

Report for: Cabinet – 8 February 2022

Title: Scrutiny Review: Haringey Family of School – Cabinet response to recommendations

Report authorised by: Ann Graham, Director of Children’s Services

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Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: Key decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1** This report sets out the proposed Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny review of the Haringey Family of Schools – attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

In 2020 -2021, Scrutiny undertook a review of the Haringey Family of Schools with particular focus on schools’ sustainability from a financial perspective, not least because of the falling rolls we are evidencing in our reception cohorts, and which will soon become evident in our secondary cohorts. A low birth rate has been exacerbated by factors such as Covid which has seen families leave the borough to access more affordable housing and work remotely.

I am pleased to see the body of evidence discussed as part of the review and also to hear from officers and from schools about the work that is already going on to address the issue of falling rolls and to support our schools at a time when challenges are significant. I endorse the recommendations that have come out of this report, and I support the work outlined therein as well as the wide range of other support that is being offered to our schools to ensure that we continue to support and build a school estate that will take us strongly through the coming years.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** Cabinet is asked:
- i) To consider the report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 3.
 - ii) To agree the response to these recommendations attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 On 29 November 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met to approve the recommendations of the scrutiny review of the Haringey Family of Schools.
- 4.2 In its work, which contributed to the report, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held several evidence gathering sessions and took evidence from Council officers and key stakeholders. The CYP Scrutiny Panel then made several recommendations which were adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 November 2021.

5. Alternative options considered

None.

6. Background information

- 6.1 In early 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed, at a meeting on 14 January 2020, the scoping document for a review of the Haringey Family of Schools. The terms of reference for the review was:

“To consider and make recommendations to Cabinet on how the Council might influence schools within the borough most effectively and, in particular, facilitate school improvement and co-ordination of school places.”

- 6.2 As part of this, the review considered:

- the role the Council has in working with schools to effectively manage the reductions in school rolls;
- how a balanced range of school provision across the borough might best be maintained; and
- what could be done to mitigate financial pressures on schools and ensure that any adverse effects on schools are minimised.

- 6.3 The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

- 6.4 The response to these recommendations is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

- 6.5 An important backdrop to this report is information contained in the annual School Place Planning Report¹ pertaining to birth rate and migration. In common with a wider picture in London and beyond, live birth rates continue to fall in Haringey. This fall, together with an increase in outward migration (partly Covid driven) has impacted on demand for reception places in our schools. In 2012, at its peak, we received 3163 first place preferences (i.e. applications); by 2021, applications for September entry for that year were at 2562, representing a reduction of 601 applications or just over 20 reception classes (601 divided by 30).

¹ www.haringey.gov.uk/schoolplaceplanning

- 6.6 This significant fall in demand for reception places has meant that the School Place Planning team is currently working with our schools to reduce capacity: an amalgamation of a school (closing Stamford Hill and absorbing the pupils into Tiverton School), and a reduction in published admission number (PAN) across nine other schools has already taken place. Intensive work is ongoing to secure further reductions as our school roll projections do not suggest that demand will pick up at any significant level in the next ten years.
- 6.7 The above will be a significant piece of work over the next two or three years and will help to ensure that we have a schools estate that is sustainable while still ensuring school place sufficiency. This work aligns with other initiatives including a masterplan which is being produced for the education estate and will take account of works needed to mainstream and special, primary and secondary as well as alternative provision needed to meet the needs of our borough and our schools. Through this work, some difficult decisions will need to be made about how we are able to effectively regulate the number of school places across the borough and taking into account the difficulties that some of our schools will face with very low rolls and no reasonable prospect of any change to this in the short and the longer term.
- 6.8 We will engage with our schools on this further in the summer term 2022 and into the autumn and work around adjustment of the overall number of school places in the secondary phase will also begin as we project demand for those places to begin to fall in 2023.
- 6.9 In summary, the estate is too big at primary, soon to be too big at secondary and we need to rationalise this position to ensure financial sustainability going forward.
- 6.10 Paragraphs 6.5 to 6.9 above provide context to this report in some of the challenges that will continue to face both local authorities and schools in the coming years.
- 6.11 Also of note is the recent consultation that the Department for Education carried out on the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant. The consultation proposes removing this grant to LAs in two phases, with 50% of the grant being removed in April 2022 and the remainder in April 2023. The grant to Haringey is just under £250k and it is passported, through the contract we hold with Haringey Education Partnership (HEP) for school improvement functions, to HEP to support the work they carry out with schools around school improvement. Despite significant opposition to the removal of the grant from local authorities, including from Haringey, the government announced in week beginning 10 January, that the removal of the grant would proceed as outlined above. This presents further pressure on our schools around securing school improvement and further dilutes the role that local authorities can play in contributing to these functions in supporting our schools.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 This report supports the Borough Plan's Priority Two: People, and its vision that Haringey is a place where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Finance

This report does not lead to any direct financial implications. Should any onward decisions for changes to service delivery be proposed, the financial implications will be considered at that point.

Head of Legal & Governance

Under Section 9F Local Government Act 2000 ("The Act"), Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) have the powers to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any executive and non-executive functions and to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority with respect to the discharge of those functions. OSC also have the powers to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority on matters, which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of its area. In order to discharge this scrutiny function, OSC has appointed Scrutiny Review Panels, which includes Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.

Pursuant to the above provision, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel has conducted a review of Haringey Family of Schools and made a number of recommendations to Cabinet that has been approved by OSC. Under Section 9FE of the Act, there is a duty on Cabinet to respond to the scrutiny report, indicating what (if any) action Cabinet proposes to take, within 2 months of receiving the report and recommendations.

Equality

The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

The proposed decision is for Cabinet to consider a set of responses to recommendations made by the OSC on how the Council might influence

schools within the borough most effectively and facilitate school improvement and co-ordination of school places. The OSC's recommendations, set out in detail in Appendix 1, cover: the Council's deep dive on school exclusions; perceptions of the quality of education at individual schools; the implications of academisation for schools under the diocesan authorities; support for schools in managing their finances; and schools buying in services. The Council's responses, set out in detail in Appendix 2, highlight work that the Council has already done in respect of the deep dive, perceptions of individual schools' quality, and work with diocesan authorities. They also note additional work needed to support schools in managing their finances and buying in of services to meet the relevant recommendations in full.

Across the piece, the proposed responses will affect school-age children across Haringey, among whom BAME communities, who are also likely to face socioeconomic disadvantage, children of particular faiths, and SEND children are overrepresented. Furthermore, several of the proposed responses will have implications on a more granular level for cohorts from these groups. For example, the exclusions deep dive review and action plan flowing from it will have specific implications for boys of Black or Black British Caribbean or Turkish origin who are overrepresented among children who are excluded from mainstream education. Detail equalities analyses, in the form of equalities comments or EQIAs, will be undertaken to capture the equalities implications of any projects flowing from the proposed responses, ensuring ensure that the Council has understood and will meet the needs of groups who will be impacted by proposed work.

The objective of the proposed decision is to approve responses to OSC recommendations, thereby taking forward a number of workstreams that will allow the Council to meet the OSC's recommendations in full where it is not already doing so. It is anticipated that this will lead to improved educational outcomes from all school-age children in Haringey, advancing equality of opportunity specifically for children from BAME backgrounds (boys of Black or Black British Caribbean or Turkish origin in particular), among whom certain faith groups are overrepresented, children who face socioeconomic disadvantage, and SEND children. The proposed decision therefore represents a measure to address a known inequality that disproportionately affects these groups.

Recommendation 1 proposes that wide-ranging consultation is undertaken with referral units, alternative provision, schools and young people who have been through the exclusions process. The Council's deep dive into exclusions and the development of the action plan has involved consultation with young people at Commerce House, part of the Council's alternative provision. Engagement will continue to be carried out so as to be inclusive of all protected groups, amplifying in particular the perspectives of protected groups who are overrepresented in relevant processes such as exclusion, with steps being taken that will ensure accessibility.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – recommendations of the committee

Appendix 2 – officer responses to recommendations
Appendix 3 – Full Scrutiny Review

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.

Appendix 1 - Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

Recommendation 1

That the “deep dive” on school exclusions currently being undertaken by the Council is:

- wide ranging and involves consultation with referral units, alternative provision, schools and young people who have been through the exclusions process;
- contains clear recommendations and an action plan;
- establishes whether there are disproportionate rates of exclusion in some schools or types of school; and
- considers and clarifies the role(s) undertaken by the local authority in the exclusions process (*paragraph 3.18*).

Recommendation 2

That work be undertaken to better understand how outdated or inaccurate perceptions regarding the quality of education in individual schools can better be addressed (*5.7*).

Recommendation 3

That positive engagement is arranged by the Council to raise the profile of less popular schools in the borough (*5.7*).

Recommendation 4

That the Council work with the diocesan authorities to ensure that school governing bodies are given clear and impartial guidance on the implications of academisation or are signposted to sources of independent advice (*6.13*).

Recommendation 5

That action take place to re-establish close relationships between the Council and the diocesan authorities and collaborate closely with them in addressing the downturn in demand for school places (*6.14*).

Recommendation 6

That an offer be developed for schools of an analysis of their cost effectiveness and that this is based on the totality of their income, including that from fund-raising activities and other additional sources (*7.16*).

Recommendation 7

That a report on the development of consortia of schools to buy in services be submitted to the Schools Forum and consideration given to how schools could be supported in developing them. (*7.18*).

Appendix 2 – Response to the recommendations made by the OSC

No.	Recommendation	Response (Agreed/Not agreed/Partially agreed)	Who and when
1	<p>That the “deep dive” on school exclusions currently being undertaken by the Council is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide ranging and involves consultation with referral units, alternative provision, schools, and young people who have been through the exclusions process; • contains clear recommendations and an action plan; • establishes whether there are disproportionate rates of exclusion in some schools or types of school; and • considers and clarifies the role(s) undertaken by the local authority in the exclusions process (<i>paragraph 3.18</i>). 	<p>Agreed and met</p> <p>In spring 2021, a deep dive of the exclusion took place to understand how and why exclusions were taking place. From this deep dive, an action plan has evolved whose core aim is to reduce the number of exclusions in the borough and to support young people as well as their families and our schools and settings in this regard. A draft exclusions pledge has been drafted to accompany the action plan and has shared with our head teachers for comment. Central to the pledge is ensuring that the views and voice of our young people is heard both in school before exclusion and in any alternative provision (AP) setting.</p> <p>An Exclusions Learning Event was held with Head teachers in autumn 2021 and a further event is planned with our school governors in the spring term and a wider partnership event in summer 2022.</p> <p>The result of this work is that exclusions have reduced significantly and there is ongoing work with our schools and families to further support this reduction, and to support our young people to achieve to the very best.</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Schools and Learning</p> <p>Assistant Director, Commissioning</p> <p>Work is ongoing and with significant milestones already achieved</p>
2	<p>That work be undertaken to better understand how outdated or inaccurate perceptions regarding the quality of education in individual schools can better be addressed (5.7).</p>	<p>Partially agreed and met</p> <p>The Local Authority supports all our schools, and we work closely with all our Head teachers and with partners, including the Haringey Education Partnership (HEP), to ensure that our schools deliver a first class education to our children and young people, one that enriches and</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Schools and Learning</p> <p>Admissions</p>

No.	Recommendation	Response (Agreed/Not agreed/Partially agreed)	Who and when
		<p>prepares them for a life into adulthood. We aim, among other things, to support all our schools to be 'good' or 'outstanding'. Among other things, we ensure that we adhere to and apply the Schools Admissions Code when school places are offered to our families at reception entry, secondary transfer and at any other in-year point when a child or young person changes school. Our Admissions booklets² for both primary and secondary schools provide clear and factual information about all our schools but does not seek to promote one school over another.</p> <p>We support all our schools to deliver to the very highest and, in doing so, to ensure that their reputation in their local community means that our families pick their local school(s) when making preference(s) on any application form.</p>	<p>Haringey Education Partnership</p> <p>This recommendation is an ongoing piece of work</p>
3	That positive engagement is arranged by the Council to raise the profile of less popular schools in the borough (5.7).	See 2 above – Partially agreed and met	See 2 above
4	That the Council work with the diocesan authorities to ensure that school governing bodies are given clear and impartial guidance on the implications of academisation or are signposted to sources of independent advice (6.13).	<p>Agreed and partially met</p> <p>The Local Authority works closely with the two diocesan boards: the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS)³ and the Diocese of Westminster (RCDOW)⁴. Indeed, both boards are statutory partners when the local authority is making school organisation changes. In recent years, both diocesan boards have engaged with their schools about forming MATs (multi academy trusts). This would move these</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p> <p>Assistant Director, Schools and Learning</p> <p>Head of Admissions and School Organisation</p>

² <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/children-and-families/schools-and-education/school-admissions/starting-secondary-school>

³ <https://ldbs.co.uk/>

⁴ <https://rcdow.org.uk/>

No.	Recommendation	Response (Agreed/Not agreed/Partially agreed)	Who and when
		<p>schools from their current voluntary aided (VA) status to academy status. For RCDOW, they have led a narrative around creating CATs (catholic academy trusts) and have engaged with head teachers and with Chairs of Governors to this effect. In April 2021, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families wrote to Bishop John Sherrington and Peter Sweeney, Interim Director for Education, asking them to talk to the Local Authority about their plans for any academisation and to not force schools down this route.</p> <p>Dialogue with the diocesan boards is ongoing, including recent engagement around reducing reception capacity across our school estate. We are in conversations with both boards about the number of places we must reduce to ensure sustainability of our schools.</p>	<p>School Place Planning Lead</p> <p>Work on this recommendation has already been achieved but it is ongoing across this school year and into 2022/23</p>
5	That action take place to re-establish close relationships between the Council and the diocesan authorities and collaborate closely with them in addressing the downturn in demand for school places (6.14).	See 4 above – Agreed and partially met	See 4 above
6	That an offer be developed for schools of an analysis of their cost effectiveness and that this is based on the totality of their income, including that from fund-raising activities and other additional sources (7.16).	<p>Agreed and partially met</p> <p>Haringey's Schools finance team has supported all schools and schools in financial difficulty through several initiatives. Including support to school business managers and work on integrated curriculum led financial planning. There are plans in place to continue to strengthen this support and ensure that our offer meets schools' needs. Several initiatives have already been implemented including additional training led by DfE.</p> <p>To support any school going through difficult times and to significantly expand the existing targeted offer, additional resources will be required.</p>	<p>Schools Finance Manager</p> <p>Assistant Director for Schools and Learning</p> <p>Met, with work ongoing with individual schools</p>

No.	Recommendation	Response (Agreed/Not agreed/Partially agreed)	Who and when
		The responsibility does remain with our schools to ensure that they are able to manage their finances effectively and remain within their allocated budget and includes the responsibility to take action (including reducing PAN) where it is financially judicious to do so.	
7	That a report on the development of consortia of schools to buy in services be submitted to the Schools Forum and consideration given to how schools could be supported in developing them. (7.18).	<p>Partially agreed</p> <p>Haringey is currently working with schools via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for services such as finance, Human Resources and payroll.</p> <p>Cost effectiveness remains the responsibility of the school, including the governing body, and while the above support is of great value to our schools and can assist them in this process, the process of developing a consortia would be a schools led initiative with the LA in support, for which there will be a cost to the LA in terms of resources given.</p> <p>Conversations are underway within the LA, including with Procurement, about how we can best support our schools through this process.</p> <p>This recommendation has been partially met with further work needed from the LA and from our schools to develop a model which is owned by our schools and to which the LA can provide support.</p>	<p>Schools in conjunction with</p> <p>Assistant Director for Schools and Learning</p> <p>And other LA services as required</p>