

# Subject: School Places Update and the Provision of Support for Children with Complex Needs

Report to: Education Panel

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 18 September 2014

This report will be considered in public

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the scope for the Panel's first meeting which will focus on two separate but related topics: the demand for school places in London and the provision of support for children with complex needs.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the report, puts questions to the invited experts and notes the discussion.**

## 3. Background

### School places

- 3.1 Last year the Education Panel heard about the "unprecedented pressures" facing local authorities in tackling the "desperate shortage"<sup>1</sup> of new school places. The situation in London remains particularly acute. According to a recent London Councils briefing paper (*Do the Maths 2014*) London needs to create 133,000 more primary and secondary school places by 2018. Two thirds of London boroughs will need to increase primary school capacity by over 10 per cent in the next six years and one third of them will have to increase secondary school capacity by over 5 per cent in the next six years.
- 3.2 The government provides basic need funding to create new pupil places by establishing new Free Schools or academies or expanding existing schools. The December 2013 Basic Need funding allocations for 2015-17 indicated that there would be an increase in the overall pot of funding available. However, London's share was down from 36 per cent of the 2013/14 Basic Need pot to 30 per cent for 2015-17.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Association press release:  
[http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/5416718/NEWS](http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/5416718/NEWS)

- 3.3 Furthermore, London Councils argue that because of escalating land prices in London, Department for Education (DfE) funding per school place has been inadequate and that in the 2013-15 allocations there “was a shortfall of funding per pupil of £8,500 and £2,700 in inner and outer London respectively.” The DfE recognised this shortfall in its 2015-17 allocations with a 3 per cent uplift for the capital. However it also introduced a “75 per cent rule” which assumed that local authorities will be able to create 75 per cent of the places identified in their 2013-15 predications and so the funding for these places was taken out of the funding allocations for 2015-17. According to London Councils “this arbitrary assumption penalises many local authorities in London...the assumption that 75 per cent of places have already been built is not the reality in most boroughs in London.”
- 3.4 DfE does also have a separate budget to set up free schools. Between 2010 and 2013, 50 free schools were established in London (35 per cent of the national total). The Mayor has set up a New Schools unit at the GLA to scope out the expansion of free schools in the capital and has identified ten sites across the GLA Group estate that are to be used for free schools over the course of this Mayoral term. The first of these new schools will be based at the site of the old East Dulwich Police Station which has now been sold and is to become a new Harris primary school. A list of a further eight primary or secondary schools that will be supported through the release of public land was published on 26 June 2014. Seven of the new schools will be primary schools, with one secondary and one all-through school planned. All bar one are free schools. Five of the sites freed up for use are former police stations. These new schools will provide an additional 7,000 or so places. The Mayor has also committed to provide a site for the proposed Fulham Boys School in Hammersmith and Fulham.

### **Children with complex needs**

- 3.5 Children with special educational needs have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most pupils of the same age. One in every five pupils has a special educational need<sup>2</sup> and in London around 4 per cent of children have a Statement of Special Educational Need – which is in line with the national average. These complex needs can include a child’s<sup>3</sup>:
- behaviour or ability to socialise, e.g. not being able to make friends;
  - reading and writing, e.g. they have dyslexia;
  - ability to understand things;
  - concentration levels, e.g. they have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; and/or
  - physical needs or impairments.
- 3.6 A pupil has a statement of special educational needs when a formal assessment has been made. The document sets out the child’s needs and the extra help they should receive. From 1 September 2014 there will be changes to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) get support. Statements and learning difficulty assessments (LDA) will be replaced by an education, health and care (EHC) plan. An EHC plan sets out the child’s needs and how they should be met. Key changes in the new EHC plan include:

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/251728/SFR42-2013Introduction.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251728/SFR42-2013Introduction.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/overview>

- Encouraging multiagency work, bringing together schools, NHS and social services to work together when making changes to a child's care, this will be done through facilitating group meetings;
- It is the responsibility of the school to write the EHC plan;
- EHC is a progressive plan which can be assessed from birth and will stay with an individual to 25 years old (previously 5 to 18 years old); and
- Parents will have greater control over how the funding pot is spent.

3.7 There are 13,780 children in 142 special schools in London. There is no separate funding stream for increasing special schools capacity. Research by London Councils suggests that the cost of providing special school places in London is on average £59,000 per pupil per year.

## **4. Issues for Consideration**

4.1 The Panel will discuss the current situation in London and short and medium term steps to mitigate the lack of school places with the following experts:

- Frankie Sulke, Executive Director for Children and Young People, London Borough of Lewisham; and
- Helen Jenner, Corporate Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

The second session will focus on the provision of support for children with complex needs:

- Tara Flood, Chief Executive Officer, Alliance for Inclusive Education;
- Gary Redhead, Assistant Director – Schools, Planning and Resources, London Borough of Ealing;
- Holly Morgan-Smith, Project Manager - SEND Reforms, London Borough of Ealing;
- A representative from the London Borough of Wandsworth;
- A representative from YoungMinds; and
- A representative from Preparing for Adulthood.

## **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 The Panel has the power to do what is recommended in this report

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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**List of appendices to this report:** None

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

List of Background Papers: "Do the Maths 2014", London Councils, July 2014

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