

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 13 October 2014

CONTACT OFFICER: Ruth Bagley, Chief Executive
Tony Madden, Principal Asset Manager

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875657

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Pavitar Kaur Mann – Commissioner for Education and Children

PART I **KEY DECISION**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOL EXPANSION: LANGLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

1 Purpose of Report

To seek approval to fund a one form of entry expansion of Langley Grammar School from Basic Needs Grant in association with other major works to be funded by a bid, if successful, for national funds made by the School.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That a maximum of £3,000,000 of grant funding (Basic Needs Grant) is allocated to fund construction of one form of entry at Langley Grammar School; and
- b) That the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Commissioner for Education is given delegated authority to agree the final sum, based on construction costs, and any conditions including appropriate changes to the school's admissions policy.

3 Slough Wellbeing Strategy and JSNA Priorities

Priorities:

- Economy and Skills – the delivery of sufficient school places for Slough residents will support delivery of skills and qualifications to young people in Slough and improve their life chances.
- The number of children with Statements of Educational Need (SEN) requiring specialist resourced provision and special school places is rising slightly faster than the general population. Creating an SEN resource unit for pupils at Langley Grammar school will make a contribution to meet the rising demand.

4 Other Implications

a) Financial

- 4.1 Delivery of Slough's School Places Strategy is dependent on:
- Effective use of the Basic Needs grant and other education funds available;
 - Support to government funded Free Schools where meeting the needs of Slough;
 - Effective use of existing school sites.
- 4.2 The Council is also responsible for securing best value from its assets and sources of funding. The Council must balance educational and other community benefits from use of land.
- 4.3 Funding for school places is in a relatively healthy position mainly due to the provision of DfE funded Free Schools. Slough is allocated funding by the DfE annually based on the locally projected shortfall of places. Slough has been allocated £38m for the 4 year period 2013-14 to 2016-17. Latest financial planning suggests that at the end of the current settlement period, to 2016-17, there will be a carry forward of £26.5m, although predicted demand beyond that date will outstrip the funds available. At this point Slough would expect to receive a new allocation for 2017-18 and later years. These figures are based on the assumption that no new Free Schools are approved in the interim period and the Council funds all required new school places.
- 4.4 The proposal is to use up to £3m to fund one new form of entry at Langley Grammar School. Slough receives £15.5K of grant per new secondary place required, based on this figure a new form of entry with sixth form expansion would be allocated £3m. A budget of £3m is comfortably within the funding available to the Council, complies with the Council's strategy of using Basic Needs Grant to fund expansions, to complement Free School proposals and to enhance education provision, and represents value for money in unit cost per head.

b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal Challenges from government and specific interest groups to overall strategy	Ensuring sound basis within places strategy and a revised admissions policy which balances individual and institutional needs across the borough	Revised admissions policy improves opportunities whilst balancing other needs
Property Planning challenges	Early consultation by LGS with Planning Sound initial consideration avoiding wasted effort	Expansion of existing sites potentially improves site use and reduces the need to establish new facilities

Human Rights Challenges from specific interest groups	Sound basis to strategy and admissions policy Appropriate consideration and consultation	
Health and Safety Traffic risks	Sound transport planning	
Employment Issues		
Equalities Issues Challenges	Ensure needs of all parts of community are considered and balanced in the strategy and admissions policy	Improve access of Slough children to grammar education without harming the existing balance in Slough non-selective schools
Community Support Risk of objection	Consult as appropriate Communicate scale of the problem and benefits	Potential support from some parents
Communications	Effective communication plan	Improving understanding of the constraints within which the Council operates in providing school places and of the difficult balance of a selective and non-selective system
Community Safety		
Financial Inability to resource need	Use available funding streams and delivery models to maximise use of resources	Improve cost-efficiency by co-funding a bigger scheme
Timetable for delivery		Co-ordinate opening with period of demand
Project Capacity		Co-funding a bigger scheme creates project management efficiency
Other		

c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

- 4.5 There are Human Rights Act implications arising out of the proposed recommendations of this report.
- 4.6 The School Admissions Code has been issued under School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to

the discharge of functions relating to schools admissions. It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with the Code.

- 4.7 Only those Grammar Schools designated by the Education (Grammar School Designation) Order 1998 are permitted to select their intake on the basis of high academic ability. Langley Grammar falls within the designation.
- 4.8 Any changes to a Schools Admission Policy must be compliant with the Code, the Schools Admission Appeals Code, other related regulations as well as relevant human rights and equalities legislation.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

- 4.9 The proposal has a positive impact since it enables an increase in the number of school places across the borough, improving access and choice for all. It will increase the number of grammar school places available in the borough without having an adverse impact on the present selective:non-selective ratio of places. It will increase access to SEN education in a mainstream setting.

5 Background

- 5.1 Langley Grammar School has submitted a bid to the DfE for a major rebuild and has asked the Council to fund building works to expand the school by one form of entry at the same time. Langley Grammar also proposes to create SEN provision for pupils who satisfy their admissions policy and who also have special needs.
- 5.2 This request offers the opportunity to do a more site-efficient and cost-efficient build, to satisfy an increasing pressure for SEN places and for the Council to deploy its Basic Need Grant at a good unit cost per place. At the same time it raises questions of principle and policy about the number of and admission of Slough students to grammar school places in the borough. Members will wish to consider how they can maximise the benefit of their investment for Slough residents whilst not unbalancing the present provision within and outside the borough which supports Slough residents.
- 5.3 Slough's secondary schools have remained relatively unchanged in number for a generation with 11 schools (56 FoE, Forms of Entry) in Slough of which 4 (18 FoE) are grammar schools. Investment in Slough's secondary school places has kept pace with demand. There has also been significant inward and outward traffic particularly of pupils coming in to grammar schools and pupils travelling out to non-selective and selective schools. This has traditionally been of approximately neutral impact. The rapid growth in the primary school population since 2007 is now starting to impact on the demand for secondary school places. Demand had initially threatened to outstrip supply yet, as a result of the recent approval and opening of new Free Schools described below, supply outstrips demand for 2014-15 and with other proposals in the pipeline is likely to do so until 2017. Thereafter in addition to the new provision described above it is estimated that another 4 schools may be required by 2022 (38 FoE in total). A further report on the Council's plans

to address the long term shortfall will be brought. In the meantime such a significant growth in demand raises questions about the proportion of places that will be on offer in future years at grammar schools.

- 5.4 The first new places that have created additional supply are via Free Schools, with Khalsa Secondary Academy opened in September 2013 in Buckinghamshire and Ditton Park Academy and Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy opened in September 2014 in Slough. Together these have provided an additional approximately 9 FoE available to Slough residents in 2013-14 and 2014-15. On a temporary basis this has resulted in an over-provision of secondary school places for Slough pupils and, as these schools grow to their planned scale that temporary over-provision will increase. This has reduced take up of non-selective schools in and particularly outside Slough and, puts those schools most severely affected at risk of becoming non-viable. This presents risks to schools within and particularly outside the borough and could mean that provision outside the borough is destabilised and lost before projected demand again exceeds projected supply from 2017. Members will know that the Council has made strong representations to the DfE to slow down the introduction of non-selective free schools to meet emerging need. However, because of the dynamics within the selective schools, one additional grammar FoE during this period will have little adverse impact, could serve to maintain the present supply of grammar school places for Slough children and will address the shortfall in the future.
- 5.5 The Council has established the following principles in its school places strategy:
- Prioritise expansion or delivery of schools to maximise the benefit to Slough residents
 - Support expansion of selective schools only where the expansion will not add to the imbalance between selective and non-selective places
 - Allow for adequate playing fields on or very easily accessible to the site
 - Maximise the available sources of funding or schemes for delivery
 - Be part of a holistic plan for future developments in the borough
 - Recognise that land use pressures must result in provision being made outside the borough
 - Be sufficiently flexible to respond to acceleration or deceleration in demand.
- 5.6 Whilst the Langley Grammar request offers an opportunity in the context of severe demand over the longer term, the challenge is to ensure that the principles above are satisfied. In essence to ensure the additional new places secured by the Council's investment should very largely serve the needs of Slough residents both by increasing the proportion of Slough students at Langley Grammar and by increasing the total number of Slough students in Slough grammar schools without adversely affecting the imbalance between selective and non-selective places. This is a mathematical and policy challenge. Policy at borough level may need to be clarified and the school's admissions policy will need to be adjusted. Langley Grammar School has offered to adjust its policy and we need to make reasonable assumptions on how this will impact the take up of places.

6 Grammar Places

6.1 Grammar schools are a key part of Slough's school provision. In 2013, they provided 38% of all secondary school places in Slough. Yet on average only a minority of places in Slough's grammar schools are offered to Slough residents (34% or 181 offered in 2014, or 13% of all secondary school places in Slough). A further 72 and 24 grammar school places were offered to Slough residents by Burnham grammar and other grammar schools respectively.

School (Current Admission number)	No. of Slough Residents Offered Year 7 Places*	% of each school's Year 7 from Slough	% of total Year 7 grammar school students resident in Slough
Herschel (120)	74	62%	27%
Langley (150)	47	31%	17%
Upton Court (145)	27	19%	10%
St Bernard's (120)	33	28%	12%
			66%
Burnham Grammar (150)	72	48%	26%
Other non-Slough Grammar	24	Not available	9%

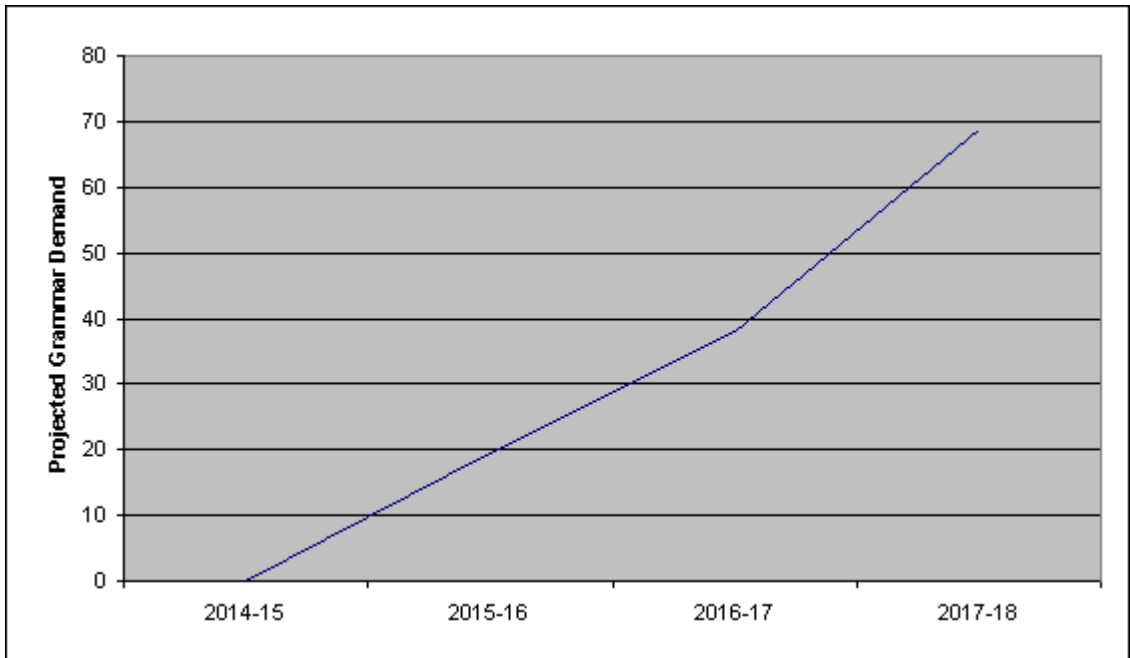
As at offer day 2014

6.2 The admission of Slough residents to Slough's grammar schools is based on a number of factors: the levels of aspiration and perception of success from Slough residents; teaching those skills which will best fit a pupil to pass the test; the admission policies of the grammar schools; and the overall pass rate as it impacts on the cohort in any year.

6.3 The current 11+ test in theory identifies the top 30% of pupils. Pupils who score 111 or greater are considered in the top 30% and therefore eligible for a place in a grammar school if they apply. If a grammar school is oversubscribed, places are offered according to the criteria set out in each individual school's Admissions Policy. Not all pupils who score 111 are guaranteed a grammar school place. This will depend on whether there is greater demand than places and whether those who pass also meet the admissions criteria of the schools to which they apply. In 2014 all Slough residents who scored 111 in the admissions round have been offered a grammar place either at a Slough school or a school outside Slough but there is no guarantee that that will happen in every year.

6.4 As the school population increases the overall demand for secondary places increases and, all things being equal, the demand from Slough residents for grammar school places will correspondingly increase. Pragmatically therefore the number of grammar school places offered to Slough residents should increase and the Langley Grammar request is timely. To maintain the balance of provision, arguably more than 10 of the 38 FoE needed in the period 2013-2022 should be selective. Yet, because only a minority of places are taken up by Slough pupils, this would mean that the Council would be facilitating school places but would not satisfy Slough's demand for the 38 FoE. To maintain a baseline ratio of Slough pupils in grammar schools in and outside the borough

it is estimated that at least 60 places will be required by 2017-18 and based on present choice/offers more than 30 will be needed within the borough. Members should note that there are many variables and the outcome may vary from the projection according to applications in any year, alternative provision increasing or decreasing particularly outside the borough, the pass rate of Slough applicants, the perception and current performance of schools within and outside the borough, etc.



- 6.5 Working within this context officers have developed some draft principles to steer policy decisions:
- maintain the baseline ratio of non-selective to selective places for Slough pupils
 - all Slough pupils who pass the 11+ are offered a grammar school place
 - all the above are offered a place in a Slough grammar if that is their preference
 - and potentially to work towards increasing the proportion of Slough pupils at Slough grammar schools, where this does not adversely affect the ratio of selective:non-selective places.
- 6.6 To achieve the above all or some of the following will be required to match the growing population on a pro rata basis by either:
- a) increasing the number of grammar school places
 - b) increasing the aspiration of Slough families to apply for a grammar school place
 - c) ensuring that Slough pupils pass the 11+ if they have the aptitude
 - d) adjusting the admissions policies of Slough grammar schools to enable more Slough pupils who meet the 11+ threshold to go to a Slough grammar school.
- 6.7 Of these: a), if done alone, would require provision of three times the new places required for Slough pupils; b) and c), if undertaken alone would increase the demand for grammar schools places and increase the 'pass

mark', so frustrating applicants who had met the current standard; d) could create some places without the need to build but is unlikely to deliver all the demand during the plan period to 2021-22. On balance to meet the immediate pressure a combination of a) and d) would deliver additional places, if schools could be incentivised to change their admissions policies. Action to achieve b) and c) could be pursued but would be longer term in effect and have wider supply and policy implications.

7 Responding to the request for funding for the expansion of Langley Grammar School

- 7.1 Langley Grammar School has submitted a strong bid for inclusion on the Department for Education's Priority School Building Programme 2. The school should hear later this year if they have been included on the programme. Inclusion would see the old part of the school rebuilt at some time between 2015 and 2020. Expanding the school at the same time as rebuilding would provide good value for money and would ensure the most efficient use of the site.
- 7.2 During this period population growth in Slough will generate the demand for at least 1 further FoE in grammar schools within the borough by 2017 and the proposal represents good value for money.
- 7.3 In allocating grant to this purpose the Council would wish to ensure that the investment in Langley Grammar School benefits Slough residents and does not simply divert Slough pupils from other Slough grammar school places. To this end officers' discussions with the school have centred around a review of the school's admissions policy, with the aim of increasing the year 7 intake from Slough pupils in future years by at least 30. The school has agreed this in principle and options for delivering this are explored below.
- 7.4 Langley Grammar School has already adjusted its admissions policy from September 2015 giving priority to pupils who live in a wide catchment area and those that live in the area are prioritised as below:
- Applicants in receipt of free meals
 - Applicants with an aptitude for music (up to 10% of places)
 - Children of staff
 - Applicants with the highest test scores.
- 7.5 Further options being explored positively between officers and the headteacher include:
- A smaller catchment area, reducing the area outside the Slough boundary
 - Priority for pupils within the catchment who are from Slough and pass the 11+
 - Priority for pupils attending feeder schools - the academy has entered into an umbrella trust with Castleview and Ryvers. These could be feeder schools perhaps with other local schools.
- 7.6 It is anticipated that such changes will increase the proportion of Slough residents at Langley Grammar School but the scale of change cannot be

predicted precisely since it is dependent on a number of factors within and outside the school and council influence.

7.7 Members may wish to suggest other admissions criteria which may secure a higher proportion of Slough pupils and may also wish to suggest other conditions which derive community benefit from the investment in the school.

7.8 Officers will seek to secure those above and any additional condition through negotiation. The final conditions and the precise contribution based on build costs will be agreed by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet member for Education and Children.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Supporting Langley Grammar School's request for funding to enable 1 FoE expansion of the school offers a pragmatic and cost effective solution to the delivery of much needed school places in the borough without undermining the present balance of non-selective:selective school places occupied by Slough residents. Whilst all figures are projections based on recent experience and the overall dynamics of school supply and demand are subject to many factors, officers believe this is a practical way forward.

9 Background papers

None