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| Committee(s): Education Board | Dated: 21/06/2023 |
| Subject: Pupil Place Planning: data and trends 2023/24 | 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 |
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Summary

This report updates Members on the current data available for school places across the London Local Authorities (LAs) where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies. In doing so, the data builds on the recent report brought to the Education Board at its Meeting on 24 April 2023 which highlighted findings from the London Councils research on managing surplus school places in London. It must also be noted that the official release of the annual school capacity survey (SCAP) will be available later in the summer with findings to be brought to the Education Boards October Meeting.

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 consequences, including adverse publicity and legal challenge.
2. As set out in the Department for Education (DfE) non-statutory guidance, 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. As with most LAs, the monitoring and analysis of data and trends for pupil planning are carried out on an annual basis to ensure their sufficient capacity.
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. Over the years, Pupil Place planning has also been impacted by the academy/ free school presumption as outlined in the Academies Act 2010. The policy requires LAs to facilitate academies or free schools as opposed to providing new schools themselves. As a consequence, long term planning from an LA perspective is challenging as Academies are able to increase their Published Admission Number (PAN) by placing a notice on their website, and then notifying the Council and do not need to seek LAs approval.
5. Additionally, whilst LAs have a legal responsibility for planning pupil places in their areas, they also have limited powers and whilst LAs can request that an academy closes or reduces its PAN, Trusts are not legally obliged to accept the request.

Current position

6. 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.
7. 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, housing development/building 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.
8. Below is an overview of the current trends across the London boroughs for where CoLAT schools are situated:

Southwark

9. For **Primary Schools**, Southwark Council has seen a considerable reduction in primary reception and whole school rolls since September 2015. Reception rolls have fallen by 18 forms of entry¹ (30FE) which is equivalent to 26% overall since September 2015. Whole school (Reception to Year 6) rolls have been reported to have decreased by 2,830 pupils over this period which is equivalent to 94 classes or 12% overall. Southwark expect that the overall number for Primary Schools will continue to fall as each year group works its way through school.
10. For **Secondary Schools**, Southwark Council has seen a stable increase in secondary place demand since September 2015 for Year 7 and secondary places on the whole. Southwark note that their Year 7 rolls have increased by 16% overall in the past 7 years. Across all year groups, the rate of pupils has increased to 3,490 pupils which is 28% over the same time period. This is equivalent to 116 classes or four 6FE secondary schools.

Islington

11. For **Primary Schools**, Islington Council have reported to have seen seeing falling rolls. Across their 46 primary schools, almost one in five Reception places are unfilled. The primary roll dropped by over 300 pupils across all year groups in 2022 and contributed to surplus places across all primary schools in all year groups totalling over 18%, or 2,800 of places. During this time, some schools also experienced surplus places in excess of 30%. For 2023/24 start dates, combining the Reception figures with the PAN for the current Reception to Year 5, the capacity for Islington Primary Schools is 15,615. Islington anticipate that they will consult on several PAN reductions to reduce the overall PAN for Islington by 105 which is equivalent to removing 3.5FE from Islington primary schools.
12. For **Secondary Schools**, Islington Council have already seen reductions agreed at two schools which they state will help manage a growing surplus of secondary places. As predicted and in line with other LAs, the projections are more stable in Islington secondary schools with a surplus just above 10% projected over the next five years. For 2023/24, Combining Year 7 figures with the PAN, capacity for Islington Secondary Schools sits at 8,615.

Hackney

13. Whilst CoLAT occupy no primary school provision in Hackney, similar trends from neighbouring boroughs are also reflected in their pupil numbers for 2023/24. Very recently, Hackney announced plans to close two primary schools and merge a further four schools into two new schools. The overall PAN for Hackney Primary Schools for 2023/24 sits at 2780 with Hackney making 2227 offers totalling at 523 vacancies. From September 2023, 120 permanent PAN reductions will be implemented across four primary schools. The planned PAN reductions will reduce the number of reception places to 2780. However, Hackney states that even with

¹ 'Forms of Entry' (FE) refers to the number of classes there are in each year group. For example, a single-form-entry school will have one year 1 class, one year 2 class and so on. A four-form entry school would have four year one classes, four year 2 classes and so on.

this reduction, the projected demand for reception places is forecast to be considerably less, resulting in a continued high number of surplus places.

14. For **Secondary Schools**, Hackney Council have a total PAN for Year 7 figures of 2569 with 2483 places being offered. This then leaves a total of 86 vacancies across the borough. Based on their latest public projections, surplus for Year 7 places ranged from 52 places in September 2022 and will increase to 142 for September 2027, with a peak of 247 places in September 2025. Furthermore, Hackney 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. This trend is apparent across London and England.

16-18 provision

15. 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.
16. 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 Newham Colligate Sixth Form (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 NCS, the number of applications in general far exceed the number of places available.

Funding implications for schools with reduced numbers

17. In England, schools get two main streams of money from the Government: (1) **core funding** (also known as revenue funding and spent on running costs) and (2) **capital funding** (for buildings). Regardless of the school status, whether they are academies or council run, their funding comes directly from the Government.
18. All schools are funded on a per pupil basis and the Government uses the National Funding Formula (NFF) to make sure that a school's per-pupil funding reflects a number of factors (including the characteristics of their pupils, how many pupils receive Free School Meals, the geographic location of the school).
19. Last year, the Government announced that in 2023-24, schools will get an extra £2 billion of revenue funding and the same again in 2024-25. This, along with the £1.5 billion increase schools will receive in 2023-24 will bring the overall funding increase this year to £3.5 billion, compared to 2022-23. The funding will mean that the total school revenue funding in England is £57.3 billion for 2023-24, rising to £58.8 billion for 2024-25². The average per-pupil funding in schools for 2023-24 is £7,460.
20. In practice, this will mean that a typical primary school with 200 pupils can expect to receive around an extra £35,000 in funding with a typical secondary school with 900 pupils to receive an additional £200,000.

² More recently, data show that between 2010/11 and 2022/23, spending per pupil fell from £7,274 to £6,982 – a drop of 4%, according to the analysis by Landman Economics.

21. As highlighted throughout this report, the data show a decline in pupil numbers and in turn, will create funding challenges for schools as , their main source of funding is based on the number of pupils in the school.
22. As an example, if a school was to see a drop of ten pupils on its roll, the school would not be able to lose a 'whole class', meaning there would not be any reduction in staff numbers and the school would still have to operate normal salary costs and to do this with reduced funding from the government.
23. As noted in the London Councils Report (2023)³, "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).
24. As highlighted in the April Meeting, Members will also be aware of the ongoing pay dispute with teachers and the DfE, and the source of any pay award as well as the amounting pensions pressures.
25. Furthermore, given the growing concerns over teacher recruitment and retention, Pupil Planning data can also play a crucial role in determining the staffing needs of a school. Schools can estimate the number of teachers, support staff, and administrators required based on the projected pupil numbers. As a consequence, this can further help when budgeting for salaries, recruitment processes, and professional development opportunities and it is considered best practice for Academies to engage with Pupil Planning numbers and projections with LAs for future planning purposes.

Key Data

26. Embedded in this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

27. 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

28. This report updates Members on the current data for school places across the London Local Authorities where there are City of London Corporation (CoLC) sponsored academies. At its Meeting in April 2023, a report illustrating the findings from the London Councils (2023) was referenced which demonstrated a significant reduction in demand for reception places across London. In that report, it shows that on average, London boroughs are predicted to see a 7.3% decrease in

³ London Councils. (2023). Managing Surplus Places in London Schools. Available at: [Managing Surplus School Places in London \(2023\) | London Councils](#)

reception pupil numbers from 2022-23 to 2026. Likewise, the demand for year 7 places in secondary schools across London is also predicted to drop by a total of 3.5% between 2022-23 to 2026-27. As the data in this report evidence, these forecasts are proving to be reliable and in general, show a decline in primary places demand with secondary schools demonstrating a slower rate. Unless there is a considerable change in child demographics over time, the reduction in Primary-aged pupils in London will filter through to secondary schools in 5-7 years time. The need for schools to focus on marketing activity with local communities, to recruit and retain pupils is important now more so than ever. In simple terms, being the local school of parental preference will be the most secure protection for City of London sponsored academies against the pressures described above. The Education Strategy Unit has offered to support the Trust with marketing and pupil retention strategies. The Education Strategy Unit will continue to analyse the data over the summer period and will update Members with further information at its Meeting in October 2023.

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