



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 7.00 pm

Committee Rooms 2 and 3, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, HA9 9HD

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Mitchell Murray (Chair)
Matthews (Vice-Chair)
Aden
Al-Ebadi
Arnold
Gladbaum
Kansagra
CJ Patel

First alternates

Councillors:

Daly
Sneddon
Oladapo
Jones
Krupa Sheth
S Choudhary
Baker
Leaman

Second alternates

Councillors:

Ogunro
Clues
Harrison
RS Patel
Hossain
Hector
Colwill
Green

Statutory Co-optees

Alloysius Frederick
Elsie Points
Nardia Sullivan
Vacancy

Non-statutory Co-optees

Mrs Hawra Imame
Dr J Levison

Observers

Mr A Carter
Ms J Cooper
Mrs L Gouldbourne
Ms C Jolinon
Mr B Patel
Brent Youth Parliament
representatives

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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Item	Page
1 Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting any relevant financial or other interest in the items on the agenda.	
2 Deputations (if any)	
3 Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 March 2013	1 - 8
4 Matters arising	
5 Brent Youth Parliament update	
The committee will receive an oral update on the work of the Brent Youth Parliament.	
6 School Place Strategy Report	9 - 24
In August 2012 the Executive approved the strategy for primary school expansion to meet the need for 21 forms of entry (FE) by 2020-21. An update on the SEN requirement was also provided, requiring 192 new places. The strategy for meeting the projected shortfall (19FE) of secondary school places was approved in January 2013. This report provides an update on the school expansion programme to facilitate a discussion of progress and future challenges.	
7 Inspection of Fostering Service	25 - 40
The purpose of this report is to provide detail regarding the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Brent's Fostering Service, which took place on 12-15 March 2013. The detail is contained within the attached full inspection report.	
8 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	41 - 48
The Work Programme is attached.	

9 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny meeting is scheduled for 17 July 2013.

10 Any other urgent business

Notice of items raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.



- Please remember to *SWITCH OFF* your mobile phone during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.
 - Toilets are available on the second floor.
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 - A public telephone is located in the foyer on the ground floor, opposite the Porters' Lodge

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MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday 20 March 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mashari (Chair), Councillor Cheese (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Aden, Al-Ebadi, Matthews, Mitchell Murray and Pavey and Mr A Frederick, Dr Levison, Mrs L Gouldbourne and Thivya Jeyashanker

Also present: Councillor Arnold

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms E Points

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

2. **Deputations**

None

3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 February 2013**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2013 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **Brent Youth Parliament update**

Thivya Jeyashanker (Chair of Brent Youth Parliament (BYP)) provided an update to the committee on the work of the BYP.

Brent Students Climate Change Conference

The Brent Student Climate Change conference had been held earlier in the day and had been very successful. The Chair and Vice Chair of BYP had addressed the conference on the subject of encouraging engagement and participation of young people and had received a good response. Amer Hajan (Strategic Youth Engagement Officer) explained that it was hoped that this would be an annual event in the future.

Next meeting of BYP

The next meeting of the BYP was scheduled for Saturday 23 March 2013 at 10.00 am. All members of Brent Council were invited and encouraged to attend. Amer Hajan explained that all Brent Councillors would be formally invited to attend these sessions in future and for those who couldn't attend, minutes of the sessions would be provided.

Training

Training was provided to members of BYP and had thus far been very useful, including subjects such as media skills and equality issues. Feedback drawn from the evaluation forms completed by BYP members evidenced that these training sessions were received very positively.

Main Issue

Tackling the issue of bullying would remain a key focus of BYP in the coming year, with particular attention being paid towards homophobic bullying. A number of strategies would be employed in the pursuit of this goal, including the development of a young people-friendly anti-bullying policy for distribution to Brent schools.

Council Budget

The BYP had sought to be as involved as possible in the budget setting process. In particular, the BYP executive had aimed to make it accessible to the wider BYP membership, who in turn could feedback to their constituents.

Amer Hajan briefly outlined a number of developments regarding his work with the BYP. He had held one to one sessions with the BYP executive members to see how they can be better supported. The committee was further advised that the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had appointed two young people from BYP to sit on its equality, diversity and engagement board/committee. Councillors were invited to contact Amer Hajan directly to obtain further details about the work taking place with the BYP.

The Committee and Councillor Arnold congratulated all of the young people involved in the Student Climate Change Conference. It was reiterated by the Chair that should any issues arise that BYP considered appropriate for scrutiny by the Committee, these could be added to the committee's work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the work of the BYP be noted.

5. Schools Finance Update - 2012/13

Mustafa Salih (Assistant Director, Strategic Finance – Children and Families) introduced the report to the committee, noting that it provided an update on the current situation regarding financial management in Brent Schools. This followed a more detailed report which had been presented to the committee on 19 July 2012. The meeting was reminded that the financial management of schools was a function that was delegated to schools' governing bodies. However, the council's Section 151 officer retained responsibility for ensuring that sound financial systems and controls were in place. Furthermore, the council held an overall responsibility to ensure that the public funds provided to schools were spent appropriately. The council therefore maintained a strategic and supportive role in relation to the financial management of schools, conducting regular internal audit reviews and providing regular guidance updates, training sessions and seminars for schools.

Mustafa Salih explained that the report focussed on three key issues which had been identified previously as requiring improvement. These were; the outcomes of internal audit reviews, failure to comply with the School Teachers Pay and

Conditions Document (STPCD) and, schools having entered into unfavourable leasing arrangements. Action plans had been developed and implemented for the latter two issues and improvements could be evidenced across the board. The fifteen audit reports that had been issued as part of the 2012-13 schools audit plan had demonstrated a much improved position from that achieved in 2010/11 and 2011/12, with the proportion of schools receiving Substantial assurance having increased from 35 to 80 per cent. Turning to the issue of compliance with the STPCD, Mustafa Salih advised the majority of Brent schools were now compliant. A few schools had been asked to provide additional supporting documentation to evidence their decision making around pay levels for senior posts. With regard to schools entering into unfavourable leases, the council had identified this problem in 2010. As the schools in question did not have the legal power to enter into these leasing arrangements, the Council was of the view that they should be treated as void from the outset. In addition to implementing an action plan to more broadly address the issue through the provision of advice and guidance, the council continued to work to extricate the worst affected schools from their costly finance leases. The council was prepared to contest any finance lease in court and at present, one case was due to go to trial before the high court in early 2014; the council was confident of success in this instance. However, the council had also successfully engaged in negotiation with some of the finance companies in question and would continue to do so where appropriate.

In concluding, Mustafa Salih noted that a Schools Finance Conference had been held on 31 January 2013 and almost every school had attended. Workshops had been held around different aspects of schools finance and up to date guidance had been provided. The council would continue with its approach to supporting good financial management in schools and would continue to monitor the situation.

During members' discussion the committee sought further details regarding the fifteen schools audited as part of the 2012/13 schools audit plan, noting that these were necessary in order to identify whether the sample was representative. It was noted that the committee had previously been assured during its discussion on 19 July 2013 that a heightened level of financial training could be incorporated into the induction training for governors and an update was sought on this matter. It was further commented that a balance should be maintained between expert and lay members of boards of governors and it was therefore important to actively recruit governors with suitable professional skills. The committee suggested that the council's governor support service could assist in identifying skills and could act as a signposting service. The committee queried how many schools had sought advice direct from the council's HR Services Manager and queried what efforts had been made to improve the dialogue between the council and Brent's schools. It was further queried what the cost had been of bad financial practice in Brent's schools and how much had been saved as a result of the actions taken to address this. Mrs Gouldbourne (committee observer and Chair of the Brent Teacher's Panel) advised that changes to the STPCD from September 2013 meant that national pay scales would be removed and schools could set their own pay arrangements. The Teachers' Unions had proposed that a pay policy be developed between the Teachers' Unions and the council which could then be recommended to schools and it was queried what progress had been made with regard to this.

In response to the queries raised, Mustafa Salih advised that details of the fifteen schools could be provided to the committee. All maintained Secondary schools

were audited annually and primary schools were audited on a three year cycle. Sara Williams explained that she was confident that the improved outcomes of the audits for 2012/13 were indicative of a general trend, resulting from actions taken to address some of key issues identified and noted that the results of the audits were good but not outstanding. The council would continue to work to further improve outcomes. Mustafa Salih added that where schools had financially penalised themselves by entering into unfavourable leasing arrangements, subsequent action taken to cancel these had saved Brent's schools approximately £1million. The overall cost of the unfavourable leasing arrangements to Brent's schools would be calculated and provided to the members of the committee. With regard to the school governors' induction programme, this did include a finance element but it was agreed that this would be reviewed in accordance with the committee's suggestion. It was highlighted that the council had held a very successful Schools Finance Conference in January which had incorporated several different workshops.

Mustafa Salih further advised the committee that the exact number of schools that had approached the HR Services Manager directly was not known. Sara Williams explained that communication with schools took place via a range of media including a fortnightly bulletin which highlighted important developments. The schools' extranet was used as a repository for important documents. Meetings were also held with head teachers and Chairs' of governors. With regard to the changes to the STCPD, guidance was currently being developed that would be distributed to schools. The council was also looking at how other London authorities sought to address the issue to identify best practice. Turning to the role of the governors support service in helping to address skills gaps in schools boards of governors, Sara Williams advised that this was something that could be explored further. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) noted that there was a national service for identifying governors and reiterated the importance of having both governors with professional skills and those who were committed individuals from the local community.

With reference to the query concerning the number of schools that had approached the HR Services Manager, the Chair commented that it would be helpful in future reports for any such statements to be evidenced with the relevant figures.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report be noted.
- (ii) that an update report regarding Schools Finance be brought to the committee on an annual basis.

6. **Academies and Free Schools**

Sara Williams (Assistant Director, Early Help and Education) presented a report updating the committee on the changes in types of schools in the borough. As with many other local authorities, Brent had a mixed economy of schools; most of its secondary schools were now academies, whilst the majority of its primary schools remained community or voluntary aided schools. It was anticipated that the transition of Brent's remaining maintained schools to academies would be incremental. However, if the council wished to establish new schools in the borough, these would have to be delivered via the free schools route, with the

council advertising via the Department for Education (DfE) for a free school provider. In view of this, the council had developed a set of partnership criteria but had not yet proposed any new school developments. There were, however, two sites for new schools that were likely to become available as a result of two developments. In addition, a free school which had been approved for a different borough had been relocated to Brent, with the DfE having purchased a site from the College of North West London. It was emphasised to the committee that the culmination of these changes on a national scale had resulted in the growth of an increasingly prominent autonomous school sector and it was judged that this pointed to the end of the local authority as a direct and large scale provider of support to schools.

Sara Williams explained that despite this changing role, local authorities retained a significant number of legal duties in respect to education and the wider needs of children as set out in the Statutory Guidance on the roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services, issued in 2012. In particular, educational attainment and school improvement remained important issues for the pursuit of borough prosperity and the equality of life chances for Brent's young people. Research commissioned by the LGA and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) identified that the key to future school improvement was the development of a schools-led partnership working with the local authority. This partnership would enable schools to provide support to each other, as well as jointly commission external support. The Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) was currently in the early stages of development, having been launched in October 2012. The council would continue to work closely with all of Brent's schools to represent the interest of pupils and parents across the borough. The council also provided an extensive offer of traded services to schools and further developments in the range of services offered were planned for 2013/14.

Sara Williams advised that new education funding arrangements for local authorities and academies would come into force for 2013-14, in the form of the Education Services Grant (ESG). The ESG would be allocated on a per-pupil basis to local authorities and academies according to the number of pupils for whom they were responsible, with each pupil attracting £116. In addition, local authorities would receive an extra £15 for all Brent pupils for the statutory duties that did not transfer to academies. As the new figure of £116 per pupil was significantly less than academies had been receiving thus far and the DfE had agreed transitional protection for academies, to be funded from the DfE budget. ESG allocations for 2013/14 were still pending but it was expected that approximately £6.2 million would transfer out of Brent's overall funding with circa £3.9 million coming back to the council for its maintained schools. The remaining £2.3 million would be allocated to Brent's academies. The expected level of funding adjustments had been incorporated in to the appropriate budgets for 2013/14.

In the subsequent discussion, the committee raised several issues. With regard to the new free school which was being established in Brent, further information was sought about its admission arrangements and how the establishment of new free schools would impact the council's projections of demand for school places. It was also queried whether the council could reduce the pressure on school places by working with other local authorities. Noting the development of the partnership criteria, the committee queried whether the council was proactively approaching groups to identify potential free school partners, particularly in light of the two sites

that were likely to become available for new schools in the borough. The committee further queried what resources the council was contributing to the BSP. It was queried how the council intended to work with academies and free schools to ensure it continued to meet its equality objectives, particularly in relation to educational achievement and the needs of groups at risk of underachievement. The committee raised a concern regarding how the council would ensure that the appropriate health and safety requirements were met across all of Brent's schools, noting that the council had a duty to ensure the health and safety of all of its pupils. This concern was raised with particular reference to potential issues at the site for the new Michaela Community School.

Sara Williams explained that free schools would be required to abide by the Schools Admissions Code. The new free school, Michaela Community School, would be admitting pupils using a banding process, similar to that which was used by the Capital City Academy. If neighbouring boroughs established new free schools this could significantly impact the borough's projections regarding demand on school places. It was emphasised that these projections took into consideration several factors and planning both within and cross borough was difficult.

Turning to the issue of the council actively pursuing the creation of new schools in Brent, Sara Williams explained that the two potential sites were dependent on developments which had been delayed. The Community Infrastructure Levy from these developments only became available to the council at a particular point in the process and so the council could not pursue these options immediately. It was thought that these sites would become available in 2016/17. It was confirmed that the council was proactively, but informally communicating with potential free school applicants. A preliminary investigation of potential partners for free schools had been undertaken but had not been progressed further as the council was not in a position to develop a firm proposition at this time. It was noted that some free school applications had been approved by the DfE without their having a set location and this offered potential for further exploring partnership opportunities. During its preliminary investigations, none of the twelve prospective free school applicants had fully met the council's partnership criteria, particularly the requirement to evidence their ability to deliver school improvement. This was thought to be potentially difficult for certain groups which had formed for the particular purpose of establishing a free school and did not therefore, have a history of achievement to evidence their capabilities. The council was currently managing the demand for school places through phased school expansion, which was considered to be the most financially efficient solution at the present time. Councillor Arnold added that it was important that the additional school places were created when they were needed which for secondary schools was not thought to be until 2017.

The committee was informed by Sara Williams that the council was assisting the development of the BSP and had, in the current financial year, allocated a small amount of funding to allow staff to be seconded from schools. It was good practice to have an effective schools partnership in place and it was therefore in the council's interest to help it evolve. Councillor Arnold explained that the council was giving Brent's schools the time needed to take ownership of the BSP. A steering group was now in place and BSP would be recruiting a director, in partnership with the council in the near future. With regard to the council meeting its equality duties, it was highlighted that as public sector bodies, non-maintained schools would be

equally required to meet the public sector equalities duty, which would include having an equality scheme in place. It would not be the role of the council to ensure that the non-maintained schools complied with this but it would be able access data on attainment against background characteristics. Similarly, the council did not have any regulatory powers to ensure that non-maintained schools complied with health and safety requirements, but the council would seek to work with the schools and would share the recommended health and safety policies and guidance.

Mrs Gouldbourne advised that two consultation events had been scheduled by Michaela Community School; one on 26 March 2013 and the other on 4 April 2013. Both of these events would take place within the school holidays which it was considered was prohibitive for teachers and parents. Sara Williams confirmed that there would be an officer presence at these events.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That the committee undertake to write a letter to the Secretary of State regarding the difficulty faced by the local authority in ensuring adequate health and safety standards for Brent Children in schools over which the council had no official influence, drawing on the experiences provided by members of the committee and appointed observers of the committee.

7. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy

RESOLVED:

That the Special Educational Needs Strategy be noted.

8. School Places Update

Sara Williams advised that there were currently five primary school pupils without an offer of a school place, due to their being very recent applications. Three of these pupils required places in Year 1 which was a very full year group across Brent. There continued to be a steady flow of children requiring school places in to Brent. Additional classes had been established at Preston Park and Stonebridge; however, it was acknowledged that places offered to parents were not always at a convenient or perceived reasonable distance. The council would review the numbers for the reception year in-take to assess whether the projections made for September 2013 were correct and whether further additional classes might be required.

Councillor Cheese noted that it could be difficult for parents who might have to take children to two different schools for the same start times. Sara Williams advised that officers were very sensitive to that issue. The Fair Access Protocol could be used in exceptional circumstances to keep siblings together but overall the council was only able to offer places where there were vacancies. Where parents were not taking reasonable efforts to get their children to school, the council would try to address this matter directly with them although could pursue legal action in extreme cases.

In response to a query, Sara Williams explained that there were adequate school places for all children moving into secondary school in September, with

approximately 67% achieving their first choice. Years 10 and 11 were quite full at the present time.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

9. **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Chair drew the committee's attention to the work programme and welcomed any suggestions for additional items from members. Thivya Jeyashanker advised the BYP's surveys had found that careers advice was an issue of significance for Brent's young people. Councillor Cheese requested that the item on educational attainment by ethnicity be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

In response to a request from Councillor Pavey, Sara Williams advised that updates on the Youth Service Review and how the Payments by results in Early Years was progressing could be circulated to the committee.

It was highlighted that it had been agreed that all reports to the committee include a section on child poverty implications and this had not yet been implemented. Priya Mistry agreed that this would be followed up.

10. **Date of next meeting**


The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed at the annual council meeting scheduled for 15 May 2013.

11. **Any other urgent business**

None

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

CLLR MASHARI
Chair

 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 June 2013</p> <p>Report from Director of Regeneration and Major Projects and Director of Children and Families</p>
<p>Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p>Review of the School Expansion Programme 2012-2016</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In August 2012 the Executive approved the strategy for primary school expansion to meet the need for 21 forms of entry (FE) by 2020-21. An update on the SEN requirement was also provided, requiring 192 new places. The strategy for meeting the projected shortfall (19FE) of secondary school places was approved in January 2013.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the school expansion programme to facilitate a discussion of progress and future challenges.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Panel discuss the report and its implications.

3.0 Background & Purpose

- 3.1 The Executive has agreed the expansion strategy to meet the need for primary, secondary and SEN schools places in Brent.
- 3.2 The Council has developed a four year strategy under the School expansion Programme 2012-16 taking into account the supply and demand mismatch, and the limited funding envelope available to the Council.
- 3.3 The Council has developed a four year rolling programme of school expansion based on improved demand forecast, smarter procurement, construction and project management arrangements than those employed to date. The programme will consider the immediate need for primary places, Secondary and SEN requirements and explore financial models that may help to deliver these. The Council will need to explore all avenues of possible funding to avoid a future significant supply and demand mismatch.

School places delivered

3.4 Since 2010-11 the following temporary and permanent primary places have been delivered:

Table 1. **Permanent and Bulge Places delivered since 2010-11**

2010-2011	School Name	Permanent	Bulge
1.	Park Lane	210	
2.	Braintcroft		60
3.	Brentfield		30
4.	Islamia		30
5.	Preston Manor Lower		60
6.	Preston Park		20
7.	St Robert Southwell		15
8.	Wykeham		30
Total Places 2010-11		210	245
2011-2012	School Name	Permanent	Bulge
9.	Brentfield	210	
10.	Byron Court	70	
11.	Newfield	210	
12.	Preston Manor	420	
13.	Chalkhill		30
14.	Furness		60
15.	Mitchell Brook		30
16.	N W London Jewish		20
17.	Preston Park		10
18.	Wykeham		30
Total Places 2011-12		910	180
2012-2013	School Name	Permanent	Bulge
19.	Chalkhill		30
20.	Mount Stewart Infants		30
21.	Wembley High T C		60
22.	Vicar's Green (Ealing)		15
23.	Preston Park Annexe		60
24.	Stonebridge Annexe		180
25.	Curzon Crescent		30
26.	College Green		25
Total Places 2012-13			430
2013-2014	School Name	Permanent	Bulge
27.	Barham*	210	
28.	Fryent *	420	
29.	Mitchell Brook *	210	
30.	St Robert Southwell *	15	
Total Places 2013-14		855	Refer to section 6

*Permanent provision is currently being delivered. These schools had taken Bulge Reception classes in September 2012, which will convert to Permanent from September 2013.

3.5 Temporary places delivered for 2012-13: 430 temporary places were created for the 2012-13 academic year, which ensured that all applicants from Reception to Year 6 by end of December 2012 had been offered a place. Some of the temporary or bulge reception places

were not available until January 2013, hence, these places have been offered to children on waiting lists and to new arrivals. Currently there are 101 vacancies overall in Reception both in the temporary provision and in permanent classes across the borough which will be needed for children who continue to arrive throughout the year. There are 54 unplaced reception children, all of whom have been made an offer, but are either under statutory school age, or are holding on for an offer of a school of preference. Any places not taken up in this year will be available as Year 1 places for September 2013 which will be needed for Year 1 aged children arriving outside the normal admission round. This is a much better position compared to February 2012 when there were 191 unplaced children and 70 vacancies in the comparative Reception Year group.

- 3.6 The Council is also in the process of delivering the expanded Crest Academies, which will provide 1FE each at the Boys' and the Girls' schools.
- 3.7 In addition, we have delivered a 20 place Moderate Learning Difficulties unit at Alperton Community School and are in the process of completing delivery of the rebuild The Village School. The works will be completed in time for the next academic year.

4.0 Update on Demand for School Places

- 4.1 **Primary requirement:** As reported in August 2012, based on GLA projections, 21 new forms of entry primary provision will be required by 2020-21 across the borough. The majority of this demand is front loaded, which means that the new places will be required by 2014/15 and 2015/16. A high level of demand exists across the borough, with a significant requirement in planning areas 3 & 5.
- 4.2 **SEN requirement:** Based on the January 2012 census data, we had forecast that 192 new SEN places will be required of which 86 are primary and 106 secondary places. 150 out of the 192 places are required by 2016-17.
- 4.3 **Secondary requirement:** Based on the 2012 GLA projections we had reported that 19 forms of entry secondary provision will be required.

5.0 Update on Permanent School Expansion Proposals

- 5.1 **Primary proposals:** Through a complete portfolio analysis, we had identified that up to 17.5FE primary places could be provided by 2014/15 across all planning areas through permanent expansion of existing primary and secondary schools and a further 2FE at Braintcroft by 2015/16, which was linked to the creation of new SEN places. A further 13FE and 9FE were identified in Phases 3 & 4, respectively. In total, we identified potential for providing 39FE across Brent.
- 5.2 We had also reported that each scheme listed in previous Executive report would need to be validated prior to commencing the expansion proposal. This is because there are several risks which may delay or even stop the implementation of a scheme, such as, a school may decide not to proceed with the expansion and/or planning constraints may render a scheme unviable. It may be necessary to substitute a scheme with another if any of the proposed schemes is not feasible, subject to due diligence completed by the Council and agreement with the school. In order to address such risks, the full list of schemes proposed would over-deliver primary capacity; however, in practical terms we are buffering our supply strategy in order to ensure

that right amount of places are created in the local areas of need. We agreed to continue to review the supply and demand closely over the life of the expansion programme.

- 5.3 Over the last few months, we have been discussing the primary school expansion proposals with governing bodies and other stakeholders.
- 5.4 The current view is that 17.5FE could be planned to be delivered for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, subject to statutory consultation and further school agreements. An additional 1FE subject to funding and agreement with the Diocesan Board could be delivered under Phase 4.
- 5.5 The list of schools that have agreed to commence statutory consultation or are in the process of considering to expand is as follows:

Table 2. **Phase 2:** Schemes which are likely to provide full new capacity by September 2014.

No.	Schemes	Planning Area	No. of New FE
1	*Uxendon	2	2
2	*Preston Park	2	1
3	*Harlesden	4	2
4	^Princess Frederica	5	1
5	**St. Joseph Primary	4	1
6	*Wembley High (new build)	2	4
7	*Vicar's Green (Ealing)	3	0.5FE
	Total		11.5FE

- 5.6 Leopold Primary School was part of the Phase 2 expansion plan by 1FE. However, after careful consideration and in consultation with the school, the Council will not be progressing with the expansion of the school. The reason for the decision is that further development of the feasibility study has demonstrated that a 1FE permanent expansion on the Leopold site will result in the school having external area that is significantly below guidelines. In addition, the significant structural work in the proposed scheme will require complex phasing/temporary classrooms which would compromise the regular operation of the school during term time for the duration of the construction period. As a result, it is envisaged that the overall scheme would not represent value for money as it would involve replacing existing accommodation as well as providing additional classrooms. Officers will continue to work on the approved schemes in the programme to deliver the required number of places in each phase.

Table 3. **Phase 3:** Schemes which are likely to provide new capacity by September 2015.

No.	Schemes	Planning Area	No. of New FE
8	**Elsley	3	2
9	^Stonebridge Primary	4	1
10	^Malorees Inf. & Jr.	5	1-2
11	***Oriental City	1	2
	Total		6FE

Table 4. **Phase 4:** Schemes which are likely to provide new capacity between September 2016 and September 2018.

No.	Schemes	Planning Area	No. of New FE
12	St Joseph Inf. & Jr.	3	1
	Total		1FE

*Statutory consultation has commenced.

**Statutory consultation likely to commence over the new few weeks.

***Dependant upon completion of S106 agreement.

^Require school approval.

5.7 The following schools have declined to expand at this stage:

Table 5. Schools not expanding

No.	Schemes	Planning Area	Comments
1	Wykeham	1	School has decided to defer any further consideration for expansion for at least one year.
2	Northview	5	School does not want to expand beyond its existing 1FE provision.
3	Braintcroft	5	School has decided not to consider an expansion until after its Ofsted review over the next 12 months. Subsequent expansion will be dependent upon obtaining a Good Ofsted rating. The school has decided not to co-locate.
4	Chalkhill	3	The school has decided not to expand.
5	Mount Stewart Jr.	2	Infant school has expressed its interest to expand but the separate Junior school has declined to expand.
6	Kingsbury Green	1	School has decided not to expand the school and continue focusing on improving its standards.

Phase 4: Finally, the remaining primary schools/sites that will be considered for expansion if a continued growth in demand is established and subject to school agreement and funding:

Table 6. Potential future proposals

No.	Schemes	Planning Area	No. of New FE
1	Quintain Site	2	2
2	Our Lady of Lourdes RC	4	2
3	John Keble CoE	4	1
4	St Andrew & St Francis	5	1
	Total		6FE

5.8 **SEN proposals:** 77 new SEN places were proposed under phases 2 & 3 for meeting the shortage up to 2016-17. We had envisaged that 44 SEN primary places could be provided at Manor through co-location with Braintcroft Primary) and 30 new secondary SEN places at Woodfield Special School.

5.9 Since Braintcroft Primary School has not agreed to expand for the foreseeable future and has declined to co-locate with Manor Special School, we are identifying other options to make up the shortfall.

- 5.10 Woodfield Special School has agreed to consult on an expansion which will provide 40 new SEN places instead of the previous proposal for 30 places.
- 5.11 Oakington Primary School will be expanding its existing Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) unit by 10 new places from September 2013 and the unit in Kensal Rise Primary School will close, due to reduction in demand for specialist speech and language places.
- 5.12 We have successfully delivered a 20 place ARP unit Alperton Community School and additional 25 SEN places will be delivered by September 2013 at the newly rebuilt The Village Special School. Both these schemes have previously been allocated funding and do not impact current or future allocations.
- 5.13 We are also in the process of optimising the use of existing ARPs, which will fill the existing 14 vacancies in the system.
- 5.14 All the above measures put together, will help the Council provide 109 SEN places against the total 2020-21 requirement of 192 places.
- 5.15 **Secondary proposals:** As reported in January 2013, further analysis of the secondary proposals is necessary. Currently, there is insufficient secured funding to undertake secondary schemes.
- 5.16 Under the secondary strategy, we had identified the creation of 2FE under Phase 1, 10FE under Phase 2 and 2FE under Phase 3, totalling 14FE from September 2014 onwards. The remaining shortfall in provision (5FE) will be reviewed further through annual monitoring of the roll projections to ensure that any large fluctuation in demand is taken into consideration in order to not over provide. We will also continue to review the impact on supply of school places in Brent through the arrival of Free Schools outside the borough's own planning. The DfE has purchased Arena House, a former CNWL building in Wembley, for a new 4FE secondary free school (Michaela Community School) in Brent from September 2014. This takes secondary capacity beyond the figure needed for 2014 and contributes to meeting the capacity needs beyond that date.
- 5.17 Our current proposal is to proceed with Phase 1 (2FE) expansion of Queens Park Community School 2015-16 which would involve discussing the proposal with the school over the next month. This is on the basis of the funding allocation of £4.9m as represented in Table 10 below.
- 5.18 Having reviewed the overall programme, taking into account the lack of secured funding and the immediate capacity that will be created in Brent from September 2014, our recommendation is that Phase 2 schemes continue to stay on hold. Under Phase 2 schemes officers had proposed the expansion of Kingsbury High School by 4FE and creation of a 6FE secondary school at Gwenneth Rickus Building, for which £32.5m capital would be required.
- 5.19 As Phase 3 of secondary school expansion, the Priority Building programme is theoretically on track to deliver 2FE expansion through the expansion of Copland and Alperton Community Schools between the academic years 2017/18 and 2019/20.
- 5.20 If Phases 1 and 3 proceed as above and Michaela Community School opens, using current projections there will still be shortfall of 11 FE secondary school places will be short by 2020-21. As identified in the January 2013 Executive report, the remaining shortfall in provision will be reviewed further through annual monitoring of the roll projections to ensure that any large fluctuation in demand is taken into consideration in order to not over provide. Sudden shifts in

Brent's pupil population may occur due to several factors, e.g. the current national policy driven changes to housing benefits. We will also review the plans of neighbouring boroughs in order to maximise opportunities for partnership in providing new school places since we are aware of high numbers of (unplanned) additional places coming into adjoining boroughs through the free schools route.

6.0 Demand for Temporary Primary Places 2013-14

6.1 The latest statistics on children awaiting primary school places are as follows:

Table 7 – Vacancy and out of school statistics 31/5/13

Year Group	Out of school children	Children who have not been offered a school place	Vacancies
REC	43	2	63
YR 1	64	6	25
YR 2	23	3	46
YR 3	13	1	32
YR 4	20	2	35
YR 5	21	0	49
YR 6	8	0	119
TOTAL	192	14	369

6.2 This shows that in not year groups does demand currently exceed supply. Processes have been tightened up and timescales shortened to better ensure that parents take up the places that are available, even when the geographical location is less than ideal for them.

6.3 As reported in August 2012, the demand for primary school places in Brent is projected to grow. The demand for 2013-14 is supported by the actual number of applications being received for the 2013-14 academic year. 3799 on time applications were received by January 15, 2012 compared to 3717 on time applications over the current academic year 2012-13. As last year, we will again be able to offer all on-time applicants a place. Since the closing date a further 233 late applications have been received, compared to 598 late applications for the entire 2011-12 academic year. Based on previous years' experience, late applications will continue to be received throughout the next academic year and account for a small but significant percentage of demand.

6.4 Our current projections based on previously reported GLA projections for the 2013-14 academic year including in-year places is as follows:

Table 8. Primary requirement for September 2013-14 onwards

R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Classes
13	4	4	2	1	1	1	26

6.5 While Phase 2 expansion will create new primary places for the 2014-15 academic year, we will need to provide temporary places for 2013-14 leading up to the creation of new permanent provision in 2014-15. In total we are projection that 26 temporary classes will be required during the next academic year. It is important to note however that not all classes are needed in September. The following table summarises the current options analysis for creation of temporary places:

Table 9. Draft Proposals for Temporary Primary Provision 2013-14

Sr. No.	School Name	No. of New Classes	Risk of Delivery (H-high, M-medium, L-low)	Comments
1.	Gwenneth Rickus Building	15	M – May be suitable for temporary satellite provision of an existing Brent primary school. Potential planning issues will need to be considered.	Since there is lack of funding to convert this property into a 6FE secondary school and also the fact that it will be a very small site to accommodate a secondary school, we are proposing to use this facility as a temporary school for a period of 4 to 7 years. We are carrying out a feasibility study but it appears that it could be relatively quickly be converted into a temporary primary base.
2.	Make use of new classrooms previously delivered	2	M – Requires agreement with individual schools – Brentfield and Preston Manor.	This will require analysing demand for upper years Y5 & Y6 and utilising new classrooms at previously expanded schools (Brentfield and Preston Manor). We will aim to fill the empty classrooms in the upper year groups Y5 & Y6.
3.	'Bulge' Classes	2	H – Creating new 'bulge' classes is becoming increasingly difficult since most schools are now running previous bulge classes or have recently expanded.	We are in the process of reviewing the proposed expanding schools with a view to establish temporary classes in advance of the new capacity being delivered for 2014-15. This would allow the bulge class to progress to a permanent facility in two years.
4.	Other council owned buildings	7	M- Requires nearby school's agreement to manage the provision	Work is in progress on options.
	TOTAL	26	To be confirmed after a full review.	

6.6 Timescale will pose a particular challenge to all the above draft proposals. We will be continuing to carry out further analysis over the next few weeks. Funding of £2.5m has been identified to deliver temporary provision for the next academic year.

6.7 We are also reviewing the possibility of using other non-school buildings in the event of one or more of the above draft proposals cannot be delivered due to any reason.

7.0 Capital Allocation

- 7.1 As reported previously, the Council had received three allocations equalling £79.79m. The total combined capital available for school places was expected to be £92.3m, which was approved by the Executive to be allocated to the primary school expansion programme.
- 7.2 The Council has been allocated a further £22.75m for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 basic need funding rounds. This is approximately £8m more than previously forecast.
- 7.3 The total main capital allocation available to spend by the end of 2014-15 on new school places is £87.99m, including new and the balance of prior year grant allocations as well as Section 106 and Schools contributions but excluding allocations agreed to deliver Phase 1 primary expansion. Elements of future unsecured funding may be required to be brought forward within the Capital Programme to meet expenditure cashflows. This would incur increased levels of unsupported borrowing in the earlier years on a short term basis, incurring increased levels of debt charges on the General Fund Revenue Account. However, upon receipt of corresponding grant money, in subsequent years the forward funded sums could be repaid and the debt charges arising negated.
- 7.4 Table 10 below provides the summary of the funding position.

Table 10. **Summary of the Fund Allocation 2012-18**

		Provision Type				
		Primary FE	Secondary FE	SEN Primary & Secondary Places	Primary Temporary Classes (2013)	Project Team
School Places Required by 2020-21	Forecast Demand	21.0	19.0	192	30	N/A
	New Places Proposed	18.5	12.0	109	TBC	N/A
	Places Gap	2.5	7.0	83	30	N/A
Capital Programme Budget to 2014-15	Forecast Cost of New Places Proposed (£m)	78.70	22.00	1.57	2.50	2.40
	Secured Funding (£m):					
	Basic Need Settlements	75.87	4.90	0.07	2.50	2.40
	School Contributions	0.75	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00
	Unsupported Borrowing - Self Funded	0.00	0.00	1.30	0.00	0.00
	Total Secured Funding (£m)	76.62	4.90	1.57	2.50	2.40
(Surplus)/Deficit of Funding over Expenditure	2.08	17.1	0.00	0.00	0.00	

- 7.5 In the above table, the forecast demand for primary, secondary & SEN school places is based on school census data from the 2012-13 academic year. This means that the forecast, in line with the previous trend could shift further up once the analysis is revised based on the current year's census data. While the analysis will be completed by May 2013, it can be assumed that any upward (or unlikely downwards) shift in demand will be based on a medium to long term requirement for which corrective action could be planned in advance.
- 7.6 **Primary funding:** £76.62m out of the £78.7m projected expenditure to provide primary school places is based on secured funding and school contributions. The remaining £2.08m may require unsecured funding, which will need an Executive decision for the increased levels of unsupported borrowing in the earlier years on a short term basis as outlined in paragraph 7.3. Hence, 17FE out of the proposed 18.5FE could be funded through secured funding.
- 7.7 **Secondary funding:** £4.9m out of the forecast expenditure £22m on expansion of secondary schools is currently available from secured funds. This will allow 2FE provision to be delivered in 2014-15. The remaining £17.1m may require unsecured funding, which will need an Executive decision for the increased levels of unsupported borrowing in the earlier years on a short term basis as outlined in paragraph 7.3.
- 7.8 **SEN funding:** It is proposed that the requirement for £1.5m SEN funding will be paid through a combination of unsupported borrowing on an Invest to Save basis (£1.3m) and schools contribution (£200k). It is envisaged generally the SEN schemes will be based on Invest to Save and will require specific proposals to evidence demand and the return period. This way the finite capital could be stretched to maximise school places across the three sectors.
- 7.9 Total forecast expenditure £107.17m (including contingency) across primary, secondary and SEN provision is based on the list of schools included under Sections 5 & 6 above, which excludes Phase 1 school expansions (Barham, Mitchell Brook, Fryent & St. Robert Southwell Primary Schools). The S106 sites, Oriental City and Quintain sites may be potential primary free schools (2FE each) which could invite separate DfE funding, hence, are not included within the total expenditure at this stage. However, this means that at some stage the risk will need to be factored in if the additional DfE funding is not realised, e.g. in the event of a policy shift whereby the DfE requires local councils to provide both land and funding.
- 7.10 Capital Maintenance funds of £16.6m (£4.6m secured + £12m forecast), which has not been included within the total forecast secured funding of £87.99m, would be allocated towards the DDA works and essential repair and maintenance programme. Currently the approved capital programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 has allocated a total of £9.2m to Asset Management Plan works at schools to include Health and Safety works. Alternatively, this budget could fund further school expansion projects.
- 7.11 The budget will need to be rebalanced on a regular basis to ensure the supply and demand across primary, secondary and SEN provision is able to meet the fluctuating demand and further grant allocations budget deficits can be matched.

8.0 Need for additional resources

8.1 A core strategy for the medium term for meeting the additional demand for school places has been agreed by the Executive; however, additional measures are required in the near term to ensure that the immediate need for places can be met and that any marginal changes in the proposed new provision could be offset. Some of the measures previously proposed in the strategy reports are summarised as follows:

- Develop and review creative solutions, e.g. utilising existing or buying non-school estate consisting of land and/or buildings to create new school places; creating small schools within new housing blocks; greater utilisation of existing Children Centres; developing cross-boundary provision.
- Improve our approach to admission arrangements making use of any surplus places.
- Continue reviewing the prospects of new Free Schools in Brent and where possible align its contribution to meet the local demand.

8.2 Furthermore, the Council will continue to focus its activity in maximising the capital funding required to deliver all the new school places. As evidenced from table 10, we do not have sufficient funds to meet the entire need for more school places. Measures being taken include:

- Making further bids to the Education Funding Agency for funding e.g. Basin Need Safety Valve
- Continue lobbying the government for new funds in partnership with London Councils.
- Review the Council's Capital Programme with a view to ascertain funding contribution from other sources e.g. S106/Community Infrastructure Levy agreements.
- Review requirement for prudential borrowing, if necessary.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The figures included within Section 7.0 of this report refer to the approved capital programme as part of the 2012/13 Budget Setting process plus the additional Basic Need Settlement announced by the DFE on 1st March 2013. It should also be noted that the DFE Settlement was for a two year period covering the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years and as such allocations for future years are forecasts only and will be subject to change post future settlement announcements.

9.2 Significant changes to school funding relating to the national funding formula and the funding of academies are planned by the DfE and announcements are expected shortly. Reforms have already been consulted on regarding the calculation of the

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which will preclude debt charges on new unsupported borrowing being met from this revenue source in the future.

- 9.3 The funding requirement in this report is based on the current pupil projections up to 2020-21 and the proposed provision outlined in sections 5 & 6 of this report. However, it must be noted that if the projections were to change significantly, this would have an impact on the funding requirement.
- 9.4 As per table 10 of this report, a funding shortfall of £19.18m is forecast. However, it is important to note that not all primary, secondary & SEN school proposals identified in the August 2012 and January 2013 Executive reports, respectively, are included with the expenditure column (£107.17m). The current primary schemes being taken through are expected to meet most of the demand for 2020-21 on the basis of the existing demand forecast. Similarly, the secondary schemes will meet the majority of the demand and provide further scope to adjust supply according to demand variations, free school proposals and new funding allocations.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 Under sections 13 and 14 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education Acts 2006 and 2011), a local education authority has a general statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of the population in its area. The Local Authority must promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. It must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area and promote diversity and increase parental choice. To discharge this duty the Local Authority has to undertake a planning function to ensure that the supply of school places balances the demand for them.
- 10.2 As a contingency, to support the admission to school of children as quickly as possible, the In Year Fair Access Protocol has been revised and schools and the Unions have been consulted on a new proposed Protocol. The Protocol now in place allows for the admission of children over schools planned admission numbers in the event that a school place is not available. Schools will not be required to maintain classes over the planned admission number but will revert to the usual admission number when children leave.

11.0 Diversity Implications

- 11.1 Particularly at secondary transfer, parents are looking for a school which meets their cultural and religious/non-religious aspirations. Achieving this is complex in Brent where so many different ethnic and cultural groups converge and where the population changes so rapidly. There is already a good supply of girls and boys only secondary places in the borough as well as Catholic and Jewish schools and overall, the first preference applications indicate that parents are looking for high achieving schools as an opportunity to improve their child's life chances.

11.2 An Impact Needs/Requirement Assessment (INRA) has been prepared as part of the four year rolling programme, which will be further reviewed quarterly.

12.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

12.1 As approved by the Executive in August 2012, new Capital Team for Delivering School Expansion Projects is in the process of being established.

Background Papers

- Executive Report August 2012 'School Expansion (Primary) Programme 2012-16'
- Executive Report January 2013 'School Expansion (Secondary) Programme 2012-16'

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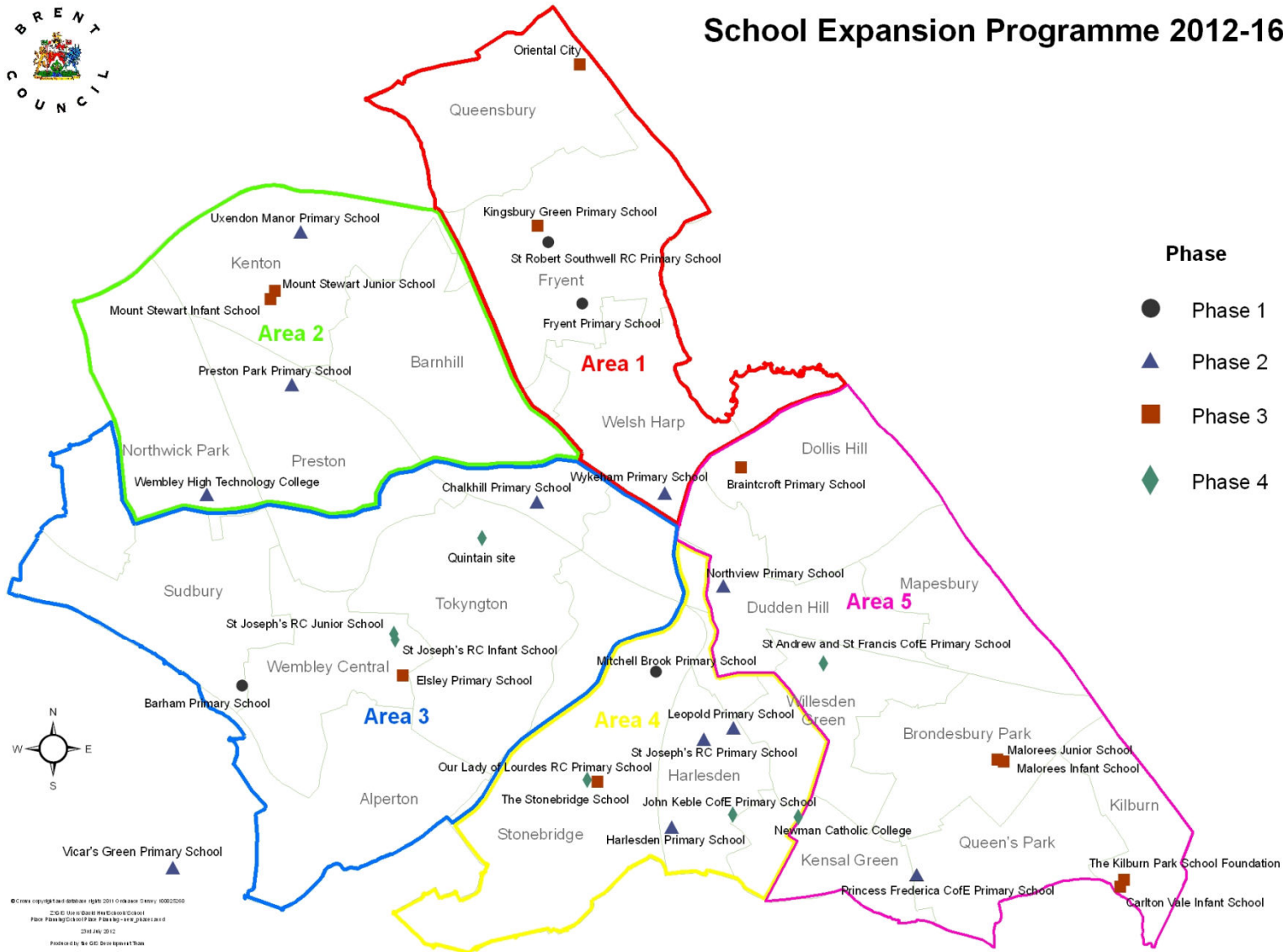
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Map 1. Primary School Expansion




School Expansion Programme 2012-16



Page 23

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 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 June 2013</p> <p>Report from the Director of Children and Families</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p>Outcome of Ofsted's Inspection of Brent Children's Services Fostering Service</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide detail regarding the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Brent's Fostering Service, which took place between 12th-15th March 2013. The detail is contained within the attached full inspection report.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the outcome of the inspection which is summarised in the report published by Ofsted on 21st May 2013 and attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Local Authority run fostering services are subject to regular inspection on a three-yearly cycle. Fostering services are subject to statutory regulation (Fostering Service Regulations 2011), guidance (Children Act 1989, Volume 4) and National Minimum Standards (2011). Compliance with these individual components forms a significant part of the inspection regime. The judgment scale for these inspections is as follows: outstanding, good, adequate and inadequate. Brent's fostering service was last inspected in October 2009 when the overall quality rating was 'good'. The Ofsted inspection regime for fostering services within Local Authorities is to change from September 2013. Scrutiny of fostering services will be combined with a more extensive

inspection of all of Children's Social Care performance – including safeguarding, Looked After Children and adoption.

3.2 In this most recent inspection the judgement received was that the overall effectiveness of the fostering service was 'good'. Overall effectiveness is measured against four specific inspection judgements:

- Outcomes for children and young people. We were judged to be **outstanding** in this area.
- Quality of service. We were judged to be **good** in this area.
- Safeguarding children and young people. We were judged to be **good** in this area.
- Leadership and Management. We were judged to be **outstanding** in this area.

3.3 The inspectors were extremely positive about the service, noting the significant improvements that have been implemented since the previous inspection and that all of the recommendations from that inspection had been met.

3.4 Two aspects of the service were judged as being 'outstanding'. One of the areas was that of outcomes for children and young people looked after by Brent foster carers. The service was recognised as treating each child as an individual and that every effort is made to place children within their own community and with carers who share a similar background. The stability of Brent foster care placements is good which enables continuity of educational placements, family and community links. Inspectors found a service that is highly aspirational for its children with education given a high priority.

3.5 The leadership and management of the service were also judged to be 'outstanding'. Improvements to quality assurance systems and a more focused team structure have helped to focus energies and improve outcomes. Inspectors found that the service benefits from a highly motivated and experienced staff team whose views are regularly sought to improve service delivery. The service was found to operate with a group of well-motivated carers who feel valued, well-supported and who have a good understanding of the often complex needs of children and young people in their care.

3.6 The inspection identified three areas where improvements should be made:

- That child-friendly profiles of foster carers should be developed in advance of any placement being made.
- That children and young people should be involved in the recruitment, preparation and training of foster carers and staff.
- That a training curriculum should be developed for carers to enable young people to acquire key life skills.

3.7 The fostering service has included these areas for improvement within the service action plan to ensure these are addressed in a timely manner. Child-friendly profiles will be completed by the end of July 2013. A young-person

has been identified to support in the recruitment of foster carers and the Care in Action group are being consulted on how young people can deliver on going training to foster carers. The foster carer training co-ordinator will include a specific course for carers on preparing young people for adult life in the next training curriculum.

- 3.8 The fostering service was very pleased with the overall outcome of the inspection. It has been shared with foster carers who were also very satisfied with the details of the report. The service is now aiming to build on the progress made, to ensure that improvements continue and that this contributes significantly to Children's Social Care's overall aspiration to be judged as 'good' when the new inspection framework is introduced in September 2013.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The inspection noted that the fostering service was effective at responding to changing demand and was successful in recruiting carers from minority communities. This has allowed more children to remain within the borough and maintain contact with their existing social networks. Inspectors also found that the service was outstanding at recognising and responding to children's specific physical, social and cultural needs.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 7.1 None

Background Papers

London Borough of Brent Children's Services Placements' Fostering Service (inspection report for local authority fostering agency). Published by Ofsted, 21st May 2013.

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London Borough of Brent Childrens Services Placement Fostering Service

Inspection report for local authority fostering agency

Unique reference number	SC042630
Inspection date	12/03/2013
Inspector	David Coulter / Muhammed Harunur Rashid
Type of inspection	Full

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Date of last inspection	05/10/2009

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The London Borough of Brent fostering service works within a child centred, multi-disciplinary and anti-discriminatory framework. There are three fostering teams that focus on recruitment and assessment, fostering support and kinship care. The service has one permanent independent reviewing officer and all other reviews are carried out through a contract with Aidhour. The Commissioning Service provide a range of placements using Brent resources and private and voluntary providers. At the time of the inspection the service was operating with 152 registered foster carers. Placements were being provided for 210 young people, 90 with independent fostering agencies and 120 within in-house provision and 35 within connected placements.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The borough of Brent is one of the most culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged areas of the country. The foster service frequently has to respond to demands brought about by factors far beyond its control. For example, many children and young people enter the service from communities that have been displaced from their own countries because of strife and civil unrest. In recent times the service has had to find placements for a significant number of young people from Afghanistan and Somalia. The service is extremely good at responding to changing demands and is successful in both recruiting and training carers from minority communities. In-house provision has increased and this has allowed more children and young people to reside within the borough and maintain contact with their existing social networks.

The service has made significant progress in many areas since the last inspection. A rationalisation of the management structure has resulted in a more streamlined service. Three teams, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, now deliver the service. The senior management team provide outstanding leadership to the experienced and motivated staff team. The introduction of a new quality assurance

system has created greater efficiency in all aspects of the service and created a regular source of reliable data to inform decision making.

Outcomes for individual young people are outstanding and children and young people respond positively to the quality individualised care they receive. Placement stability is good and the majority of young people now reside in their placements until 18 years. Young people are placed without avoidable delays and make good progress from their starting points. The educational attainment of children and young people continues to improve and an increasing number now progress on to college and university. The health and well-being of individual's is appropriately monitored and specialist help obtained to address specific health issue. Young people live full and active lives and expand their horizons by participating in a wide range of social and recreational activities. Young people are integral to decision making and their views contribute significantly to the development of the service. Diversity and equality are promoted effectively in all aspects of the service.

The service operates with a group of experienced and well-motivated carers. Carers feel valued and well supported and have a good understanding of the often complex needs of the young people in their care. New carers are carefully selected and are well prepared and trained. The service is extremely 'child focused' and carers and staff strive to ensure that the children and young people in their care are kept safe and are able to grow and develop within caring families.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop carers profiles that can be provided for young people in advance of any placement (NMS 11)
- involve children and young people in the recruitment, preparation, training and review of foster carers and staff (NMS 1.7)
- Develop a curriculum for the acquisition of key life skills. (NMS 12.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The service recognises each child and young person as a unique individual with their own specific physical, social and cultural needs. As part of the matching process every effort is made to place young people within their own community with families who share their ethnic, religious and linguistic background. However, this is not

always possible. Those placed with families from different cultural backgrounds felt their beliefs were respected and that appropriate arrangements had been made to ensure their religious and cultural needs could be met. While the service has been extremely successful in increasing its in-house provision there are still a significant number of placements sourced from outside the borough. Arrangements for monitoring the progress of young people in such placements are good. By accessing specialist interpreters staff aim to ensure that the views of young people who experience communication difficulties are obtained and shared with foster carers.

Although a number of foster families have produced excellent profiles that can be shown to children and young people before visiting, they are currently not yet widely available. Placement stability is good and indicates children and young people are appropriately placed with foster carers who can meet their assessed needs. By maintaining existing educational placements the service helps to provide a degree of continuity in children and young people's lives and minimise the inevitable disruption they experience when entering care. Once settled children and young people normally reside in their placements until 18 years.

The service is aspirational and there is an expectation that young people will grow and develop during their placements. Each child and young person is assigned to an independent reviewing officer who monitors their progress and ensures recommendations arising from their six monthly reviews are appropriately addressed. Additional independent support is also provided for children and young people who wish to access the service's complaints process. Young people spoken with felt they are appropriately placed with foster families whose members have a genuine interest in their well-being. The support they are receiving is clearly contributing to an increase in self-confidence and enabling them to make positive plans for their futures. One young person said that his foster placement, 'Was the best,' and that his life was now, 'Safe and enjoyable.' Young people reported they were happy with their accommodation and spoke positively about the food they were receiving. Children and young people are encouraged to recognise their potential in many different areas and are helped to live full and active lives by participating in a wide range of social and recreational activities within their community. While foster families provide opportunities for young people to acquire independent living skills, the current system is somewhat ad hoc and does not ensure all young people acquire the same key skills.

Education is given a high priority within the service and is viewed as a key element in increasing life opportunities. Effective support systems help children and young people who have disruptive educational histories to catch up and in many instances surpass their peers. Staff from the virtual school are extremely good at monitoring the progress of each child and young person and ensure that those preparing for national tests and exams have access to additional support if required. School attendance is good and exam results indicate children and young people are making significant progress. Virtual school staff are aware of all exclusions and intervene to help prevent reoccurrences. Foster carers and staff indicate that the support and extra-curricular enrichment activities provided by the virtual school is helping raise the educational aspirations of young people and an increasing number are now

progressing on to higher education.

The health needs of children and young people are appropriately met. All children and young people entering the service receive a comprehensive paediatric assessment that identifies any specific health needs. Thereafter looked after children nurses carry out regular reviews. Effective systems have been established to ensure that children and young people who have arrived from overseas receive recommended immunisations. Foster carers are provided with training on health related matters and closely monitor the health and well-being of young people in their care on an on-going basis. Young people spoken with were clearly aware of the contribution eating wisely and taking regular exercise contributes to health. Young people in their teens are helped to assume responsibility for monitoring their own health and are provided with advice and guidance on issues such as the use of alcohol, drugs and sexual health. Many young people arrive in the service following periods of stress and uncertainties in their lives. By providing life story work young people are helped to understand their past and contextualise events. Child and family health services (CAMHS) staff assist children and young people to develop emotional resilience.

Although children and young people contribute to the development of the service they are not currently involved in the recruitment, preparation and training of new foster carers. The service has created an open culture in which the views of children and young people are regularly gathered and participation officers have been extremely innovative in creating new ways of obtaining their views. For example, disposable cameras have been issued so that individuals can record the things that are important to them in their placements. The photographs are then presented and discussed at different forums. Another project 'We Care' has provided children and young people the opportunity to create a DVD on what it is like to enter foster care. The DVD is to be used as a 'child friendly' introduction to the service. Fortnightly 'Care in Action' council meetings provide opportunities for children and young people to discuss any concerns and proposed developments. Suggestions from young people are always considered and responded to. For example, as a result of children and young people complaining about the difficulty they experienced in accessing their social workers, staff have been issued with Apple phones. As the ability to text is now available lines of communication have greatly improved. Children and young people feel that consultation processes are good and that their views are valued.

Quality of service

The quality of the service is **good**.

The service strives to recruit foster families that will offer safe and nurturing environments in which children and young people can grow and develop. There is an expectation that children and young people will be integrated into their foster families and participate in all aspects of family life including family holidays. The children of foster carers are acknowledged as playing a key role and are involved in

both the assessment and training programme. The service's robust recruitment system ensures that unsuitable individuals do not gain access to vulnerable children and young people. All prospective foster carers have to be appropriately vetted and successfully complete an initial training programme before being presented to panel for approval.

The service's culture of training and development expects carers to continually update their knowledge and skills. Training is delivered by supervising social workers, experienced foster carers and a range of allied professionals from health and education. All new carers complete a training programme that familiarises them with key aspects of fostering such as attachment, contact, education, health and development, safeguarding and managing challenging behaviour. Carer training also raises awareness of equality issues and specific courses focus on culture, religion and disability. Specialist training is also arranged to address the specific needs of individual young people, such as those that experience medical or behavioural difficulties. The training needs of carers are reviewed on an on-going basis. There is an effective system to monitor foster carers attendance at training. The success and achievements of foster carers is recognised and celebrated at regular social events.

The service benefits from having a team of experienced and well-motivated staff who have established sound working relationships with their foster carers. Supervising social workers ensure foster carers effectively meet the care needs of the children and young people in their care. Communication between supervising social workers and fosters carers is good and support and guidance can extend to evenings and weekends. Effective communication and co-ordinated action between foster carers and service staff clearly helps achieve consistency in the delivery of care. All young people are provided with placement plans that are subject to regular review and are updated in response to changing circumstances.

Foster carers confirmed that staff are always quick to intervene and provide additional support if they are experiencing difficulties. As one carer remarked, 'My supervising social worker is always there when I need her.' Service staff are extremely good at liaising with other agencies such as housing and health and education to ensure foster families and the young people in their care have access to appropriate services and resources.

Foster carers feel the key role they occupy within the service is recognised and their views and opinions about the progress of the children and young people in their care is valued by service staff and allied professionals. Foster carers are aware of the need to continually update their knowledge and skills and appreciate the opportunity regular supervision gives them to reflect on their practice. As one carer remarked, 'Even though I have been fostering for many years I am always learning something new.'

The service benefits from the expert scrutiny of an appropriately constituted fostering panel. Decisions are made on good quality and rigorous assessments. The panel list includes members with expertise in childcare, education, health and a number with personal experience of foster care. The list provides sufficient members

that ensure it can meet regularly and remain quorate. The approval and reviewing functions of the panel provides an effective quality assurance function that ensures that young people are only cared for by appropriately trained and vetted foster carers. Matters arising through panel are discussed and contribute to further service development. Panel members provide advice to supervising social workers on the quality of their assessments and review reports. This feedback helps drive up the quality of both assessments and the on-going support of foster carers. Effective mechanisms exist for the panel and decision maker to discuss issues and differences.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Safeguarding underpins all policies, procedures and working practices within the service. Supervising and children's social workers liaise effectively to ensure that carers are provided with key information about a young person before a placement is made. Risk assessments are extensively used to identify areas of potential concern. The needs of household members is always considered prior to the placement of a new child or young person. Service staff work alongside foster carers and develop behaviour management plans that address inappropriate and challenging behaviours. Foster carers receive safeguarding training that enables them to develop safe caring practices applicable to their particular social circumstances. All family members are made aware of their individual responsibilities in regard to the reporting of any safeguarding worries or concerns. This means that child protection issues are safely handled.

The service has established robust systems to monitor all placements and implements immediate action over any reported safeguarding concerns. The views of children and young people about their placements are always sought prior to their foster carers annual reviews. Supervising social workers meet with their carers in their homes on a monthly basis and undertake up to three unannounced visits annually. Each carer's home is subject to an annual household review to ensure it meets accepted standards. The service continually refines its approach in the light of best practice guidance arising from research and serious case reviews.

Although the service operates within a 'safe caring' framework, it is not risk averse and there is an expectation that children and young people will live full and active lives by participating in a range of social and recreational activities both within the home and in the local community. Carers work alongside young people and help them develop effective strategies and practices to keep themselves safe. Carers are successful in breaking established patterns of anti-social and destructive behaviours. Children and young people reported that they feel safe in their placements. None reported being bullied and all indicated they had an adult to whom they could report any worries or concerns. Children and young people indicated they were aware of how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the local authority fostering agency are **outstanding**.

There have been significant improvements in the way the service is managed since the last inspection. A new quality assurance system has been developed and its influence permeates all aspects of the service. The effective harnessing of technology now ensures that the operation of all aspects of the service can be monitored and information shared between all relevant parties. Managers can, at the touch of a button, gain up to date information about how the service is supporting children, young people and their foster carers. The new monitoring systems have helped drive improvements and promote positive outcomes for young people. For example, if a young person is excluded from school all key personnel are informed and strategies developed to prevent a further occurrence. The system also helps staff ensure that all statutory obligations, such as annual reviews, take place within expected timescales.

Although the new systems require staff to continually update information on the computer system they feel it has led to greater efficiency in the way they work and allows them to adopt a more pro-active approach. Staff reported they are now able to use information to identify potential difficulties within placements and intervene early and provide additional support. The working environment was observed to be organised and exuded an air of calm and efficiency. There was no indication that staff were having to react to crisis situations.

Since the last inspection a new three team structure has been introduced. Recruitment and assessment, fostering support and kinship each have their own team of dedicated staff. Each team operates with its own experienced manager. The registered manager and team managers operate as an effective management team. The senior management team are clearly aware of the need for the service to remain responsive to changing needs. Staff confirmed that managers are always accessible and they receive good quality and regular supervision. There is a general consensus amongst carers and staff that the service is well managed and maintains a clear focus on providing high quality foster care.

The service benefits from having a highly motivated and experienced staff team who are clearly focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in foster care. Staff feel their views are regularly sought, valued and contribute to the development of the service. Staff are expected to assume responsibility for their professional development by accessing the many training opportunities on offer and consulting current research. The service operates with a full complement of staff who operate with appropriate caseloads. Developments and new initiatives are encouraged and best practice is shared between foster carers and staff.

Complaints and concerns are acknowledged, investigated and responded to within appropriate timescales. Outcomes from investigated complaints contribute to the service's robust approach to improvement. There is an effective independent

reviewing process that ensures that the experiences of young people are aired and addressed at reviews. The service strives to improve and seeks out developments and best practice from a range of sources. New initiatives are informed by research and the experiences of others.

Recommendations arising from the last inspection have been appropriately addressed. Allegations against foster carers are appropriately recorded, investigated and resolved within established timescales. The new management structure ensures each area of the service, including arrangements for short term placements are appropriately managed. The new quality assurance system ensures that all foster carer reviews are scheduled and take place annually. Foster carer's agreements now specify the conditions of approvals.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of local authority fostering agencies.

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2013/14

DRAFT

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	Recommendations
18 June 2013	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.		
	School place strategy report	To consider progress on school place planning and expansion		
	Inspection of Fostering Service	Members will receive an update on the recent inspection.		
	Draft work programme	Discussion		
18 July 2013	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.		
	Local Safeguarding Children's board annual report	To receive a report on the work of the local authority and its partners to ensure safeguarding of children in Brent		

Page 41

	<p>Corporate parenting – annual report</p> <p>SEN update report</p> <p>School places update</p>	<p>To receive a report on the council's progress and approach to acting as corporate parent of looked after children</p> <p>To consider progress on transformation of special educational needs provision in the borough</p> <p>Standing item to update committee members of the current situation regarding school places in the borough</p>		
<p>19 October 2013 Page 42</p>	<p>Working with families - update</p> <p>Brent Youth Parliament</p> <p>School Places update</p>	<p>Update on the council and its partners' work to intervene early to turn round the lives of families with complex needs and to improve our overall approach to improving families' lives</p> <p>The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.</p> <p>Standing item to update committee</p>		

		members of the current situation regarding school places in the borough		
10 December 2013 Page 43	Brent Youth Parliament Short Breaks Provision update School standards Alternative education, behaviour and attendance School places update	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider. Members to receive an update on how the project has developed and what it has achieved. A report on standards in the borough's schools Update on plans to transform the approach in the borough to supporting pupils at risk of exclusion and non-attendance Standing item to update committee members of the current situation regarding school places in the borough		

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 44</p>	<p>05 February 2014</p> <p>Brent Youth Parliament</p> <p>Update on financial management in schools</p> <p>Progress on borough plan – children and young people</p> <p>School places update</p>	<p>The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.</p> <p>Members have requested for an annual update. The report will provide information on the auditing procedures and findings from audits for Brent schools.</p> <p>Report on progress against CYP pledges in revised borough plan</p> <p>Standing item to update committee members of the current situation regarding school places in the borough</p>		
<p>19 March 2014</p>	<p>Brent Youth Parliament</p>	<p>The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.</p>		

	School places update	Standing item to update committee members of the current situation regarding school places in the borough		
Page 45				

Items from the Forward Plan and Work Programme to be timetabled.		
The committee will be presented with a list of items related to children and young people's services on the Forward Plan, to decide whether there are any they wish to scrutinise. The committee's work programme will also be included on the meeting agenda		
Item	Issue for the committee to consider	
Careers advice for young people in Brent Impact and Service Improvement Report	BYP Anna Janes to provide information and will present the report.	
Domestic Violence – Children's Partnership Project	The committee will consider the Children's Partnership report on domestic violence in Brent, following up previous presentations to the committee on this issue.	
Youth service review update	As requested by the committee in October 2010, the committee will receive an update on the progress of the on going youth services review, being carried out by the Children's Trust Sub Group.	
Educational Benefits of all through schools	Suggestion for a report covering the benefits and disadvantages of all through schools for members to consider.	
A plan for Children and Families in Brent (PSCFB) 2012-2015	Report on how Brent is will provide the support to ensure that children and young people in Brent are healthy and safe. The aim is to narrow the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive. Report goes to Executive on 19 September 2012.	
Travel Plans and Parking Permits for schools	Report on the progress made on school travel planning, the process for school parking permits and future priorities.	
Child Poverty Strategy	It was agreed by members at the October meeting that this should be a regular item on the agenda and that members should receive regular updates on the work being done around this. This area links into various other projects and strategies and therefore will be presented to the committee as part of those.	

Youth Service Review	Not yet complete. Lead officer is Cathy Tyson.	
Review of young people's services	Committee to receive a report on the proposed restructure and how this will bring the different strands together.	

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