

Committee(s): Education Board	Dated: 24/04/2023
Subject: Pupil Planning and Projections	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/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Scott Caizley, Lead Policy Officer (Education, Culture and Skills)	

Summary

This report is to inform Members on pupil projections of demand for school places across the London local authorities where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Local Authorities (LAs) have a statutory duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure sufficiency of school places for its resident children. Failure to fulfil this obligation carries serious consequences, including adverse publicity and legal challenge.
2. As set out in its non-statutory guidance, the Department for Education (DfE), LAs are required to provide, for each school within each pupil planning area (PA), information about the number of registered pupils and the capacity of schools in their area.

3. The annual returns also include LAs own forecasts of pupil numbers, at PA level, by year group for whom primary and secondary education will need to be provided. This data is then published in the 'School capacity' statistical releases which includes place planning tables showing modelled estimates of places needed to meet future demand.
4. The DfE also uses the data in the calculation of future Basic Need capital funding allocations to aid departmental monitoring of local authority sufficiency and to support a range of policy developments and operational decisions.
5. In short, pupil projection refers to the process of estimating how many pupils a local area and/or school is likely to have in the future. In contrast, pupil planning refers to the process of using pupil projection data to plan for the future. This could involve decisions about expanding facilities and estates, reorganising funding or identifying areas where additional support may be needed, such as schools with a high proportion of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or schools seeing an increase of those with SEND. Horizon scanning of birth rate trends and predictions, migration patterns and housing development all inform pupil place planning activity.
7. In July 2022, the DfE released their annual pupil projections for the next decade and provided national projections for the number of pupils in schools in England by type of school and age. This data was based on the new mid-2020 ONS national population projections published in January 2022, ONS monthly births and the Schools Census data up to and including January 2022.
8. The projections estimate that in 2028, nursery and primary school places will be down 532,000 from the population in 2022. In contrast, for secondary schools, the projections estimates that these will be up 37,000 from the population in 2022. The peak of pupil projection numbers for secondary schools is still estimated to happen in 2024 which will then be followed by a gradual drop to the end of the projection period.

Current position

9. The City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT) has in total 10 sponsored academies (primary, secondary and sixth-form) which are located in the London boroughs of: Newham, Hackney, Islington and Southwark. Across London, there has been a reduction in pupil numbers because of falling birth rates, changes to EU migration patterns (Brexit), the impact of COVID, and more recently, the current economic situation which has seen more young families moving out of London to cheaper housing areas, supported by the growth of remote working opportunities.

Primary

10. For CoLAT primary academies which are located in the Southwark and Islington, the latest data from the DfE on pupil forecast from 2021/22¹ to 2026/27 are shown below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Islington	12,712	12,685	12,555	12,490	12,389	12,213
Southwark	21,315	21,009	20,704	20,332	19,944	19,551

Table 1: DfE Local Authority Pupil Forecasts: Primaries

11. In Islington, across the 46 primary schools, almost one in five Reception places are unfilled. The primary roll dropped by over 300 pupils across all year groups in the last year. This has contributed to surplus places across all primary schools in all year groups totalling over 18%, or 2,800 of places. At six primary schools, surplus places exceed 30%. Islington note how they expect this surplus to continue to rise if no action is taken.

12. In Southwark, across the 72 primary schools with reception classes, 924 surplus places are available in Reception and a total of 5,850 surplus places across the primary school system as a whole. Southwark note how this has put pressure on individual school finances as schools are funded for each pupil on roll and how this will result in further pressure to both the schools and the council.

13. In January 2023, London Councils² analysed data from 32 London boroughs which showed that 29 London boroughs are expecting a drop in demand of over 4% for reception places between 2022-23 and 2026-27 (see **Appendix 1**). London boroughs are predicted to see a 7.3% decrease in reception pupil numbers from 2022-23 to 2026-27 and London's total reception numbers are predicted to decline from 96,424 to 89,121 over this period (reflecting a 7.6% total decrease).

Secondary

14. For CoLAT secondary academies which are located in Southwark, Islington and Hackney, the latest data from the DfE on pupil forecast from 2021/22 to 2028/29 are show below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Hackney	14,747	14,805	14,963	14,977	14,918	14,960	14,959	14,920
Islington	8,309	8,309	8,361	8,319	8,231	8,162	8,130	8,099
Southwark	18,774	19,126	19,334	19,180	18,882	18,558	18,368	18,143

Table 2: DfE Local Authority Pupil Forecasts: Secondaries

¹ Number of actual pupils on roll in 2021/22 taken from January 2022 School Census

² [London Councils report on surplus school places January 2023.pdf](#)

15. In Hackney, based on their latest public projections, surplus for Year 7 places will range from 52 places in September 2022 to 142 in September 2027 with a peak of 247 places in September 2025. Hackney Council note that work is underway to determine the impact of falling primary rolls on the secondary phase. Furthermore, while Hackney is experiencing a fall in demand for mainstream places, they have reported a significant increase in the number of children and young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP). This means that the percentage of each year's pupil cohort identified as requiring SEND support and provision may increase moving forward.
16. Likewise, Southwark and Islington have reported a surplus of places at secondary level with Islington numbers currently above 10%. Islington note how they expect this figure to remain stable over the next five years.
17. More recently, London Councils (2023) predict a forecast demand for year 7 places in secondary schools across London to drop by a total of 3.5% between 2022-23 to 2026-27, representing a slower rate of decline than at the primary level. This amounts to a decrease from 92,722 to 89,510 children (see **Appendix 2**).

16-18

18. The London Councils report (2023) estimates that demand for places in 16 to 18 education and skills is expected to continue to increase for the next two to five years and will remain above current levels for up to a further two years afterwards.
19. Post-16 school places demand is more complex given applications are more influenced by demand for particular institutions rather than geographical area, and potential students can make multiple applications to a number of institutions rather than in an order of preference. Additionally, in the case of NCS and no doubt several other Post-16 institutions a number of applications will be received which do not meet the entry criteria. In the case of Newham Colligate Sixth Form, the number of applications in general far exceed the number of places available.

London Council Report 2023: understanding the challenges.

20. As shown above, the latest data from the DfE and the more recent data from the London Councils report (2023) shows that the London boroughs in which CoLAT schools are positioned are more than likely to face a decline in pupil numbers in the upcoming years with primary schools facing a greater impact. For primary schools, Southwark is to see a greater decline followed by Islington. For secondary schools, Southwark again is to see the greatest decline for where CoLAT schools are positioned followed by Islington and Hackney.
21. London Councils report birth rate being the main driver behind the decrease in demand for school places. For example, between 2012- 2021 there has been a 17% decrease in the birth rate in London - a reduction of 23,225 live births across London.

22. Other factors which are reported as playing a key role are the rights of entry and freedom of movement which have been withdrawn from EU nationals and because of families leaving London during the Covid-19 pandemic.
23. The majority of school revenue funding is allocated on a per pupil basis. This means that any decrease in pupil numbers will also reduce the funding a school receives. As noted in the London Councils Report, “many primary schools in London are already struggling to balance budgets this academic year, due to a combination of factors including inflationary price increases, a shortage of teaching and support staff leading to increased spend on expensive agency staff, and a significant pay award for support staff” (London Council Report, 2023, p. 5). Members will be aware of the ongoing pay dispute with teachers and the DfE, and the source of any pay award.
24. In the Autumn Statement, the UK government committed to increase core revenue funding for schools, but it is not yet clear whether the funding for London’s schools will be sufficient to cover increased costs. As noted in the report, “if a primary school is also struggling with falling rolls this will lead to a smaller government funding allocation which will put further pressure on the budget” (ibid).

Key Data

25. Embedded in this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

26. This report delivers on the following strategic objectives:
- 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.

Conclusion

27. This report updates members on pupil projections of demand for school places across the London Local Authorities where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies and provides wider context from the London Councils Report (2023) to inform Members on future projections.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** London Councils Report 2023 Reception Numbers
- **Appendix 2:** London Councils Report 2023 Year 7 Numbers

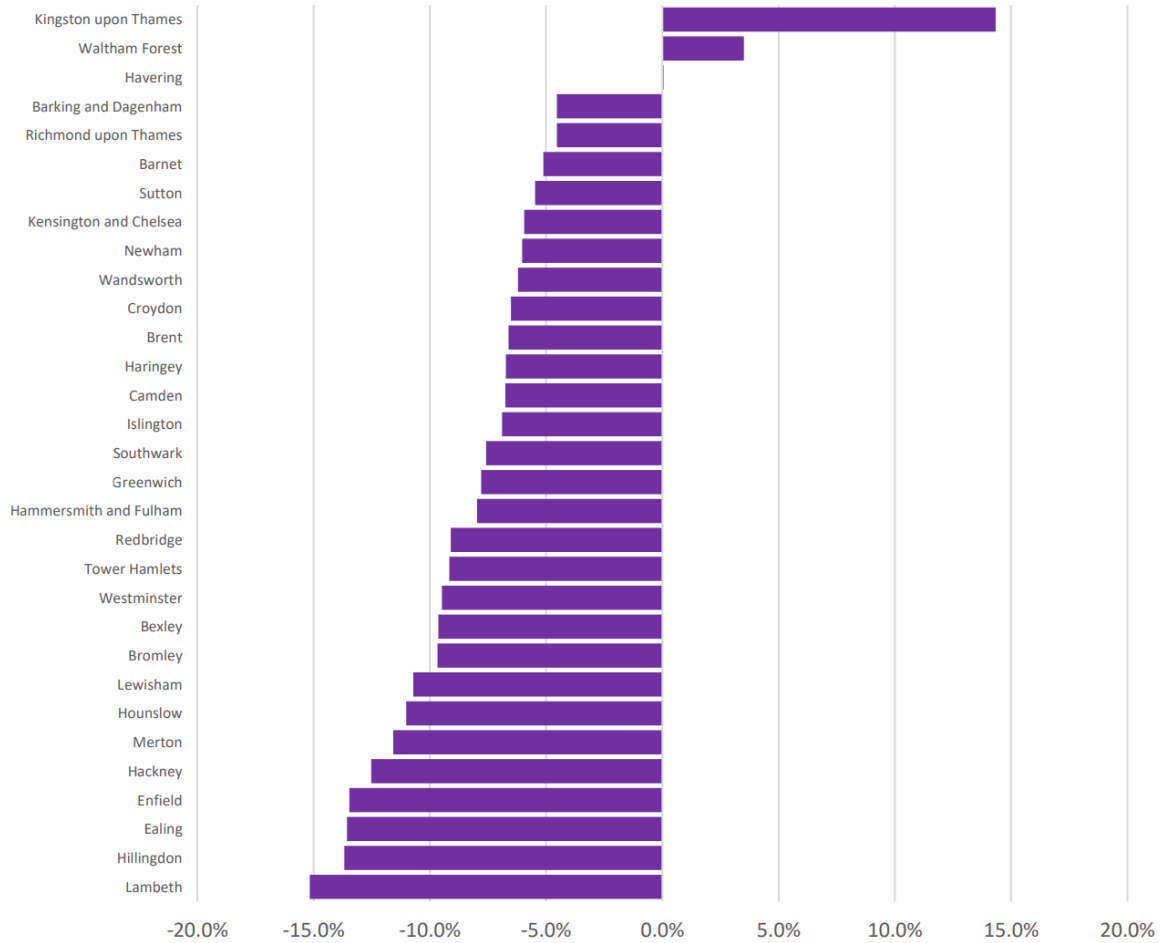
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Appendix 1: London Councils Report 2023 Reception Numbers

Graph A: Percentage Change in Reception Student Numbers from 2022-23 to 2026-27



Appendix 2: London Councils Report 2023 Year 7 Numbers

