



Cabinet
11 March 2019

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Children and Young People**

**Informal Consultation on the school organisation
arrangements of Roe Green Infant School**

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One: • Appendix 1: Equality Analysis
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the intention to informally consult on a change in the age-range of Roe Green Infant School and the closure of primary provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site from September 2020.
- 1.2 The 2019-23 School Place Planning Strategy, approved by Cabinet in November 2018, identifies reducing demand for primary places and increasing spare places across the borough. Within this context, officers propose to undertake initial informal consultation on a proposal to cease primary provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site. Subject to the outcomes of this consultation, Cabinet approval would be sought to consult formally, through publication of a statutory notice, on a change in the age range of Roe Green Infant School from 4-11 to 4-7, a reduction in the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) from 150 to 120 and a phased closure of provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet notes that initial informal consultation will be undertaken with stakeholders that could lead to subsequent statutory consultation on proposals to:

- change the age-range of Roe Green Infant School from 4-11 to 4-7
- reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) from 150 to 120 for September 2020
- implement a phased closure of provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18 approved by Cabinet in October 2014, identified an increasing demand for primary school places and the need for additional places across the borough. To help meet this demand, new primary provision was established in 2014 under the management of Roe Green Infant School on a separate site known as the Roe Green Strathcona site.

3.2 Roe Green Infant School is situated in Planning Area 1 in the north of the borough, which covers the Queensbury, Fryent and Welsh Harp wards and is close to the Barnet and Harrow borders. The Roe Green Strathcona site is situated in Wembley in Planning Area 2 and covers the Kenton, Northwick Park, Preston and Barnhill wards.

3.3 The Roe Green Strathcona provision was initially opened as temporary provision for 210 places in total, 30 in each year group from Reception to Year 6. Pupils were first admitted to the provision in March 2014 into Reception and Year 2 classes.

3.4 A statutory process to regularise the provision was implemented in September 2016. This changed the legal nature of Roe Green Infant School by permanently establishing the provision on the Strathcona site:

- the age range of the school changed from ages 4-7 to 4-11 (excluding the nursery)
- the total number of permanent places in Reception to Year 6 was changed from 360 to 570, with infant provision for 360 pupils on the school's Princes Avenue site alongside a nursery for 40 full-time equivalent places, and 210 places in years Reception to Year 6 on the Strathcona site.

4.0 Primary school place demand 2019-23

4.1 As set out in the Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23, agreed by Cabinet in November 2018, the January 2018 Greater London Authority (GLA) projections for Reception for the 2018/19 academic year are 12% lower than they were in January 2014, when the Strathcona site provision opened. This is partly due to revised ONS population and migration data, but also due to falling birth rates across London.

4.2 Demand for places in Planning Area 2

Table 1 shows demand for places in Planning Area 2 based on the GLA January 2018 forecasts and available places in each year group. While a small increase in demand is forecast from 2022 onwards, a high surplus of places is forecast in Reception both in the planning area and across the borough (12% of all places in September 2018).

Table 1: Planning Area 2 Forecasts and projected surplus of places

Planning Area 2		Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2018/2019	Capacity	780	720	750	720	750	660	750
	Projections	653	565	672	680	692	621	693
	surplus/deficit	127	155	78	40	58	39	57
2019/2020	Capacity	780	780	720	780	720	750	660
	Projections	650	638	553	687	673	680	609
	surplus/deficit	130	142	167	93	47	70	51
2020/2021	Capacity	780	780	780	720	780	720	750
	Projections	657	635	625	566	678	659	667
	surplus/deficit	123	145	155	154	102	61	83
2021/2022	Capacity	780	780	780	780	720	780	720
	Projections	645	644	624	640	561	662	649
	surplus/deficit	135	136	156	140	159	118	71
2022/2023	Capacity	780	780	780	780	780	720	780
	Projections	653	638	635	642	637	550	655
	surplus/deficit	127	142	145	138	143	170	125
2023/2024	Capacity	780	780	780	780	780	780	720
	Projections	663	647	629	652	639	624	543
	surplus/deficit	117	133	151	128	141	156	177

4.3 Numbers on roll at Roe Green Strathcona site

There are currently 114 pupils on the Roe Green Strathcona site, with only 7 pupils in Reception. Other than Year 5, all year groups currently have significantly lower numbers than 30. Applications for Reception places on the Strathcona site for September 2019 are also low, with only 6 first preference applications received. The number of pupils on the site will be lower than 100 from September 2020 onwards if larger cohorts leaving in Year 6 are not replaced by a similar number in Reception.

Table 2: Numbers on roll at Roe Green Strathcona Road site

Year*	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
March 2014	Bulge		Bulge					
2014/15	34	59	14	28				135
2015/16	15	30	55	9	28			137
2016/17	16	19	26	49	6	27		143
2017/18	7	14	11	22	42	3	22	121
2018/19	7	8	16	12	20	44	3	110
2019/20	7	7	8	16	12	20	44	114
2020/21	7	7	7	8	16	12	20	77

*2014-2017/18 from January school census; 2018/19 from admissions database in January 2018; other data are forecasts.

- 4.4 Roe Green Infant School operates as one school with the leadership team and staff working across both sites. The school currently organises pupils in some year groups into mixed age classes with one class for Reception/Year 1 and two Year 5/6 classes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 based at the Strathcona site travel to the main school site for some shared teaching.
- 4.5 In an attempt to increase admissions, the school has refreshed its marketing approach to ensure that parents are aware of the provision. The school has also considered opening a nursery on the Strathcona site to attract families. Officers are of the view, however, that while this may attract some parents, the high number of forecast spare places across Planning Area 2 suggests that there is not likely to be sufficient demand to sustain the provision long-term.
- 4.6 The school achieves good outcomes for pupils across both sites and was rated by Ofsted as 'Good' in November 2017. However, sustaining a split site school where provision on one site is small becomes increasingly difficult as pupil numbers continue to fall. Furthermore, maintaining the provision does not represent good value for money - the per pupil cost of provision is already higher than the Brent average (see paragraph 6.2).
- 4.7 Several other high quality schools in the area served by the Roe Green Strathcona site have been expanded to meet predicted demand, and would provide for local children if the provision closed:
- Byron Court Primary School gradually expanded from 3FE to a 5FE school from September 2016 onwards.
 - Preston Park Primary School expanded from 3FE to 4FE from September 2014
 - Uxendon Manor Primary School expanded from 2FE to 4FE from September 2015
 - East Lane Primary School was built with capacity for 4FE, although has been operating as a 3FE school since April 2017.

Table 3 overleaf provides the number of pupils on roll at schools within the local area.

Table 3: Number of children and places in all schools within the local area

Planning Area 2 Schools	Reception PAN	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Byron Court Primary School	150	101	120	89	134	88	120	89	741
Mount Stewart Infant School	90	90	87	89					266
Mount Stewart Junior School					83	89	119	90	381
Preston Park Primary School	120	83	118	114	113	89	137	90	744
Roe Green Infant Strathcona site	30	7	8	16	12	20	44	3	110
Sinai Jewish Primary School	90	48	71	86	90	90	89	89	563
Uxendon Manor Primary School	120	76	105	102	87	60	59	60	549
Wembley Primary School	120	107	119	117	114	120	116	117	810
Total	720	512	628	613	633	556	684	538	4,164
Planning Area 3 schools near the Strathcona site									
Ark Academy	60	59	57	59	59	59	60	56	409
Chalkhill Primary School	60	60	60	60	60	58	86	90	474
East Lane Primary School	120	90	75	44	29		26		264
Sudbury Primary School	120	120	118	119	121	120	120	119	837
Total	360	329	310	282	269	237	292	265	1984

Source: October 2018 census

- 4.8 Only one school in Planning Area 2 is expected to fill to planned capacity in September 2019; all other schools are considered to be viable alternatives for families that might be served by the Strathcona site provision. Analysis shows that of the 184 pupils living within 0.5 miles of the site who were offered Reception places for September 2018, 41 were offered a place at Preston Park Primary School, 36 at Wembley Primary School, 33 at East Lane Primary School and 31 at Byron Court Primary School.

5.0 Consultation on proposals

- 5.1 In the context of current and predicted demand and places available at other local schools, primary provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site is not considered to be sustainable or required. Formal consultation to change the provision would be required under the statutory process for making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools (Statutory Guidance for Proposers and Decision-makers, Department for Education, October 2018). As the admission authority for the school, the local authority would lead this process.
- 5.2 The statutory consultation process for significant changes to school provision has four stages - Stage 1 Publication of a Statutory Notice, Stage 2 Representation (formal consultation), Stage 3 Decision and Stage 4 Implementation. In addition, Brent carries out informal consultation prior to the formal publication of a statutory proposal. Cabinet approval is not required for this additional informal consultation, which is seen as good practice by the Department for Education.
- 5.3 The intention is to undertake initial informal consultation on proposals that would, if eventually implemented, change the legal nature of Roe Green Infant School, with the school reverting to its previous size and structure. This would be achieved by:

- a) reducing the legal age range of the school from 4-11 to 4-7 (excluding the nursery)
- b) reducing the school's admission number from 150 to 120 from September 2020 and decreasing the total number of permanent pupil places for children in Reception or above at the school from 570 to 360:
 - Provision on the Princes Avenue site (NW9 9JL) would continue as is currently delivered. The school has a nursery for 40 full time equivalent places, and Reception to Year 2 provision that admits up to 120 pupils each year into Reception i.e. 4 classes. Children would continue to apply to other schools for their Year 3 to Year 6 education.
 - Provision on the Strathcona Road site (HA9 8QL) would cease to admit pupils from 2020.
- c) Implementing a phased programme to cease provision for pupils currently attending the site, which would be informed by the consultation process.

5.4 As Cabinet has determined admissions arrangements for 2020/21 (in January 2019 in line with statutory requirements), it would be necessary to seek a variation to the admission arrangements for 2020, in view of the major change in circumstances, from the Schools Adjudicator to implement the proposed changes.

5.5 Parents have already submitted their on-time preferences for entry to Reception in 2019. Places at both of Roe Green Infant School's sites will be allocated to parents in line with the national process.

5.6 Informal consultation will involve distributing a consultation document that outlines the proposals and relevant background information to stakeholders. This includes all parents and carers with children at Roe Green Infant School, the Governing Board and staff, nearby schools and the local community. The document will also be posted on Brent's website. The consultation document will include a consultation reply slip and details about consultation meetings with stakeholders, including a public meeting, that provide the opportunity for comments and questions about the proposal.

5.7 Informal consultation provides an opportunity for discussion with staff, parents, and local residents about the issues that need to be considered before the decision is taken to publish a statutory proposal.

5.8 If following informal consultation, officers remain of the view that the provision is no longer required, a report will be presented to Cabinet seeking approval to undertake formal consultation through publishing a statutory notice. The statutory notice must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed changes. The period for formal representations would be four weeks from the date of the publication.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Strathcona site is supported by the local funding formula. The school receives approximately £4,475 per pupil funding plus a split site allocation of £200k. With 110 pupils this totals £692k of funding that Roe Green Infant School receives as a result of having the Strathcona site. This sum will reduce as the number of pupils reduces and could require decisions, such as more classes comprising two or more year groups, to resource education provision at the site. The school had reserves of £450k as of 1st April 2018.
- 6.2 Funding is provided by the DSG, and equates to nearly £6,300 per pupil for children at this site. This compares to an average of £5,100 per primary pupil across the borough. Given that there are spaces in other schools, the closure of the site will lead to more efficient use of DSG.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The authority has the power to consider and determine proposals published under Section 19 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006, pursuant to Section 21 (2) (f) of the Act and in accordance with Schedule 3 paragraph 3 of The School Organisation Regulations 2013.
- 7.2 Under sections 13 and 14 of The Education Act 1996, as amended by The Education and Inspections Act 2006, 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. They must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area and promote diversity and increase parental choice. To discharge this duty the LA has to undertake a planning function to ensure that the supply of school places balances the demand for them.
- 7.3 If the proposals which form the basis of the proposed informal consultations were eventually to be implemented, then this would have the potential effect of the need to consider potential redundancies for staff.

8.0 Equality Implications

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Local Authority when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics covered under the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination) pregnancy and maternity, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) religion or belief (this includes lack of belief) sex and sexual orientation. Due regard means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, in that whenever significant decisions are being made consideration must be given to the impact/affect that implementing a particular decision will

have in relation to equality before making that decision. Brent Council also has a policy of considering Human Rights and socio-economic impact.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposals set out in this report and is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact from these proposals on the basis of disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination) pregnancy and maternity, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) religion or belief (this includes lack of belief) sex and sexual orientation.

8.3 Pupil-level data suggest that the intake at Roe Green Strathcona site is similar to other schools in terms of ethnic diversity, children on free school meals and the number of children with special needs and disabilities (SEND). If as a result of this proposal children move school, this could have a negative impact on individual children. However, based on current information other local schools would provide a suitable alternative and would support children to settle.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications

9.1 The proposals, if implemented, are likely to impact on the required staffing for Roe Green Infant School; the proposal would lead to a reduction in overall staffing levels which would, therefore, result in the possibility for the need to consider redundancies. The number of staff affected will depend on the nature of a phased closure. There may also be opportunities to reduce the impact on staff, for example, by transferring existing staff to the main Roe Green Infant School site. The school would need to follow the Managing Change in Schools policy and procedure including consultation with affected staff and trade unions to effect the changes in due course.

9.2 The Strathcona site would be considered for other educational use if this proposal was implemented.

10.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

10.1 The proposal to undertake consultation has been discussed with the Ward Members where the two school sites are located (Queensbury and Preston wards). Members of other wards that sit within Planning Area 2 (Kenton, Northwick Park and Barnhill wards) will be consulted as part of the informal consultation process. Other stakeholders will be consulted on the proposals as set out in paragraph 5.4.

Report sign off:

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