 intake	3,022
Offered Places on offer day	2,959
Number on roll	2,987

- 5.6 The October 2023 census (estimated) gives 2987 pupils on roll in Year 7. The local authority always has more applications than pupils who arrive in school at the start of term, and the statutory duty is to offer every child living in the borough, who applies, a school place. I.e. The LA always need more places to offer than is forecast or taken up. The forecast predicts how many children will arrive in school and not how many applications and offers we expect to process.

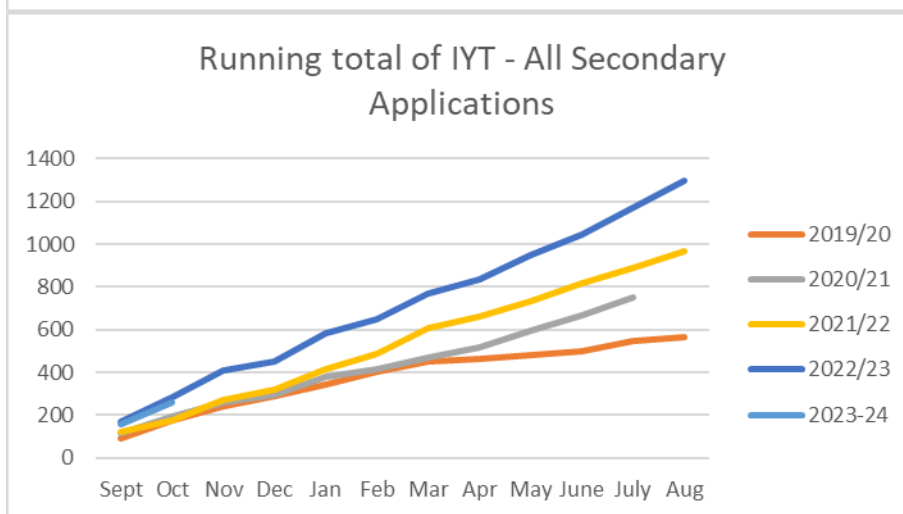


- 5.7 The graph above shows that for the next 3 years, 2024 – 2026, in both with and without PFE scenarios that Rochdale schools will be very close to capacity. This combined with the fact that the local authority also has more applications than are forecast, and that the year to year uncertainty on applications can be impacted by Greater Manchester wide factors, mean that for the following year more capacity should be sought in order to guarantee that the local authority continues to meet its statutory duty.
- 5.8 From 2021 – 2023 additional capacity was provided by an expansion of Wardle Academy where the school have taken a total of 150 additional children over the 3 year period. Additional capacity was also sought across Heywood and Middleton for September 2023, with 15 more places offered in order to meet late applications through the summer.
- 5.9 In-year ‘new’ school applications shown in the graph below indicate that since applications dipped in the first year of covid lockdowns, the in-year applications for school places have grown in each subsequent year.
- 5.10 Part of the reason for increasing numbers of in-year school applications is the rise in numbers of applications for Secondary school places shown in the ‘Secondary’ graph below. There is a shortage of Ofsted rated “good” Secondary school places across GM, and Middleton had the Edgar Wood Academy open in its permanent site for 2022 intake along-side the new housing in that area.

5.11



5.12



Heywood and Middleton

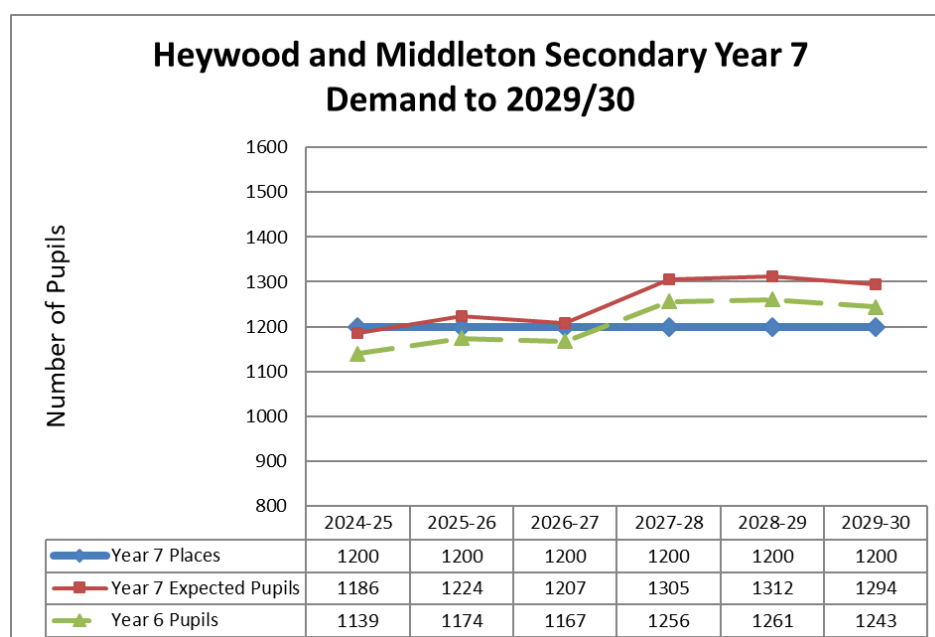
5.13 The combined Heywood and Middleton forecast suggests for 2024 intake the number of applications should drop slightly. For 2023 intake the local authority asked all schools in the area to take an additional 5 children. Three out of the six schools approved the uplift in numbers and 15 additional places were created.

September 2023	Number of children
Size of Cohort in Year 6	1,182
PAN – Total Places Available	1,215 (incl. 15 additional)
Forecast	1,196
Offered Places on Offer Day	1,164
Late applications (first preference)	68
Number on roll	1,185

5.14 The current number on roll (as of 13/10/2023) as shown in the table above is 1,185, with 30 spare places across the area. This is 2.5% spare capacity which is deemed an acceptable capacity to be able to place most in-year

applicants a suitable school. However the LA does receive a high number of applications, and some travel distances across the joint Heywood and Middleton area could be longer than the 3 miles travel to school distance.

- 5.15 The current forecast below suggest there are currently 1,139 in Year 6, with 1,186 children expected to arrive in school in Year 7. The 1,186 pupils expected theoretically leaves only 14 spare places. Last year 68 additional late applications were received, so the conclusion is that additional capacity of 40 places should be kept as an option through the application round for 2024.
- 5.16 For 2027 the forecast shows that there will be a shortage of between 52 places to 105 places (if new housing is included). This rises to between 82 places short and 177 places short (with new housing). Consequently the LA must move forward with seeking additional capacity and to this end the LA will consult to look at delivering an expansion of a school in the area to increase the intake by 30 places.



Pennines and Rochdale

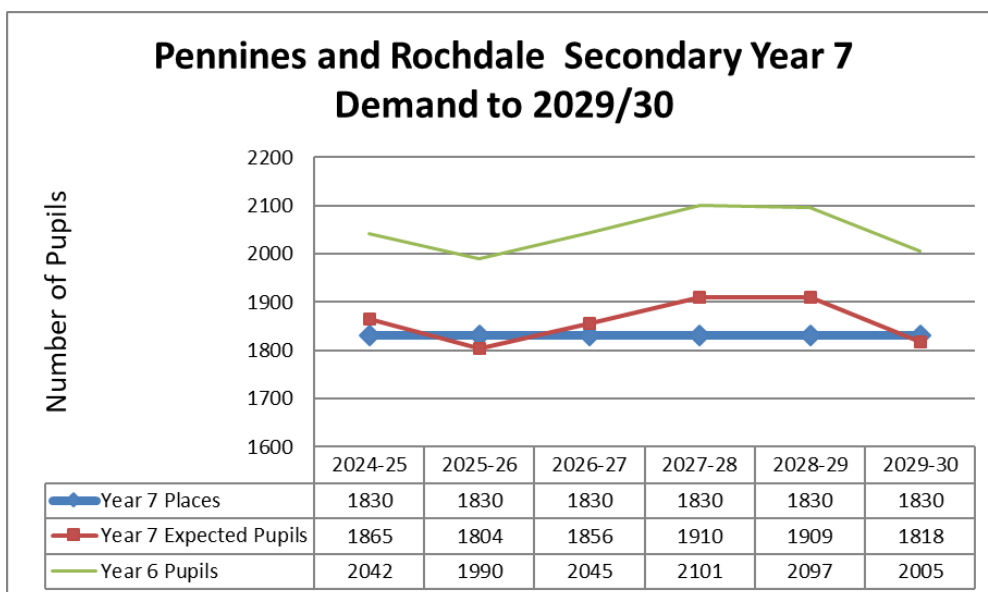
- 5.17 In 2020 St Cuthbert's RC, Kingsway Park, and Falinge Park each offered 10 additional places, and Matthew Moss High offered 20 additional places across the area. In 2021 St Cuthbert's again offered 10 additional places. For the last 3 years to 2023 Wardle Academy has temporarily expanded its intake to take 50 additional places per year each year to support the LA to manage the sufficiency of places.
- 5.18 Academy schools and Voluntary Aided schools set and manage their own Admissions and the LA works alongside them and our community schools to manage places to deliver on the LA's statutory duty to provide a school place

offer to every child in the borough however late they apply. The LA is grateful for the support of the school's sector in the delivering of this vital service.

- 5.19 In 2022 the LA was notified of the DfE “pause” in the delivery of a second new Secondary academy school. The DfE have now notified the LA that the project is to be restarted. Unfortunately because of the pause the project is to be restarted afresh. Consequently the DfE have suggested that any new school will not be opened until 2027 at the earliest.
- 5.20 Rochdale North and South Townships see the largest flow out at Secondary transition. The combined Rochdale and Pennines areas see on average 10.5% (or 217 pupils) leave the borough for their secondary education.
- 5.21 The table below shows that for 2023 the area lost 216 pupils (net) at transition, the offer day total was in-line with final number on roll and the forecast was slightly above. However the data shows that following offer day the LA still needed 88 potential spaces to offer late applications. An additional 25 pupils were also placed in Year-7 places through the in-year applications process.

September 2023	Number of children
Size of Cohort in Year 6	2,018
PAN – Total Places Available	1,880 (incl. 50 additional places)
Forecast	1,825
Offered Places on Offer Day	1,795
Late applications (first preference)	88
Number on roll	1,802

- 5.22 For 2024 there are 2,042 pupils in year 6, with 1,865 pupils forecast and 1,830 places. This suggests a shortfall of 35 places on an average intake, but spare places will be needed to be able to offer for late applications and in-year applications. Consequently it is estimated in order to meet its statutory duty the LA needs 100 additional places from the seven schools. [35 to meet offer day need, plus 25 to meet in-year need, plus 40 to meet need to offer late applicants].



5.23 **Summary**

- I. 2024/25 to 2026/27 will see the borough continue to struggle to offer sufficient good school places. This is likely to cause continued pressures on inclusion services and the Fair Access process. While there are insufficient good school places it is difficult to accurately forecast how many parents will choose to opt for out-of-borough Private, Grammar and CofE schools;
- II. The second new (potential) academy school will not now open until 2027 at the earliest, but the programme has been restarted by the DfE;
- III. Across the Middleton and Heywood sector more places need to be kept under review to manage late and in-year applications;
- IV. In Middleton approval is sought to approve in-principal funding to expand the Secondary school estate intake by 30 for 2027;
- V. Across the Rochdale and Heywood sector it is estimated an additional 100 places need to be sought to late and in-year applications;

6. **Finance**

- 6.1 The costs associated with co-ordinating admission arrangements are met from the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 6.2 Where applicable, schools offering additional pupil places to meet the LA's statutory need may also be eligible for additional revenue funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The policy and funding available for basic need growth has to be agreed with Schools Forum.

6.3 Schools are funded based on the number of pupils. Whilst it is acknowledged that the LA needs some vacant places for in-year applications, a high number of vacant places can have an adverse effect on school's revenue funding.

6.4 The costs associated with capital expansions will be met from the Basic Need Capital allocation

7. Legal

7.1 Under the Education Act 1996, section 14(1) the Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient school places and is also the strategic commissioner for new school places in its area. Most of the Secondary schools in the borough are schools who manage their own Admissions.

7.2 A local authority shall exercise their functions under this legislation to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education and, in the case of a local authority in England, further education, are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.

8. Human Resource

8.1 Two scenarios for any additional staff would be funded through school's revenue (Dedicated School's Grant) and include DSG funding to academies to undertake to directly employ additional staff, or to maintained schools for posts on council's standard contracts.

9. Sustainability Impact

9.1 Project will reduce significantly travelling times and costs or vulnerable families with school aged children. Project will improve education outcomes as more children will be learning in their local schools who abide by Rochdale behaviours and values. Reduction in vehicular travel will be an outcome. Local schools do a huge amount of work on integration and culture.

10. Other considerations (corporate priorities, risks)

10.1 EIA

Positive outcomes from this project would be improvements in day to day living of families with school aged children. School environments are the best places to reduce inequalities when all children have access to good school places.

Background Papers: None

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