



Date of Meeting	29 th September 2020
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Report Author	Fay Davies
Public/Private Document	Public

Need for Primary School Places 2021-2024

Executive Summary

- 1.1 After a peak in births for the 2021/22 Primary school intake birth rates appear to be levelling off and dropping in some area of the borough. However in-year applications for school places have continued to be high with the usual rate of key stage 1 (age 5-7 years) and increased numbers arriving at year 3 and above.
- 1.2 Large numbers of new housing in the last few years has impacted on the ability of school admissions to provide school places in schools of preference and in some localities.
- 1.3 Housing coming forward in north Pennines, South Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood will mean some expansion of the school estate will continue to be needed. In some places inability to further extend schools will require new schools to be built. Where a new school and site is being delivered through developer contributions, a trust will be needed to run the school and the Free school Presumption route is required to be followed. Any new school sites should be sufficient to requirements.

Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet consider the information in this report and support the expansion of the Primary school estate.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the opening of a consultation on proposals to address the need for extra Reception places.
- 2.3 That Members consider the new Primary school needed as part of the junction 19 development, which will be required to be provided through developer contributions and using the Free school Presumption route.
- 2.4 That Members approve the capital expenditure on bulge classes in north Pennines and Middleton.

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 Current housing development plans along with the housing allocations defined in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, GMSF (currently still under consultation) dictate that pupil numbers in Rochdale may continue to grow in some localities and plans must be put in place to create the needed school capacity. New housing build rates have been above those required to be delivered by the GMSF for two years.
- 3.3 Parental choice creates a situation where parents who can, are more likely to travel longer distances to school, this means that spare capacity is more likely to be concentrated in fewer schools and consequently over supply of school places is a consideration. Falling birth rates and increased housing mean that places are constantly under review.

Key Points for Consideration

4.1 Heywood

In recent years Woodland CP, Harwood Park CP, St Joseph's RC Primary and St Luke's CE Primary have all been extended creating an additional 90 Reception places. House building rates have been relatively high in Heywood for the nine years, and are due to slow. However housing coming forward at the junction 19 development will require a new school to be delivered through the Free School Presumption route. Good timing of the new housing and new school will be crucial to maintain sufficient places.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Extra Reception Places Needed	34 spare	22 spare	6 spare	25 spare
Plans	Harwood Park has a temporary bulge class in this year (+30)		Look to provide a temporary bulge class if needed for 2023/23	
Future Issues			(ii) New housing coming forward in Heywood will require a new 1 form entry school and an - extension to an existing school may be required in the interim.	

4.2 Middleton

Five schools in Middleton have been extended recently, creating an additional 105 places. Two further schools have provided bulge classes for consecutive years. However Reception year started with 68 spare places in September 2018 and 86 spare places in 2019 and this amount of spare capacity caused significant issues with school financing. It appears likely that extra capacity will need to be sought in either the east or south of the area requiring expansion of an existing school.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Extra Reception Places Needed	4 places needed	32 spare	11 spare	40 spare
Plans	Look to provide a temporary bulge class		Look to provide temporary bulge class	
Future Issues			Keep under review pupil place need because of new housing developments. Permanent expansion of school may be needed in East or South of Middleton.	

4.3 Pennines

In recent years St Andrews CE and Newhey CP have been extended and a further 3 schools have taken temporary bulge classes. New housing at Birch Hill hospital is thought to have increased applications for places in the north and further housing developments are under construction. Although current birth rates indicate dropping numbers, housing developments under construction will impact on the current spare capacity. Bulge classes will be needed in north Pennines for 2021 intake, but in the south previous rises in birth rates have not been a good predictor of Reception place uptake in the area. Places in the south of the area will be kept under review.

		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Pennines N	Extra Reception Places Needed	13 places needed	44 spare	35 spare	37 spare
	Plans	Look to provide a temporary bulge class			
	Future Issues			Keep under review pupil place need because of new housing developments	
Pennines S	Extra Reception Places Needed	24 places needed	9 places needed	16 spare	12 spare
	Plans/ Future issues	Too much capacity has been an issue in this area previously and spare capacity in the North Pennines and Central Rochdale regions could be sufficient. Plans will remain under review.			

Rochdale

- 4.4 Permanent school expansions have been carried out recently in the north-west, at Whittaker Moss CP, in central Rochdale, at Belfield CP and Lowerplace CP, and in the south at Sandbrook CP, Castleton CP and St Johns in Thornham, creating an additional 123 places in Reception year.
- 4.5 There is a peak in birth rates for 2020 intake in the north west and east, but current pupil numbers from births in the area are then due to drop. NE Rochdale sees high levels of in-year admissions and NW Rochdale has many parents who opt to travel into the area for schools. Rochdale NE also has a significant level of new housing coming forward.
- 4.6 In the south and central areas of Rochdale, birth rates zigzag and show only a slight decline. Additional capacity was created due to high birth rates in the area and insufficient places and the high level of in-year admissions. Housing developments in the south of the area have also impacted on the sufficiency of places. Timing of new housing developments and creation of sufficient places is going to be an issue going forward and current forecasts of spare capacity need to be reviewed constantly.

		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
NW and NE Rochdale	Extra Reception Places Needed	49 spare	51 spare	57 spare	74 spare
	Plans/Future Issues			Spare capacity will be reviewed however high in-year admissions means spare capacity needs to be sufficient to maintain school stability.	
C and SW Rochdale	Extra Reception Places Needed	37 spare	112 spare	60 spare	99 spare
	Plans		Spare capacity in the central zone will be kept under review but large numbers of in-year applications requires sufficient growth capacity		
	Future Issues	Additional housing developments in the south means a new school will be needed in the area in the long term.			

Summary

- 4.7
1. Current spare capacity is a consideration in some areas but rising levels of new housing will cause pockets of higher need as housing is completed.
 1. In Heywood the new school within the Junction 19 development will require the council to tender for an academy trust through the Presumption route. The school will be funded through the developer contributions, but Rochdale Council will have to run a Presumption competitive tender process. The successful trust will be chosen by the DfE through the Regional School Commissioners Office.
 1. In Heywood, prior to the new school, additional places may need to be created for 2023/24 and this would need to be delivered through an expansion of an existing school. Depending on the phasing of the new housing more capacity will be needed in the Hopwood - area.
 1. In Middleton in recent years there has been too much spare capacity, but new housing currently under construction means that additional capacity will need to be created in the south or east of the area. An additional bulge class is required for 2021 for 1 year.
 1. In Pennines north additional housing has required bulge classes recently and another bulge class will be needed for 1 year for 2021. With birth rates appearing to fall but more new housing developments under-construction place sufficiency will need to be reviewed constantly. A new school or permanent expansion may be required in the near future.
 1. Currently more school capacity is being delivered in south-west Rochdale due to current need. Housing developments are also coming forward and more capacity will be needed in the longer term either by a new school or the expansion of existing schools.

4.8 **Conclusions**
Bulge classes are needed in north Pennines and Middleton for 2021 each for 1 year only. Children's Services will look to create additional capacity where possible in existing spaces, but some costs for the additional classes may be needed.

4.9 Longer term extra capacity will be needed in Middleton for 2023 onwards and Children's services will discuss possibilities with schools in the area of need.

4.10 **Alternatives Considered**
Alternatives are constantly under review and any impacts of the current pandemic on house building rates or timing of new developments will have knock on effects on school capacity.

Costs and Budget Summary

5.1 The costs associated with co-ordinating admission arrangements are met from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

5.2 The cost of approximately £300,000 for creation of classroom bulge spaces for the bulge classes mentioned in paragraph 4.8 will be funded by the ESFA annual allocations of Basic Need capital budget.

5.3 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.

Risk and Policy Implications

6.1 The application of pupil place planning arrangements contributes to the Council Business Plan in ensuring an effective allocation process for school admissions. The council has a statutory duty to offer a school place to every child living in the borough and must manage the schools estate to meet the predicted need.

6.2 For any new school needed the Council does not have under its direct control the legal mechanisms to create new schools and must, under the Academies Act 2010 and Education Act 2011, seek Department for Education approved academy trust providers to provide the schools. Guidance from the DfE, for - delivery of a school, using the Presumption will be followed when appropriate.

Consultation

7. Plans developed from this report for any permanent school extensions will be presented to the relevant Township Committees for consideration, before being reported to Cabinet. A formal consultation process will be conducted as defined by the government guidance on Prescribed Alterations to Schools if required.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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For Further Information Contact:	Fay Davies, , fay.davies@rochdale.gov.uk
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