

Primary School Places Action Plan For Sep 2011 to 2013

Finance Division

For Education and Children's Services

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1 INTRODUCTION

For some years now Slough has been predicting a shortfall of school places. In 2009, demand for Reception exceeded forecasts and 5 new Reception classes were required and put in place. The rise in demand between 2008 and 2009 was far higher than anticipated but was part of a similar trend experienced in many urban authorities in England in the same period.

Local forecasts have now been revised in light of this change in trend. In response, the authority is allocating all available capital funding to increasing school places to keep pace with current and future demand.

The most important indicator of future demand for primary places is birth trends; this shows that Slough needs to plan for increasing the number of Reception places available by another 25% by September 2013. This is on top of the expansion projects already agreed for September 2010.

This plan looks at the options for increasing school places for September 2011, 2012 and 2013 with the funding currently available.

This plan concludes that there are 3 main options and some or all of these will need to be implemented to create the new places required:

- i) Use any surplus existing primary accommodation
- ii) Add modular classrooms in a planned way across the estate
- iii) Build new schools

2 EXPANSION FOR SEPTEMBER 2010

A number of projects are now being implemented to increase places for September 2010, these will add 210 permanent new reception places for September 2010. To address a recent increase in demand one bulge class has been created at the new Lea site school, this ensured every applicant was offered a place on 'offer day'.

2.1 Recent Experience

Slough had 1677 Reception places available in all schools for September 2008. This left 12 surplus places. For September 2009, demand rose to 1857 with only 1707 Reception places available (30 having already been added at Wexham Court); this left a shortfall of 150 places and 5 bulge classes were created at short notice. 14 of these places were still available in April 2010 as some parents chose not to take up places at the schools offered but to wait for a place to become available at their preferred schools.

The table below summarises this data. The increase in demand between 2006 and 2009 was 18% or 285 Reception places.

Table 1 Comparison of demand and availability of reception places for 2006 to 2009

| | PAST YEARS | | | |
|---|------------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|
| | Sep-06 | Sep-07 | Sep-08 | Sep-09 |
| Demand (Reception) | 1545 | 1621 | 1665 | 1830 |
| Availability | 1617 | 1677 | 1677 | 1707 |
| Surplus/shortfall | 72 | 56 | 12 | -123 |
| Number of Reception classes required to meet demand | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 bulge classes added |
| Equivalent number of schools | | | | 2 new schools required |

2.2 Current Expansion Projects

For September 2010 expansion projects were proposed and approved to create 210 new reception places. These projects were

| Proposal | Additional reception places created |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Expand Western House School | 30 |
| Expand Parlaunt Park Primary School | 30 |
| Create new places (possibly via a new school) on the former Lea Junior site | 60 |
| Change Cippenham Junior to a Primary School | 60 |
| Expand Wexham Court Primary School* | 30 |
| Total | 210 |

*Wexham Court Primary School added 30 new Reception places from Sep 2009 and these are already included in table 1

2.3 Demand for September 2010

The number of applications received for September 2010 was broadly 90 higher than 2009 (1948 compared to 1855). Between the closing date for applications and the date offer letters are sent out there is always a drop in the number of applications following checks by the Admissions Team to ensure all applicants still require places. By adding an additional 30 places at the new Lea School every applicant was offered a place on offer day. Based

on experience from 2009, where new arrivals continued to arrive after the admission round, it is possible that a second bulge class (additional to the one created at the new Lea site school) will be required for September 2010. If this should be the case then a school from the attached candidate list will be expanded a year early.

3 PROJECTED DEMAND FOR SEPTEMBER 2011-13

The authority has now revised its forecasts in light of the change in trends experienced in 2009. The table below indicates the level of growth required over the period 2010-13. Note that the shortfall is not accumulative, so 8 new classes may be required for 2011, 3 more the next year and 5 more the year after that (16 altogether).

Table 2 Comparison of demand and availability of reception places for 2010 to 2013

| | FUTURE YEARS | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Sep-10 | Sep-11 | Sep-12 | Sep-13 |
| Demand (Reception) | 1917 | 2108 | 2198 | 2349 |
| (Min→Max)* | (based on current applications) | (2064→2126) | (2152→2216) | (2300→2369) |
| Availability | 1887 | 1887 | 1887 | 1887 |
| Surplus/shortfall | -(30→60) | -221 | -311 | -462 |
| Number of additional Reception classes required to meet demand | 1 as at 7/4/10 | 8 new reception classes required | 11 new reception classes required | 16 new reception classes required |
| Equivalent number of schools | 1 new school required | 3 new schools required | 4 new schools required | 6 new schools required |

* Projecting the demand for school places over a range is more accurate than using an exact figure particularly 2 or 3 years into the future, however, an exact figure is shown for the purposes of clarity.

The projections shown above are based on actual data and recent trends but will be subject to unforeseen changes, it is therefore important that they are updated regularly to reflect the current situation and to include any changes to the underlying assumptions.

3.1 Numbers of Births

Table 3 overleaf outlines the rapid and continuing rise in births being experienced in Slough. Since 2001-2 births have risen by 47% and the majority of this rise has yet to be felt in schools as children have yet to reach school age. In the table below, those born in 2005-6 are the cohort currently applying for reception places. Note that over the following 3 years, births rise by a further 25%.

The table above shows the birth data received from the ONS¹ for previous years. Slough's forecasting methodology uses this figure and compares it to the number of pupils that start in Reception in a Slough school 5 years later. The comparison of the 'number that start in Reception' to the 'number of births' 5 year's earlier is called the 'retention ratio'. By multiplying the 'number of births' by the average retention ratio for the last 3 years estimates of future demand for reception places are produced. These are the forecast shown in table 2.

¹ Slough receives live birth data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on an annual basis. The availability of this data at postcode level in recent years is a big improvement over previous years however there is still a significant lag before data is made available, for instance 2008-9 data will not be available until September 2010.

Table 3 Birth numbers 2001-2 to 2008-9

| YEAR | Number of live births | Increases in Births: | | Application year |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | | compared to previous year | compared to 2001-2 | |
| 2001-2 | 1865 | | | |
| 2002-3 | 1946 | +4.3% | +4.3% | |
| 2003-4 | 1984 | +2.0% | +6.4% | |
| 2004-5 | 2051 | +3.4% | +10.0% | |
| 2005-6 | 2234 | +8.9% | +19.8% | Sep-10 |
| 2006-7 | 2457 | +10.0% | +31.7% | Sep-11 |
| 2007-8 | 2561 | +4.2% | +37.3% | Sep-12 |
| 2008-9 | 2738* | +6.9% | +46.8% | Sep-13 |

* This is adjusted provisional data and subject to change

3.2 Ward Level Data

The table shown below displays the birth data in each Slough ward for 2005-6 to 2007-8. Those born in 2005-6 are the ones currently applying for places for September 2010. Highlighted on the right are those wards where births have risen by over 20 and a new Reception class or classes may be required.

Table 4 Birth Data at Ward Level

| Ward | Applying now for Sep 10 | | | Growth 2005-6 to 2007-8 |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| | 2005-6 | 2006-7 | 2007-8 | |
| Baylis & Stoke | 228 | 258 | 235 | 7 |
| Britwell | 141 | 177 | 174 | 33 |
| Central | 231 | 234 | 280 | 49 |
| Chalvey | 202 | 226 | 277 | 75 |
| Cippenham Green | 120 | 132 | 154 | 34 |
| Cippenham Meadows | 221 | 248 | 244 | 23 |
| Colnbrook & Poyle | 96 | 88 | 102 | 6 |
| Farnham | 193 | 202 | 195 | 2 |
| Foxborough | 128 | 117 | 149 | 21 |
| Haymill | 150 | 177 | 171 | 21 |
| Kedermister | 124 | 135 | 138 | 14 |
| Langley St Mary's | 101 | 106 | 115 | 14 |
| Upton | 122 | 144 | 139 | 17 |
| Wexham Lea | 177 | 213 | 184 | 7 |
| Slough total | 2234 | 2457 | 2561 | 327 |

This data should not be looked at in isolation and current expansion plans will need to be considered as well as growth in adjacent wards and situations, such as Upton, where significant numbers of resident pupils will miss out on a place in their catchment school (Castleview) for September 2010. New housing is also a key factor when prioritising future expansion projects.

4 OPTIONS FOR 2011-13

3 options for expanding places for 2011, 2012 and 2013 are explored in this section. The option of creating further bulge classes (as happened at Montem and St Mary's in 2009) is not discussed at this stage, as this option provides the poorest value for money and should only be considered as an emergency measure or where demand is expected to fall in future years. Similarly, the option of using the classes that will be temporarily surplus at Western House, Parlaunt, Wexham Court and the new school is not considered at this stage although this will need to be reviewed and considered annually.

New applications for places are received on a weekly basis, therefore at the start of the school year it is desirable to have 30-60 surplus school places in any one year group. If this small surplus is not created then there is likely to be a need to create a bulge class or classes mid-year – the aim is to avoid this situation by building some surplus into the system. At the same time it would not be cost effective to 'overbuild' which might be the case if demand should reduce in future years. This is considered in the options below.

4.i Use any surplus existing primary accommodation

The scale of growth required in the primary sector and the associated costs mean Slough needs to make maximum use of existing accommodation. This was considered in 2009-10, with projects such as the change of Cippenham Junior to a primary school where existing surplus accommodation was utilised. There are two schools where something similar might be explored, others will be explored if they become apparent:

- Priory School: The school has surplus classrooms which have traditionally been used for admitting additional pupils at Key Stage 2, the demand for these places has fallen away and the school now has surplus classrooms. An allocation of up to £100K would permit the school to make minor adjustments for the additional pupils.
- Claycots School: The school has set aside significant funding to add an additional form of entry for Key Stage 2 classes. The school has requested funding to also expand its Key Stage 1 accommodation to raise the PAN to 120 from September 2011. Costs are estimated at £500-£750K.

4.ii Add modular classrooms in a planned way across the estate

This option is being considered based on the need to add 11 forms of entry in by 2012 within the funding limits currently available and ensuring grant funding is fully spent by August 2011. The proposed plan is to add 3 modular classrooms to a large number of existing schools over the next two years. The funding available would be sufficient to create the full number of Reception classes required for 2011 and 2012 (based on current forecasts) and would provide accommodation for those pupils to move up to Years 1 and 2 at the same time. This would create an 'infant annex' at each school. There would then be a 3-year window of time to source the additional funding required to add accommodation for Key Stage 2 (a further 4 classrooms).

A current candidate list is attached as Appendix 1 and this will be updated on an ongoing basis. Candidates would be prioritised after considering the following factors although others may apply for particular schools:

- i) Site size and footprint for situating 3+ classrooms
- ii) School performance and Ofsted assessment
- iii) Opportunity to join funding with school project
- iv) Local demand, popularity and new housing

v) Type of school (F, C, VC, VA or Trust)

This option has the following benefits:

- No new sites are required
- Costs would be far lower than new build
- Funding currently available would provide most, if not all, the places required over the next 2 years
- Putting classes in place would be much quicker than planning for new build, there would be less design work required, for instance
- Funding currently available needs to be spent by August 2011, new build projects would make this difficult/impossible
- If demand should fall in a few years, the new block could be removed or changed to specialist/community spaces and the published admission number could be reduced to its former level
- Each scheme would allow for some improvements or enlargement to existing accommodation as required by each school. New build costs would be unlikely to permit these works
- Modular buildings are now of a high standard and can even be brick-clad with a pitched roof to blend with current buildings
- Funding might permit improved sports facilities to replace lost playing fields (and this might be required by Sport England whatever the build type to gain planning permission on some sites)

The negative aspects would include:

- Modular accommodation is more likely to be single storey and require a larger footprint
- There is likely to be a greater loss of playing fields than with new build
- Expenditure on highways and transport to obtain planning permission would be significant given the number of sites likely to be involved.

4.iii Build new schools

Based on a Cabinet decision taken in March 2010, Slough is conducting a feasibility study on the planning issues and costs with building a new school on each of the candidate sites currently available across the town, and particularly in or around the Chalvey ward.

Chalvey was the resident ward of a significant proportion of the pupils without a primary place in 2009. As well as having a higher than average mobile population, its catchment area school is Montem Primary, located some way outside the ward. Table 4 in section 3.2, shows that the birth rate is rising faster here, than in any other ward.

With a number of candidate sites in the area, the main reason for possibly delaying this decision would be the cost of building and the availability of funding. A new 2-form entry school would cost c£7m and a 3-form entry school would cost c£10m.

This would mean that building one new school adding 60 Reception places would cost the same as adding perhaps as many as 9 Key Stage 1 blocks across the town, creating 270 new Reception classes.

Building a new school would likely require additional funding from the council as all funding currently available for school places (which is 100% government grant) needs to be spent by August 2011 and a new school project would take longer than this to complete (a

minimum of 2 years to build). With the bulk of the funding being spent at the tail-end of the project.

Infant Option: An alternative option and one that would create 2 or 3 times the number of Reception places would be to build an Infant School (as opposed to a primary). With a budget of c£7m, this might be sufficient for a 5-form entry school. The downside being a 5-form entry Junior School would be required after 3 years to complete the project (another c£9m).

Refurbishment rather than new build (option 4.iii.b): The feasibility study underway will look at the possibility of using the old part of the Town Hall building as a new school. This may be a more affordable option than new build and would allow options (4.i) and (4.ii) to also go ahead. The number of classrooms that could be accommodated in the old part of the building would be relatively low, therefore new modular classrooms would need to be added 2 or 3 years later to create sufficient classes for a primary school. This could create 2 or 3 forms of entry if the feasibility study suggests this is a viable option.

All costings given above are approximate at this stage and are based on recent, local experience of tendering capital projects. Actual costs and the number of school places that can be built for the budgets mentioned will be site- and market-dependent.

The earliest date for opening a newly built school would be 2012, therefore options 4.i and 4.ii will need to be considered the only options that can provide the places required in the timescale permitted. Although the refurbishment of the Town Hall could also be considered if it proves to be viable.

5 FUNDING

5.1 Available Funding

Slough currently has 3 main funding sources (other than council capital) that can potentially be allocated to this project, all are external in nature:

1. Unallocated Basic Need Safety Valve funding - £6.28m

The allocation to Slough (£9.0m) is based on the shortfall of places projected to 2012, so the number of places funded by the £9.0m will be deducted first before any future allocations are made through Basic Need. This funding needs to be spent by **August 2011** or it is subject to claw back. Slough cannot rely on any future allocation of Basic Need funding for 2 reasons:

- i) This is an advance allocation, if future demand proves to be lower than projected then Slough would have been over-allocated funding and there would be a case for claw back from future allocations
- ii) In recent years it has been allocated as supported borrowing (Slough requires grant funding) and this may be the case again with future allocations.

2. Modernisation funding - £1.19m

This grant funding has yet to be allocated but must be fully spent by **August 2011** or it may be clawed back.

3. Section 106 funding from developers

Funding received to date has been fully allocated. Future funding is anticipated from large projects already approved or underway; e.g. Cippenham Wedge and Castleview Site 16.

In summary, there is **£7.469m** remaining to be allocated, all of which must be fully spent by August 2011. In addition some section 106 funding may be received, although the amounts and timing are unpredictable and dependent on a number of external factors beyond the control of the council.

5.2 Funding Shortfall

Capital allocations for the period 2011-14 will be announced through the Comprehensive Spending Review (expected late 2010), but given the current financial climate there is no certainty of any future capital grant allocations. Slough requires grant funding and not supported borrowing to fund any shortfall. Until new funding sources are identified there will remain a funding shortfall for the council, as it needs to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. To fund any shortfall the council will require capital receipts.

Using the following assumptions, the table below shows one scenario for the shortfall of funding:

- i) Priory and Claycots together would add 2 forms of entry
- ii) Could in theory add any number, average cost estimated at £800K
- iii) Each new primary would equate to a cost of £3m-£3.5m per form of entry. This cost would be split in two if infant places are built first and junior places built 3 year's later.

The table below shows one possible scenario for creating the 16 forms of entry for 2013. The actual shortfall would be dependent on the combination of options adopted. For

instance, not building the new school (reducing cost by £10m) but adding 3 more modular infant blocks (at a cost of £2.4m) would reduce the shortfall to £4.75m for 2013.

| OPTION | Expansion Option | Forms of entry | 2010-11 £m | 2011-12 £m | 2012-13 £m | Total £m |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| i | Priory and Claycots | 2 | £0.30 | £0.55 | £0.00 | £0.85 |
| ii | Modular infant blocks | 11 | £1.00 | £6.20 | £1.60 | £8.80 |
| iii | New schools* | 3 | £0.30 | £9.00 | £0.70 | £10.00 |
| | Total | 16 | £1.60 | £15.75 | £2.30 | £19.65 |
| | Available funding | | £1.60 | £5.70 | £0.00 | £7.47 |
| | Shortfall | | £0.00 | -£10.05 | -£2.30 | -£12.18 |

* The refurbishment of the Town Hall has been given a provisional budget of £1m but the feasibility study currently underway will test the viability of this option and the likely costs.

6 NEXT STEPS

| Action | Responsibility | Dates | Notes |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Consult Primary Heads on options for expansion | Bob Garnett/ Julian King Harris | 29 April 2010 | Distributed draft plan and heads consulted |
| Consult School Organisation Group (SOG) on these and other options for expanding provision | Bob Garnett | 12 May 2010 | Action Plan agreed by SOG – 9 candidate sites identified |
| Carry out feasibility study on sites for a new school in or around Chalvey | Neil Simon/ Tony Madden | To be completed by June/July 2010 | Brief drawn up and work about to be tendered |
| Take feasibility back to Cabinet | Clair Pyper | 12 July or 20 September 2010 | Feasibility may not be ready for July meeting |
| Continue to develop candidate list for expansion for 2012 and 2013 | Tony Madden/ Julian King Harris | Ongoing | |
| Take Action Plan to Cabinet for agreement and way forward | Clair Pyper | 14 June 2010 | Decision required to start planning for expansion projects |
| Get preliminary costings for modulars and prepare a procurement method | Tony Madden/ Neil Simon | June 2010 | Start immediately following Cabinet approval |