	<b>Cabinet</b> 16 October 2023
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</b>
	<b>Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People &amp; Schools (Councillor Grahl)</b>
<b>Review of Primary School Places in Primary Planning Area 4</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Stonebridge, Roundwood and Harlesden and Kensal Green
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Shirley Parks Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy 020 8937 4259 <a href="mailto:Shirley.parks@brent.gov.uk">Shirley.parks@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Michelle Gwyther, Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships 07388 859380 <a href="mailto:Michelle.Gwyther@brent.gov.uk">Michelle.Gwyther@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Michael Rollin Admissions and School Organisation Manager 020 8937 2862 <a href="mailto:Michael.rollin@brent.gov.uk">Michael.rollin@brent.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the intention to informally consult on proposals to manage spare school capacity and falling pupil rolls in Primary School Planning Area 4 (PA4). This planning area comprises the wards of Stonebridge, Roundwood and Harlesden and Kensal Green.
- 1.2. The new School Place Planning Strategy 2024-2028, due to be approved by Cabinet in October 2023, confirms the position of falling rolls in the primary

sector that was set out in the November 2022 refresh of the School Place Planning Strategy 2019-2023. Primary Planning Area 4 has the highest number of spare places of Brent's six Primary Planning Areas. It is within this context that consultation is proposed on two proposals: to reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) of Mitchell Brook Primary School and to cease primary provision on the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School, so that the school operates only from its Hawkshead Road site.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes that initial informal consultation will be undertaken with stakeholders that could lead to subsequent statutory consultation on a proposal to implement a phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School. If a phased closure were to proceed, Leopold Primary School would continue to operate from its main site on Hawkshead Road. Ceasing provision on the Gwenneth Rickus site would involve a variation of the PAN for Leopold Primary School from 120 to 60 places for admissions in 2025 and no further admissions to the Leopold Gwenneth Rickus site from September 2025. There would be a phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site. The timing of the full closure of the site would be determined during consultation.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that a reduction in the PAN of Mitchell Brook Primary School from 90 to 60 from September 2025, will be recommended for formal consultation in a report at the November Cabinet meeting on the Admission Arrangements for 2025/26.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword**

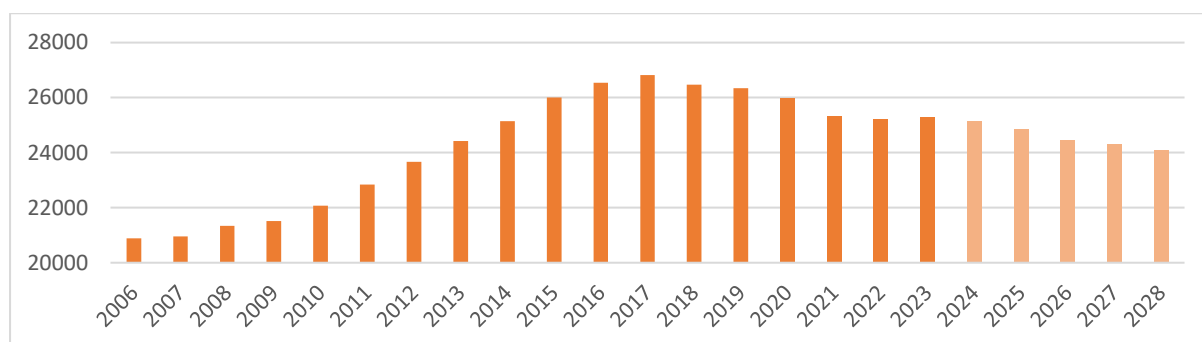
- 3.1.1 School place planning supports the Borough Plan Strategic Priority 4: The Best Start in Life, by ensuring there are sufficient school places for children and young people in Brent and supporting every child and young person to access high quality education in the borough.
- 3.1.2 Borough-wide projections indicate that demand for Reception school places will continue to fall over the next 5 years. Planning Area 4 has the greatest number and percentage of spare places of all the six Primary Planning Areas in Brent. Schools in the area have been managing the impact of falling rolls for several years with the support of the local authority. The proposals to reduce capacity at Leopold Primary School and Mitchell Brook Primary School are aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of all schools in the area.

### **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 Between 2012-2021 there was a 17% decrease in the birth rate in London, which is a reduction of 23,225 live births across the capital. As a result there is a predicted 7.6% decrease in Reception aged pupil numbers across London from 2022-23 to 2026-27 (from 96,424 pupils to 89,121 pupils over this period). This roughly equates to a decrease of 243 classes of children.

3.2.2 The new School Place Planning Strategy 2024-2028 sets out demand for primary school places in Brent. Demand for primary places peaked in 2017 and has been reducing since. The latest forecasts indicate that demand in Brent will mirror the position for London, with reducing intakes up to 2028 (Graph 1). Place planning projections are based on a number of factors including historical migration patterns, school census data, cross border movement, and population projections. Population projections are informed by housing development trajectories and take into account future building projects within each planning area. The most recent forecasts are underpinned by 2021 census data at ward level populations.

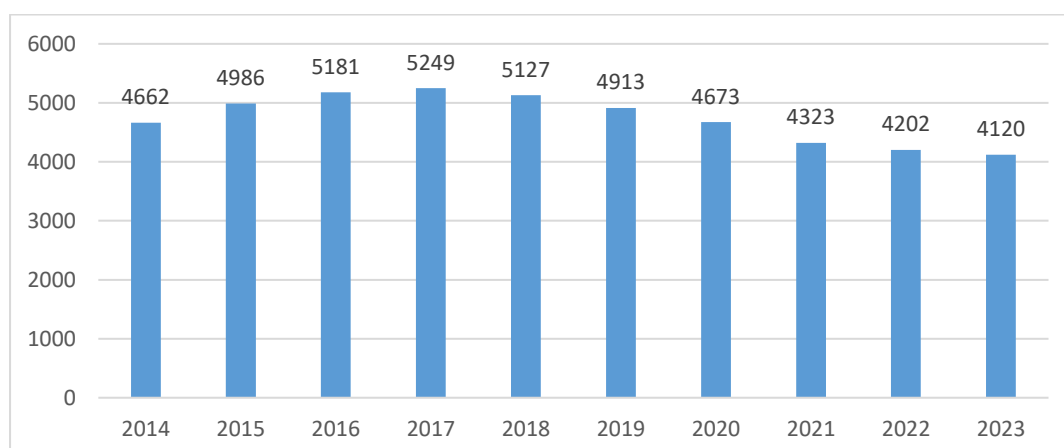
**Graph 1: Primary numbers on roll and projections as of January each year up to 2028**



3.2.3 The local authority has been working closely with schools across the borough over the past five years to manage the impacts of falling demand. A range of different strategies have been deployed including reducing PANs, schools coming together in federation arrangements and considering alternative use for spare capacity, for example establishing Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) for children with SEND.

3.2.4 Spare capacity is not evenly distributed across the local authority’s six primary planning areas. Some planning areas are currently operating near to capacity, while others have a high number of spare places, as is the case in Primary Planning Area 4. The area benefited from substantial expansion of school capacity between 2005 and 2017 in response to increasing demand for school places which at the time was forecast to continue. However, demand for places in Primary Planning Area 4 peaked in 2017 and has reduced since. The area has seen numbers on roll reduce from 5249 in 2017 to 4120 in 2023 (Graph 2).

**Graph 2: Number on roll in Planning Area 4 (January Census Data)**



3.2.5 The falling primary population in Planning Area 4 has resulted in spare capacity of between 26% and 40% of capacity in each year group (Table 1). This position is not forecast to change over the next five years with an anticipated surplus of places equivalent to between 7 and 12 forms of entry in each year group. Longer-term forecasts (which are less reliable, but still useful for context) suggest a rise in demand to the current level in this area only after 15 years.

**Table 1: Planning Area 4 2023 projections and capacity**

PA 4	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2023/2024	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	519	515	577	573	621	580	629
	Surplus	336	340	278	282	234	275	226
	Percentage	39%	40%	33%	33%	27%	32%	26%
2024/2025	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	498	502	504	582	581	617	603
	Surplus	357	353	351	273	274	238	252
	Percentage	42%	41%	41%	32%	32%	28%	29%
2025/2026	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	477	482	492	507	590	575	638
	Surplus	378	373	363	348	265	280	217
	Percentage	44%	44%	42%	41%	31%	33%	25%
2026/2027	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	485	462	472	494	514	585	592
	Surplus	370	393	383	361	341	270	263
	Percentage	43%	46%	45%	42%	40%	32%	31%
2027/2028	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	479	473	455	479	504	513	607
	Surplus	376	382	400	376	351	342	248
	Percentage	44%	45%	47%	44%	41%	40%	29%

3.2.6 There are 11 maintained primary schools and one academy in Primary Planning Area Four. The maintained schools include seven community and four voluntary aided schools. 10 out of 12 schools consistently have intakes in all year groups that are lower than the school's PAN (Table 2). Parental preference for schools can be neighbourhood specific and influenced by a number of factors, including proximity to schools, outcomes, faith-based education and school facilities.

**Table 2: Starting Primary School (Reception) Offers on National Offer Day for September 2023**

National Offer Day 2023	PAN	Number of offers	Number of vacancies	Over/Under subscribed
Brentfield Primary School	90	25	65	Undersubscribed
Donnington Primary School	30	30	0	Oversubscribed
Furness Primary School	60	33	27	Undersubscribed
Harlesden Primary School	60	37	23	Undersubscribed
John Keble CofE Primary School	60	25	35	Undersubscribed
Leopold Gwenneth Rickus Primary School	60	24	36	Undersubscribed
Leopold Primary School	60	36	24	Undersubscribed
Mitchell Brook Primary School	90	68	22	Undersubscribed
Newfield Primary School	60	15	45	Undersubscribed
Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School	30	26	4	Undersubscribed
St Joseph's RC Primary School	60	60	0	Oversubscribed
St Mary's CofE Primary School	45	21	24	Undersubscribed
The Stonebridge School	90	15	75	Undersubscribed
<b>Totals</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>380</b>	

3.2.7 The reduction in demand for primary school places in PA4 is creating a number of issues for schools in the area, including strains on school budgets and workforce planning. A number of schools in the area have had to take action to respond to the impact of reducing pupil demand on school budgets, for example in how they organise classes or undertaking staff restructures.

3.2.8 Table 3 shows the current level of unused spaces in Planning Area 4 schools (based on January 2023 census data). The number and proportion of school places means that some form of school organisation action is required to ensure the sustainability of local schools in the medium to long term. After consideration of a range of potential options, officers are of the view that to support the long-term viability and sustainability of schools in Planning Area 4, a reduction in the primary school estate is required.

**Table 3: Spare places by school 2022/23**

School	Published Admission Number	Built Capacity	Number on roll	Building Vacancies	Percentage of spare capacity
Brentfield Primary School	90	630	382	248	39%
Donnington Primary School	30	210	210	0	0%
Furness Primary School	60	420	319	101	24%
Harlesden Primary School	60	630	288	342	54%
John Keble CE Primary School	60	420	380	40	10%
Leopold Primary School	60	420	346	74	18%
Leopold Primary School - GR Site	60	420	282	138	33%
Mitchell Brook Primary School	90	630	605	25	4%
Newfield Primary School	60	420	225	195	46%
Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School	30	210	192	18	9%
St Joseph's RC Primary School	60	630	432	198	31%
St Mary's CE Primary School	45	315	193	122	39%
The Stonebridge School	90	630	266	364	58%
<b>Total</b>	795	5985	4120	1865	31%

### 3.3. Proposal

3.3.1. A range of options have been considered to address surplus places in PA4 in line with the principles set out in the School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28. These take into account a number of factors including the number of pupils on roll at each school and where they live, school locations and proximity to other schools, the community served by each school, spare building capacity, school buildings condition and previous/needed investment, school effectiveness and internal school organisation. The options considered include reducing capacity in the school estate, reducing published admission numbers, informally capping admission numbers and utilising spare capacity for alternative use, such as SEND provision. Further information on how these options can support schools can be found in the School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28.

3.3.2 Following analysis of a range of data as noted in paragraph 3.3.1, the following proposals are made:

- Informal consultation on the phased closure of Leopold Primary School, Gwenneth Rickus site. This would involve a variation of the PAN for Leopold Primary School from 120 to 60 places for admissions in 2025 and no further admissions to the Leopold Gwenneth Rickus site from September 2025. There would be a phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site. The timing of closure of the site would depend on the number of pupils receiving education on the site and available accommodation on the main school site.

- Formal consultation on Mitchell Brook Primary School has requested that its PAN is reduced from 90 to 60 from September 2025.

3.3.3 There will continue to be ongoing consideration and analysis of the remaining primary school estate in Planning Area 4 as the two proposals are unlikely to resolve the impacts of falling rolls without further measures being taken. Support for other schools in the area will continue, including considering where school capacity could be repurposed to support children with SEND, for example through Additionally Resourced Provisions or special school satellite provision.

### 3.4 **Gwenneth Rickus Site of Leopold Primary School**

3.4.1 Leopold Primary School currently has capacity for 120 places in each year group with 60 on the school's main site on Hawkshead Road and 60 on the Gwenneth Rickus site. Leopold Primary School achieves good outcomes for pupils across both sites and was rated by Ofsted as 'Good' in June 2022. Leopold operates as a split-site school with one leadership team and staff who work across both the main school site on Hawkshead Road and the Gwenneth Rickus site.

3.4.2 On national offer day in 2023 for Reception places in 2023, 60 places were offered and there remained 60 spare places across the two school sites. As with other schools across the borough, the actual Reception cohort now on roll is higher due to late applications, which would have been diverted to other schools had Leopold's capacity only been 60. Demand for Leopold Primary School has been falling since 2018 and the Gwenneth Rickus site operates as one form of entry in some year groups, including Reception and Year 1.

3.4.3 The Leopold Gwenneth Rickus site was opened in September 2013 as annexed provision in response to increasing demand for primary school places. The site was previously used by the borough as a school improvement centre, running courses for education professionals. Now that demand has reduced, there is no longer a need for this additional site to be retained as there are sufficient spare places on both the Leopold Primary School main site and in other local schools to accommodate future demand for primary provision in the area.

3.4.4 In January 2023, there were 628 pupils at Leopold Primary School compared to 767 in January 2019, with 282 pupils educated on the Gwenneth Rickus site. The proposal is for the status of Leopold Primary School to return to that of prior to 2015 when the school operated with two forms of entry from one site only (Hawkshead Road). A phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site is recommended to avoid disruption to as many pupils and their families as possible. As the Hawkshead Road site has a central location within the planning area, it is anticipated that over time pupils from the Gwenneth Rickus site would move to the main Leopold Primary School site. Other local schools will be able to accommodate any pupils who wished to move school.

3.4.5 Parents of future Reception children would continue to have a range of schools to choose from. Only two schools in the area (Donnington Primary and St

Joseph's RC Primary School) were oversubscribed on national offer day for the September 2023 intake. There are several schools with spare capacity close to the Gwenneth Rickus site (Tables 2 and 3).

### **3.5. Consultation on ceasing provision on the Leopold Gwenneth Rickus site**

- 3.5.1 Formal consultation to change the provision offered by Leopold Primary School would be required under the statutory process for making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools ('Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory Guidance for Proposers and Decision-makers, Department for Education, January 2023). As the admission authority for the school, the local authority would lead this process.
- 3.5.2 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, the DfE expects local authorities to carry 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 DfE.
- 3.5.3 The intention is to undertake initial informal consultation on proposals that would, if eventually implemented, change the legal nature of Leopold Primary School, with the school reverting to its previous size and structure. This would be achieved by:
- a) reducing the school's admission number from 120 to 60 from September 2025 and decreasing the total number of permanent pupil places for children in Reception or above at the school from 840 to 420:
  - b) Provision on the Hawkshead Road site would continue as is currently delivered
  - c) Provision on the Gwenneth Rickus site (HA9 8QL) would cease to admit pupils from 2025. Implementing a phased closure for pupils currently attending the site would be informed by the consultation process.
- 3.5.4. As Cabinet will have determined admissions arrangements for 2025 (in January 2024 in line with statutory requirements), and prior to the outcome of any formal consultation to make a prescribed alteration, it would be necessary to seek a variation to the admission arrangements for 2025, in view of the major change in circumstances, from the Schools Adjudicator to implement the proposed changes.
- 3.5.5. 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 Leopold Primary 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 would provide the opportunity for comments and questions about the proposal. Informal



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

- 3.5.6. If, following informal consultation, officers remain of the view that the proposals should proceed, 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. Responses to the formal consultation would then be reported back to Cabinet, who as the statutory decision-maker would decide whether to determine the statutory notice and close the provision.

### **3.6. Reduction in Published Admission Number of Mitchell Brook Primary School**

- 3.6.1 The proposed reduction of the PAN at Mitchell Brook Primary School from 90 to 60 would help to reduce spare places in other schools in the planning area. Mitchell Brook Primary Schools is rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (September 2021). It is anticipated that Mitchell Brook Primary School will remain a popular school. However, any children who are unable to secure a place at the school would be able to access places at other local schools in the immediate area.

- 3.6.2 The school is in support of a reduction of the school's PAN and has raised concerns about the constraints of continuing to operate as three forms of entry due to the school's confined site. Although forecasts indicate low demand in Planning Area 4 in the short and medium term, the spare building capacity created by reducing the school's PAN could be brought back into use in the future at a time when demand rises again.

### **3.7. Consultation to reduce the PAN of Mitchell Brook Primary School**

- 3.7.1 The process for consulting to reduce a school's PAN is set out in the School Admissions Code 2021. The proposal will be included in consultation on the Brent Council Admission Arrangements for 2025/2026 for community schools. Cabinet will receive a separate report setting out the proposed formal consultation on these arrangements at the November 2023 Cabinet meeting which will be followed by 6 weeks consultation on any proposed changes, with Cabinet determination of the arrangements before the deadline of the end of February 2024.

### **3.8 Timeline**

- 3.8.1 The impacts of school organisation proposals will be carefully managed to mitigate the impact on children, families and staff throughout the process. An indicative timeline to take forward consultation on the recommendations in this report is set out in Table 4. This represents a likely timeline should decisions be taken to proceed with the proposals after the consolidation and reporting to Cabinet of responses to both informal and formal consultation stages.

**Table 4 Indicative Timeline for Reorganisation Proposals**

Date	Leopold Primary School	Mitchell Brook Primary School
<b>October 2023</b>	Report to Cabinet regarding Primary Planning Area 4	
<b>November 2023</b>	Informal Consultation (6 weeks) Including public meetings with affected stakeholders	Report to Cabinet seeking permission to consult on Community School Admissions Arrangements for 2025/26 including a reduce in the school's PAN to 60 for 2025
<b>December 2023</b>	Consolidation of responses	Formal Consultation (6 weeks)
<b>January 2024</b>	Report to Cabinet on informal consultation which could seek permission to undertake formal consultation	
<b>February 2024</b>	Formal Consultation (4 weeks)	Report to Cabinet detailing responses to consultation and to determine new Community School Admission Arrangements for 2025/26
<b>March 2024</b>	Consolidation of responses	
<b>April 2024</b>	Report to Cabinet on formal consultation which could seek a decision to close the Leopold Primary School Gwenneth Rickus site	
<b>July 2024</b>	Submission of variation request to reduce the school's PAN to 60 in September 2025 to the School's Adjudicator	
<b>July 2025 onwards</b>	Phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site	

#### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 School representatives (Headteachers and Chairs of Governors) have been involved in discussions about school place planning through the School Place Planning Working Group, and the first meeting of the group held in November 2022 focused on planning area 4. On 18 April 2023 discussions were initiated with headteachers and chairs of governors from schools in Planning Area 4 about the need for school re-organisation in the area to reduce the size of the Primary estate. Leaders were invited to propose options to reduce pressures.
- 4.2. Discussions with local ward members about the issues facing schools in the planning area, and the range of actions which could be undertaken were held on 24 August 2023. A second meeting with ward councillors was held in advance of this report being presented to Cabinet. The Lead Member has been and will continue to be briefed about school place planning issues in all planning areas including Planning Area 4.
- 4.3. Any proposed changes to provision would be subject to public consultation with parents and stakeholders in accordance with statutory guidance and legal frameworks.

## **5.0 Financial Considerations**

- 5.1. School funding received via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is driven by pupil numbers and vacant school places cause a financial pressure for schools as they will need to manage with reduced budgets. A small number of schools have applied for a licensed deficit and several schools in the primary phase remain at risk due to the knock-on effect of falling rolls not only in Brent but across London. A licenced deficit enables a school to hold a deficit balance for a period of three years while implementing an agreed plan on how to return to a balanced position at the end of the three-year period. This becomes increasingly difficult and will not be sustainable as pupil numbers continue to fall leading schools to undergo staff restructures which also have a financial cost arising from redundancies.
- 5.2 Leopold Primary school's main source of income is from the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG). The school reported a surplus reserves balance of £0.926m as at end of March 2023 and estimates to use half of its reserves by the end of the current financial year 2023/24, with almost all of the balance spent by March 2025/26 on goods and services including some planned capital works. The school undertook a restructure in 2022/23, to match staff numbers to pupil numbers, due to continued falling rolls across the two sites and to ensure financial viability. The restructure cost absorbed by the school was £0.250m.
- 5.3 The school receives a per pupil funding rate of £6,205 and with approximately 634 pupils, this equates to £3.9m DSG funding, inclusive of £0.224m split site funding allocation. The average per primary pupil funding rate across the borough is £6,000. It is anticipated that the majority of pupils will remain on roll at Leopold Primary School when the site closes. However, the closure of the site will lead to a more efficient use of the DSG as spare places in other schools are utilised for new cohorts of children. There may be support required towards redundancy payments.
- 5.4 There would be general fund cost implications to maintain the Gwenneth Rickus site if it remained vacant, including utilities and any security provisions officers felt were required. The costs and the budget required are yet to be confirmed but could be in the region of £20,000 per site per annum, depending on the level of resources involved to look after the site.

## **6.0 Legal Considerations**

- 6.1 The Local 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.
- 6.2. 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 Local Authority has to undertake a planning function to ensure that the supply of school places balances the demand for them.

- 6.3. If the proposals which form the basis of the proposed formal consultation for school closure were to be implemented, it would have the potential effect of the need to consider redundancies for staff.
- 6.4. Although not part of the considerations for the sites proposed to be closed, any change of use from Education use and/or disposal requires the permission from the Secretary of State for Education under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Schedule 1 of the Academies Act.

## **7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2. If the proposals are to be taken forward, an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out. Based on previous proposals of a similar nature, 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. However, the majority of staff at both schools are female.
- 7.3. Pupil-level data suggest that the intake at the Leopold Gwenneth Rickus 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 access to a good quality of education and would support children to settle.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 The sustainability approach of all school place planning requires the retention of the school estate as part of any decision to reduce capacity in a school. This ensures capacity is available to restore in the future without the requirement to build any new provision. This will reduce use of construction materials and waste produced.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 Implementation of the proposal to close the Leopold Primary School Gwenneth Rickus site would be likely to impact on the required staffing for Leopold Primary School, as it would lead to a reduction in overall staffing levels. This could therefore result in the possibility for the need to consider redundancies and/or relocation of staff to the main Leopold Primary School – Hawkshead Road site. The number of staff affected would depend on the nature of a phased closure. The school, supported by the Local Authority and the school's HR provider, 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. The Local Authority would work with the governing boards of local schools to see if affected staff could find local re-employment.
- 9.2 A reduction of the PAN at Mitchell Brook Primary School could impact on the school's staffing structure. However, the change will be gradual and staffing levels will continue to be managed based on ongoing need.
- 9.3 Should a decision be made to close the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School, then the building and site would become surplus to requirements for mainstream primary school use. At that time the Council will review its priorities and potential future uses for the site, but this could include educational use given the need for other forms of local educational provision, for example for children and young people with SEND or for children accessing alternative provision.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 Consultation will be carried out to include all affected stakeholders and members of the public as set out in 3.5 and 3.7. Consultation on the closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School will involve public meetings to discuss the proposals and an invitation for written responses. Any proposals that are subject to the statutory process for making prescribed changes to maintained schools (including opening and closing schools) will involve informal and formal consultation, subject to decision-making.

### **Related document(s) for reference:**

School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children and Young People