

Committee(s): CoLAT Board	Dated: 08/07/2021
Subject: School places projections for City academies	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3 & 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Gerald Mehrtens, Director of Academy Development, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

This report is to inform members on projections of demand for school places across the London local authorities where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies since it was last reported to this board on 9 July 2020. These projections are based on the relevant Greater London Authority (GLA), and London local authority data. Attached to this report as **Appendix 1** shows these pupil projections for the relevant London local authority where the City sponsors academies.

The demand for primary school places data is showing although many London boroughs are currently experiencing significant levels of surplus reception places, the Greater London Authority reports that it is too early to predict whether falling rolls will be sustained across London. This means that many local authorities are balancing the financial sustainability of schools with falling rolls against the statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places.

In the case of City sponsored primary academies, For the LB Southwark, Galleywall and Redriff City academies are located in Planning Area 2 where there continues to be growth. However, in the case of LB Islington Planning area 6, were COLPAI is located, there is a 15% surplus of primary school places and LB Islington will likely need to take further actions to those already in place to ensure there are appropriate levels of capacity in this Planning area in future years.

At secondary school level there is less areas of concern and many London local authorities have made adjustments to the PAN of some schools to address the higher than desired surplus number of places available. However, the significant increase in demand at primary schools in previous years will in turn feed through to secondary schools for the next half decade and then projected to decrease over the longer term as the declining numbers at primary schools eventually feed through to secondary schools.

In addition to levels of demand for school places, parental preference plays a significant factor in the Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) of a school being filled, particularly where first and second preferences for a school is high. Attached to this report as **Appendix 2** shows the parental preference data for City sponsored academies over recent years, against the PAN of each academy.

This data shows, with the exception of COLA Highbury Grove, all City academies can fill their PAN from first and second preferences alone. This is a notable achievement in the case of the academies formed via the Free School application process. However, this data also identifies declining parental preferences at COLA Highbury Grove, COLA Southwark and The City Academy Hackney (TCAH) with a recommendation to establish why and how this can be addressed.

Should surplus supply of school places become a feature of the landscape across London local authorities, City sponsored academies will need to continue to outperform their surrounding schools to maintain the high numbers of parental first and second preferences and thereby retain filling their PAN.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the projected demand for primary and secondary schools' places in local authorities where there are existing City sponsored academies, as well as the trends in parental preference for each City sponsored academy.

Main Report

Background

1. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient school places and that places are planned effectively. London had seen rapid growth in the number of children living in the city over the last two decades. Between 2001/2 and 2011/12, annual births in London rose by almost 30,000 (28 per cent), with many individual authorities seeing much larger increases. The financial crisis of 2008 had a dramatic impact on London's patterns of migration. Outflows from London to the rest of the UK fell sharply in the aftermath of the crisis, with young families moving to the surrounding counties particularly affected. The combined impact of these factors was a rapid growth in the number of children living in the city. This growth put immediate pressure on primary school places, necessitating a huge expansion in capacity.
2. However, since 2016 the Greater London Authority's (GLA) estimates for future populations in London show a lower rate of increase than estimated in previous years and in some areas a significant decline. Many inner London local authorities are reporting fewer Reception pupils each year, which is likely to be due to a combination of changes to welfare benefits, rising rents and the possible effects of Brexit. Furthermore, projections indicate that demand for reception places is not expected to increase in the short term to the level of reception places available

Current Position – Demand for school places

London Borough of Islington (LB Islington)

3. **Primary schools:** Across LB Islington falling rolls is a pressing issue, with a 14% surplus across all primary places; and 16% surplus in Reception at 2019/20. A series of managed reductions to existing capacity Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) proposed for 2022/23 will help bring the surplus in reception down temporarily (from current 16% to 11%), with a further rise expected the following year due in large part to declining birth rates. Although the Department for Education (DfE) recommends that local authorities maintain surplus capacity at approximately 5%, London boroughs primary vacancy rates have averaged around 10%.
4. In Planning Area 6, where City of London Primary Academy Islington is located, there is 15% surplus capacity across primary (Reception to Year 6). Subject to the decision by the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Secretary of State on the possible closure of Clerkenwell Parochial School which has less than 50% occupy, there is expected to be a surplus in excess of 50 places in Reception from 2023/24 (17%). LB Islington will need take further actions to ensure there are appropriate levels of capacity in this area. Appendix 1 Table 1 of this report shows Reception class surplus places projections 2015/16 to 2029/30 for LB Islington with Table 2 showing Planning Area 6 school rolls against capacity. It should be noted the 17% surplus capacity for COLPAI in this table relates to the reduction to a single form of entry while in temporary accommodation.
5. **Secondary Schools:** LB Islington secondary school rolls have declined over recent years with a surplus of 10% projected over the next 5 years. Although rolls may rise in the short term, this is likely to be temporary and a downward trend will follow from 2022/23. Upcoming decline in primary rolls will accelerate the drop in secondary in year 7 from 2030 onwards (this falls outside the reported DfE projection years). PAN reductions have been agreed for Beacon High and Arts & Media School Islington from September 2020, and further reductions may be required in future years as the reduced primary numbers move into secondary from 2030 onwards. Appendix 1, Table 3 of this report shows Year 7 School Rolls, Projections & Capacity, with Table 4 showing Secondary School Rolls from 2017/18 to 2019/20 Against Total Capacity which includes proposed reductions in PAN.
6. **Post-16:** Pupil rolls here have also fallen in recent years, and this has resulted in surplus places. LB Islington is a net importer of 16-18-year olds attending all types of provision. In May 2020 Islington student imports stood at 4,164 students from other London boroughs (and from outside London); and 1,894 were exported to other areas; with the main imports from Hackney (731) and Haringey (749) and exports to Camden (603).

London Borough of Southwark (LB Southwark)

7. **Primary School:** Since September 2015 Reception rolls in LB Southwark have fallen by 13 forms of entry (13FE) and by 11%. While this year LB Southwark have an oversupply of primary places, the local authority have not had to change the PAN at any schools following reductions across 13 primary schools proposed and agreed by LB Southwark Cabinet in October 2018 to address the previous surplus in primary school places. GLA projections anticipate that primary reception demand overall will continue to decline until September 2023 but will slowly increase thereafter, when demand, unless LB Southwark takes action, exceed capacity from September 2028 onwards.

8. However, in Planning Area 2, where Redriff and Galleywall City sponsored academies are located, this remains the only planning area in Southwark where there is existing growth and is anticipated to continue for the future. Appendix 1 Table 5 show primary places projections against capacity for LB Southwark, with Table 6 showing primary projections for Planning Area 2.
9. **Secondary School:** Since 2016 LB Southwark, working with the DfE and Free School sponsors, will have added 14 Forms of Entry places by 2022, resulting in an additional 2,545 secondary school places, an increase of 18% by 2026. In 2019 LB Southwark had projected a shortfall in secondary school places, however this year's enrolment and the latest GLA 2020 projections no longer show this to be the case with a 4% cushion in secondary school places, slightly less than the DfE recommendation. Appendix 1 Table 7 of this report shows the demand for Y7 places is unlikely to exceed supply until after 2033. However, A considerable variation in the popularity of secondary schools within LB Southwark exists in the 20 secondary schools resulting in demand and the availability of places is not evenly distributed across the borough.

London Borough of Hackney (LB Hackney)

10. **Primary Schools:** Between 2007 and 2014 Hackney experienced significant and unprecedented growth in demand for primary school reception places with very high rolls between 2012 and 2016. Since 2015 however, demand for reception places has decreased year on year. In January 2020 there were 2599 reception pupils and 3035 reception places available, giving rise to 436 surplus reception places (14.4%). To help address in September 2019/20, four primary schools permanently reduced their PANs, removing 120 places from the total number of places available and five schools capped their PANs. In 2020/21 and 2021/22, four schools will cap their PANs, temporarily reducing reception places by 105, for both years. Appendix 1 Table 8 attached to this report shows LB Hackney Reception surplus places based on published and capped PANs.
11. **Secondary schools:** LB Hackney projections indicate that there will be at least 108 surplus year 7 places each year from 2023 against the 2519 places available, with the highest number (239), occurring in September 2025. Current projections indicate that there is no immediate demand for a new secondary school in Hackney, as earlier projections had indicated. Plans for a new secondary school have therefore been paused indefinitely. However, LB Hackney will be kept under review
12. **Post 16:** The most recent census data indicates that sixth form numbers are relatively stable in a very competitive environment. As of January 2020, there are 540 vacant sixth form places. There are a number of small sixth forms which may not be financially sustainable long term. There is some partnership work developing to mitigate against this. Appendix 1 Table 9 attached to this report shows School sixth form roll and admission numbers (January 2020 census) for Post 16 provision.

Parental preference for City of London sponsored academies

13. In addition to levels of demand for primary and secondary school places in local authority areas relevant to City sponsored academies, parental preference will largely dictate if all places are filled in these schools. Attached to this report as **Appendix 2** shows parental preference data for each City sponsored academies over recent years.

14. Importantly, with the exception of COLA Highbury Grove, all City academies can fill the PAN for both Reception and Year 7 classes from first and second choice preferences alone. However, Members may wish to note in addition to the concern at COLA Highbury Grove, the dip in first choice preferences at TCAH, and what be becoming a trend in reduced first choice preferences at COLA Southwark. In addition, any increase in first/second choice preferences at COLA Highbury Grove could equally have a detrimental effect on these preference choices at COLA Islington due to the close location and could benefit from being monitored going forward.
15. **Newham Colligate Sixth Form (NCS):** Post-16 school places demand is more complex given applications is more governed by demand for particular institution rather than geographical area, and potential students can make multiple applications to a number of institutions rather than an order of preference. Additionally, in the case of NCS and no doubt a number of other Post-16 institutions a number of applications will be received which do not meet the entry criteria. Currently there are 2950 applications for the 300 places available, noting these are not the final numbers given applications have been left open due to the lack of predicted grades from schools, and expect a number of students will also arrive and apply on the day of enrolment.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. Strategic implications

This proposal delivers on the following strategic objectives of the CoLC:

- a. to contribute to the outcomes within the CoLC's Corporate Plan to 'Promote effective progression through fulfilling education and employment', and 'to contribute to a flourishing society' as its aim.
- b. the CoLC Education Strategy for pupils in the CoLC's family of schools to have access to transformative education, enabling them to achieve their potential, flourish and thrive.
- c. the Department of Community and Children's Services Business Plan's priority objective 'Potential', which states: "People of all ages can achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning", with the outcome to be achieved by "Delivering an outstanding education offer through the CoLC's family of schools.

17. Legal implications

Contained within the report

18. Financial implications

All free schools are funded directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, with any 'new' academies joining CoLAT requiring 'new' Supplementary Funding Agreements falling under the CoLAT Master Funding Agreement(s). There is no direct financial liability to the CoLC in respect to the CoLAT sponsored academies, which is a separate legal entity (being a charitable company limited by guarantee). However, the CoLC remains accountable to the DfE as sponsor for the on-going successful operation of CoLAT and the delivery of high-quality education at each of the academies sponsored by the CoLC, and this will be of strategic importance to the CoLC.

19. Risk implications

The risks are detailed in the report,

Conclusion

20. Demand for school places in London which reached record levels over the past decade are now showing a lower rate of increase than estimated in previous years and in many areas a significant decline. At primary school level in the LB Southwark Planning area 2, where Galleywall and Redriff City academies are located, there continues to be growth, but in LB Islington Planning area 6, where COLPAI is located there is a 15% surplus of primary school places.
21. At secondary school level there is presently less areas of concern as local authorities have made adjustments to the PAN of some schools to address the higher than desired surplus number of places available. However, the previous significant increase in demand at primary schools will in turn feed through to school schools for the next half decade and then projected to decrease as the declining numbers at primary schools across London will eventually feed through to secondary schools. Local authorities will continue to monitor this as part of their statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places and CoLAT will wish to do the same in considering its financial sustainability.
22. However, if City academies continue to outperform the surrounding schools and therefore maintain their high numbers of parental first and second preferences, these academies should retain their pupil numbers to retain their PAN. This report notes the potential area of concern shown by the preferences data at COLA Highbury Grove, Southwark and TCAH.

Appendices

- *Appendix 1 - Projected demand for state-funded school places*
- *Appendix 2 - Preference data for City of London sponsored academies*

Background Papers

- *School Places demand projections, CoLAT Board, 9 July 2020*
- *Islington School Place Planning Projections*
<https://democracy.islington.gov.uk/documents/s24796/Item%203.pdf>
- *Hackney School Organisation Plan*
https://education.hackney.gov.uk/sites/default/files/document/School_Organisation_Plan_2020-2025.pdf
- *Southwark Pupil Place Planning Report for 2020*
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/34711/EIP167-pupil-place-planning-report-for-2020.pdf>

Gerald Mehrtens

Director of Academy Development,
Department of Community and Children's Services
T: 020 7332 xxxx
E: gerald.mehrtens@cityoflondon.gov.uk