



Cabinet
14 October 2019

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

**Appendix C: Supplementary report on the future use of the
Roe Green Strathcona site**

Wards Affected:	Barnhill, Kenton, Fryent, Northwick Park, Preston, Queensbury, Welsh Harp.
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:	None
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Brian Grady, Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy 020 8937 4122 Brian.Grady@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with further information regarding proposed additional uses of the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site, raised as part of the call-in on a change in the age range of Roe Green Infant School and the closure of primary provision on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site from September 2020.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

2.1 Notes the information provided in this report regarding proposed additional uses of the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site.

2.2 Agrees for officers to develop alternative options to meet the demand for education places for young people with SEND at the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site from September 2022

3 Detail

3.1 The request to call-in the Cabinet decision set out a number of proposals for the additional use of the Roe Green Strathcona site. The proposals for additional use assume that mainstream primary provision continues on the Roe Green Strathcona site and that the additional uses utilise spare accommodation or the premises out of school hours. This differs to 'alternative' use of the site which would be established if primary provision ceased to operate from the site. The additional use proposals are set out below as described in the Call-In form, along with an officer evaluation of the viability of each proposal.

3.2 **Proposals 1 and 2: Approved Resource Provision (A.R.P) for children with autism or for children with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).**

"In view of the increasing need for provision for children with autism in this borough, this would be an economical option specifically for children on the high functioning end of the spectrum. As a one form entry school (RGS), two autistic children in each class would allow for an appropriate balance: the school already has enough neurotypical children. This would enable these children to access as much of the curriculum as possible in mainstream whilst providing two bases within the school (for KS1 and KS2) for the children to use as and when needed. There is opportunity to build on existing links with, for example, the Village School. Many parents of children who are high functioning autistic want their children to access mainstream education. This approach would make it possible. We have the expertise within the existing staff. The Executive Head Teacher set up and ran a similar provision very successfully within another London borough for 10 years. In addition, the Head of School is a very experienced SENCo and has worked with many autistic children and their families. The site at RGS is very well set up to meet the needs of these children because it's small, all on one level with easy access to outside areas. The ambiance of the school is calm and quiet, helping autistic children to avoid the high anxiety caused by sensory overload, and to thrive. There is enough parking and access to allow transport for children to come from across the borough. The school minibus could be used on a regular basis to take children out. With appropriate funding, this provision could be set up with immediate effect, to commence as early as Autumn 2019".

3.3 Response

3.3.1 An **Additionally** Resourced Provision (ARP) is a provision, within a mainstream school, designed to provide specialist and targeted support for children with long term special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). ARPs are funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), based on the number of places agreed with the local authority. As indicated in the proposal to establish an ARP on the Roe Green Strathcona site, children placed in ARPs are expected to spend some of their time integrated into mainstream classes. The proposal suggests that 2 children could be accommodated in each class, which would mean a maximum of 14 assuming the Strathcona site had sufficient mainstream pupils for 7 classes to operate. There are, however, currently 104 mainstream children receiving their education on the Roe Green Strathcona site, who, due to the small size of each year group, are organised into fewer classes, some of which are vertically grouped.

3.3.2 The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2018-2021 and the School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23 (approved by Cabinet in November 2018) summarise the need for additional special school places within the borough. The latest data shows that demand for special provision in Brent has been growing over the last 3 years. The number of children and young people with EHCPs increased by 8% between 2017 and 2019, when there were 2110 (SEN2 data return) Brent resident children and young people with an EHCP. While there are primary aged children placed in out-of-borough special settings (of whom 10 are placed in an ARP), the School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23 identifies that the priority need for additional in-borough provision is for special school provision, rather than ARPs, and places for children and young people of secondary age and in particular for young people aged 19-24.

3.3.3 Many mainstream schools in Brent cater for pupils with SEND, who either have an Education, Health and Care Plan or are identified by the school as requiring targeted SEN Support. The number of children at Roe Green Infant School with EHCPs or on SEN Support is low compared to many other schools (Tables 1 and 2). There are, therefore, other Brent schools with more experience of SEND.

Table 1: Top 10 Schools based on percentage of children with an EHCP (January 2019)

School	Total pupils R-Y6	Pupils with EHCPs	Pupils with EHCPs as % of total R-Y6
Roe Green Infant School	557	5	1%
Oliver Goldsmith Primary School	457	11	2%
The Kilburn Park School Foundation	166	4	2%
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School	491	12	2%
Malorees Infant School	204	5	2%
Kilburn Grange School	156	4	3%
Donnington Primary School	221	6	3%
Mitchell Brook Primary School	653	19	3%
North West London Jewish Day School	258	8	3%
St Mary's RC Primary School	278	9	3%
St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Junior School	348	12	3%
Malorees Junior School	256	12	5%

Source: School Census January 2019

Table 2: Top 10 Schools based on percentage of children on SEN Support (January 2019)

School	Total Pupils R-Y6	Pupils on SEN support	Pupils on SEN support as % of R-Y6 pupils
Roe Green Infant School	557	19	3%
The Kilburn Park School Foundation	166	27	16%
The Stonebridge School	467	78	17%
Christ Church CofE Primary School	214	37	17%
Newfield Primary School	340	63	19%
Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School	211	41	19%
St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School	208	42	20%
St Joseph RC Junior School	279	57	20%
Our Lady of Grace RC Infant and Nursery School	243	50	21%
Anson Primary School	386	85	22%
Carlton Vale Infant School	136	31	23%

Source: School Census January 2019

3.3.4 The ARP proposal is not intended to increase the number of mainstream children on the Roe Green Strathcona site. For as long as there is significantly lower primary pupil demand than available places, the sustainability of provision on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site will be at risk. There are risks, therefore, to establishing an ARP for vulnerable children who have SEND at any school where there is a degree of uncertainty about the long-term future of the mainstream provision.

3.4 **Proposal 3: SEND/Mental Well-being Training and Resource Hub**

“The school would work closely with other agencies e.g. EPs, S & L, OTs, family support, deaf and partially sighted therapists, music and art therapists etc. to be a base for these professionals to have conversations and access relevant resources and support. This would help with staff retention. It is important to provide mental and well-being training and support for both children and teachers. Emotional well-being is high on the government agenda and surveys show that parents are more concerned about their children’s well-being than with attainment. All schools must now have a member of staff who is responsible for well-being, not just for the children, but for staff. Well-being is central to the new Ofsted framework. Strathcona could also provide a safe space for professionals to work with children with emotional and social difficulties. This space could also be accessed by these professionals working with these children to address their own well-being. It could also provide a venue for family contact meetings and other community groups, which could also be outside school hours. Strathcona is well set up to provide this in the fact that it is a small, welcoming and friendly environment. It has its own school minibus which could be used to facilitate these arrangements”.

3.5 **Response**

3.5.1 This proposal will not increase demand for mainstream places on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site.

- 3.5.2 There is no evidence of demand from professionals for a SEND/Mental Well-being Training and Resource Hub. Many of the proposed uses of the Strathcona site premises are already being delivered. Schools access a range of training opportunities to deliver their responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of staff and providing relevant training and support, for example training delivered by the Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) (a conference on mental health and wellbeing was held in October 2018); a Personal, Health, Social and Economic (PHSE) network for teachers supported by BSP; Public Health provided training on Youth Mental Health First Aid and Brent's Setting and School Effectiveness Team training for NQTs on Mental Health Awareness.
- 3.5.3 In addition to training, schools can access a range of professional services that provide mental health and wellbeing support and information, including CCG commissioned services, the THRIVE project which is raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing in schools, the School Nursing Service and the Brent Educational Psychology Service. The new Targeted Mental Health and Well-being Service commissioned by the local authority to support children in vulnerable groups, such as those at risk of exclusion, will also provide a universal guidance and training offer to schools and a helpline.
- 3.5.4 The Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) is committed to promoting high quality school-to-school support, and developing system leadership across the network of Brent schools. This includes Specialist Centres which reflect school leaders' commitment to ensuring high quality provision and outcomes for all Brent children and young people. Specialist Centres are led by schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted or schools that have exemplary practice in a specific aspect of school provision. Manor School (an outstanding school) is a Specialist Centre for Special Educational Needs, because of its expertise in delivering high quality, personalised education for children with a wide range of learning difficulties and special needs, particularly with autism. The school offers training for teachers on a range of topics including, developing their understanding of autism, developing effective SEND classroom practice and how to incorporate occupational therapy and Makaton into every day teaching and learning opportunities.
- 3.5.5 With regards to a family contact venue, as is well known, Brent already has a base, the Freeman Family Centre, for contact meetings between children in care and their parents and relatives. There is no evidence of the need for professionals to have a 'safe' space to meet with children who have emotional and social difficulties - currently they meet either in the safety of the child's school or in clinical settings. With regards to other uses, community groups can currently hire the Roe Green Strathcona premises out of school hours and other schools also provide this opportunity for their local communities.
- 3.6 ***Proposal 4: To provide support and training to teachers who are in their early to middle years of their career to improve their subject knowledge from Early Years to KS2.***
"Many teachers are leaving the profession by the end of their fourth year of teaching – in inner London this figure is over 40%. How do we keep these teachers in the profession? Strathcona could be used in partnership as a training site. There is an on-site kitchen to provide lunches. Strathcona could be hired as a venue to provide training days. The new Ofsted is going to be focussed very much on teachers and their subject knowledge and we have the expertise and experience to lead some programmes. There is a large hall and

the children's classrooms can be closed off from the proposed training area(s). The school has a stable team with excellent retention rates and many years of training experience. This could be set up with immediate effect. Focus in particular needs to be on the non-core subjects such as history, geography and RE, relationships and health education, sex education and PSHE”.

3.7 Response

3.7.1 This proposal will not increase the number of mainstream children on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site.

3.7.2 It is the responsibility of schools, not the local authority, to support staff development through training. As this is not a local authority statutory responsibility, the local authority does not have a budget to support training. However, there is in Brent a developed market that is meeting this need as evidenced by strong Ofsted outcomes. The BSP provides leadership and subject specialism training at a number of schools sites across the borough. The Brent Teaching School Alliance (Byron Court) and the Woodfield Teaching School Alliance also provide specialist training for school staff as well as specialist leaders of education (SLEs) in core subjects. In addition, there are four Brent Schools Partnership Centres of Excellence: The Manor Special School for SEND, Chalkhill Primary School for Raising Achievement of Boys of Black Caribbean Heritage, Kingsbury Green Primary School for Assessment and Stonebridge Primary School for Safeguarding.

3.7.3 Additionally, Brent Schools Forum has commissioned from the BSP from June 2018 a two-year Leadership development programme targeting 60 potential and current school leaders, to engage in a development programme to prepare them for the next stage of their leadership career.

3.8 Proposal 5: Refugee Support Centre (EAL).

“When families come into borough from abroad the centre would provide an induction course to equip them with the language and skills required to function in mainstream schooling. The school has a proven track record in this area. Strathcona, as a centre of excellence, could also provide training and support for teachers in meeting the needs of new arrivals in their settings. Many teachers cite this as one of the biggest challenges they meet in their day to day teaching”.

3.9 Response

3.9.1 Brent is not part of a national scheme to receive a significant number of refugees for whom a specialist centre might be required. There are, however, high levels of mobility and in-migration in Brent schools, with many families new to the country choosing to settle in the borough each year. A large proportion of Brent's under-16 population is born outside the United Kingdom (19%).

3.9.2 New arrival children of primary age are allocated a school place through the normal school admission in-year application process, taking into account parental preferences and the school nearest to home with a vacancy. There are many primary schools across the borough, including Roe Green Infant School, that provide for children who have English as an additional language, as evidenced in Table 3.

Table 3: Top 10 Schools by percentage of pupils with English as an Additional Language

School	Total Pupils R-Y6	EAL pupils	EAL Pupils as % of total R-Y6
Wembley Primary School	875	759	87%
Carlton Vale Infant School	136	118	87%
Kingsbury Green Primary School	665	582	88%
Braintcroft E-Act Primary Academy	664	595	90%
St Joseph RC Junior School	279	251	90%
Park Lane Primary School	472	427	90%
Uxendon Manor Primary School	593	538	91%
St Joseph's RC Infant School	262	241	92%
Roe Green Infant School	557	517	93%
Lyon Park Primary School	919	868	94%

Source: School Census January 2019

- 3.9.3 While placing new arrival children who require intensive language support at Roe Green Infant School for an induction period could temporarily increase the number of children based on the Strathcona site, this would impact on pupil numbers at other schools in the borough who have also developed expertise in supporting children who arrive with limited English language skills. It is considered to be best practice to integrate primary aged children who arrive from overseas into mainstream schools and there is no evidence to suggest that these children are not settling well and quickly acquiring English language skills. The quality of the provision for EAL pupils at Brent schools and settings was recognised by Ofsted in a visit to observe this support in November 2016:

“Younger pupils in early years and primary schools are quickly settled into a mainstream classroom where they are able to acquire English rapidly from their peers and adults. This is achieved through their ‘real-life’ activities and experiences in the settings and classrooms as well as wider enrichment through visits and trips. I saw examples of this at Curzon Crescent Nursery School and The Stonebridge Primary School.”

4. Summary

- 4.1 None of the additional proposed uses of the Strathcona premises detailed in Section 3 would themselves result in increased sustained demand for mainstream places at the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site provision. The purpose of the additional use proposals seems to be to deliver more efficient use of the site pending an increase in primary demand across the borough.
- 4.2 There is, however, no evidence that mainstream demand for the provision will increase over the next five years to ensure the long-term sustainability of the site. As noted in the Cabinet report of 9 September 2019, the latest forecasts indicate that Brent’s primary population will gradually increase. Given the high number of spare places across Brent primary schools (approximately 12% at a borough-level) there is sufficient capacity to meet the gradual forecast increase in demand for mainstream primary places even if provision on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona was to close. The latest pupil forecasts for Primary

Planning Area 2, within which the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site is located, indicate that there will be a high number of spare places across all year groups over the next 5 years (14% spare capacity) which equates in Reception to 118 spare places, approximately 4 forms of entry.

- 4.3 As the proposed additional uses of the site are not likely to support the long-term sustainability of the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona provision, officers have considered alternative use of the site.

5. Alternative use of the Strathcona site

- 5.1 Should Cabinet confirm the decision to close the Strathcona site then the building and site would in time become surplus to requirements for the primary school. The Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23, approved by Cabinet in November 2018, identifies significant demand for places for children with SEND of secondary age as larger cohorts transfer from the primary phase and for young people aged 19-24 in line with the local authority's extended responsibility for young people with SEND up to the age 25.

- 5.2 The local authority currently places 136 children and young people in out of borough independent and non-maintained special schools, at a cost of £24,000 to £84,000 per place depending on the individual child's needs. Some children have such specific needs that they cannot be met other than in very specialist provision. For other children and young people, once they are placed out-of-borough, and have settled in a new school, it is very difficult to bring them back to local provision. There is, however, scope to reduce out-of-borough placements through the provision of more secondary special school places so that children in primary settings can transfer to a local 16-25 provision and provision for young people post-19 so that they can remain in Brent. This would have educational and social benefits for children and young people, as well as financial benefits.

- 5.3 The Brent Children's Trust Inclusion Board has identified the development of post-19 SEND provision as a strategic priority. A recently commissioned needs analysis evidences a demand for 30 places per year group for young people with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19-24. There is currently very little in-borough provision for young people with SEND aged 19-24, and, as the Strathcona site was previously an adult social care day centre, it is well suited for provision to meet their needs. In taking this proposal forward, officers would engage with stakeholders and a range of providers including local colleges and special schools.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Brent schools are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block. The Strathcona site is supported by the Brent local funding formula of the DSG, which allows for additional funding for split site schools. The school receives approximately £5.3k per pupil funding plus a split site allocation of £200k. With 110 pupils this totals £786k of funding that Roe Green Infant School receives to deliver school places at the Strathcona site and equates to approximately £7k per pupil for children at this site. This compares to an average of just over £5k per primary pupil across the borough. The Strathcona site funding as part of the Roe Green Infant School allocation is set out below in Table 4.

Table 4: Roe Green Infant School 2019/20 per pupil funding figures

Description	
2019/20 Total Funding Formula for Roe Green Infant School	£2,474,342
Total pupils funding is based on 447 pupils (October 2018 census)	447 pupils
Average funding per pupil across whole school	£5,535
Pupils on main school site	337 pupils
Pupils on Strathcona Site	110 pupils
Split site funding awarded for Strathcona site	£202,000
Total funding less split site funding	£2,272,342
Average Funding per pupil across whole school without split site funding	£5,084
Cost of split site funding per pupil on Strathcona site	£1,836
Total funding per pupil on Strathcona site	£6,920
Total funding of Strathcona site	£761,189

6.2 If the provision were to close, pupil level funding would follow the pupils who transfer to alternative schools. The £200k funding for the site would be redistributed to primary schools through the Schools Block. The impact of the level of additional funds per Brent school from this resource would vary from school to school, but initial analysis suggests an additional £6.6k for a 3 FE primary school and £3.3k for a 2 FE primary school. Table 5 sets out the potential impact of redistributing the funding for the Strathcona site.

Table 5: Potential impact of redistribution of Roe Green Strathcona funding

Description	
Total funding of Strathcona site	£761,189
Average per pupil funding in Primary phase Brent Schools	£5,094
Estimated funding that would directly follow pupils to new schools	£560,326.30
Estimated funding available for redistribution from the Split site funding	£200,863
Total number of Primary phase pupils in Brent	25,500 pupils
Funds available for redistribution per pupil	£8
Potential additional funds for a 2 FE Primary School	£3,308.33
Potential additional funds for a 4 FE Primary School	£6,616.66

7. 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 (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013.
- 7.2 Under sections 13A and 14 of The Education Act 1996, as amended by The Education and Inspections Act 2006, a local 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.

8. 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 was provided as an appendix to the report received by Cabinet in September 2019. 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.

9. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 9.1 Ward members participated in the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 October that considered Cabinet's decision of 9 September 2019 to implement a phased closure of the Roe Green Strathcona provision.

10. Human Resources Implications

- 10.1 If the closure proceeds, the school will be supported by the local authority to implement the proposals, following the Managing Change in Schools policy and procedure which will include consultation with affected staff and trade unions to effect the changes.

11.0 Property Implications

- 11.1 Should a decision be made to close the Strathcona site then the building and site would in time become surplus to requirements for the primary school. As set out in section 5, consideration will be given to use of the site for provision for young people aged between 19 and 24, an identified need in the Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23.

Related documents:

- Cabinet Report of 19 June 2019 – Formal Consultation on the School Organisation Arrangements of Roe Green Infant School
- Cabinet Report of 11 March 2019 - Informal Consultation on the School Organisation Arrangements of Roe Green Infant School;
- Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23

Report sign off:

GAIL TOLLEY

Strategic Director, Children and
Young People