



Report to Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 21 November 2016

Report of: Executive Director Children, Young People & Families

Subject: School Places Planning Update

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Summary:

This report provides an update on school places needs in Sheffield and provides details of the Government's recent announcement on Grammar Schools. This report is being presented at the request of the Chair of the Committee.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	X
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to consider the report and note its contents.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Report of the Director of Children, Young People & Families – School Places Planning Update

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on school places needs in Sheffield and provides details of the Government’s recent announcement on selective schools. This report is being presented at the request of the Chair of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Council’s published vision is for all Sheffield families to have access to great, inclusive schools in every area of the city. This means schools working in partnership to ensure each child reaches their potential, equal access for the most vulnerable children to high quality education, schools at the heart of their communities, and getting best value from all funding opportunities.
- 1.3 The starting point for the strategy is to provide sufficient places in areas of major population growth. The strategy must acknowledge the strong expectation that parents will be able to gain a place for their child at a good local school and be founded on a strong vision of excellence that will support and encourage the aspiration of parents.

2. Meeting Demand for School Places

- 2.1 Births in Sheffield rose by 25% between 2002 and 2012 with 1000 more children per year now coming into Reception. The children born in 2012 are the largest birth cohort in the city since 1991. This has required a programme of extra places in the primary sector and now the secondary sector as the bigger cohorts have filtered through.

Primary Places

- 2.2 Throughout this period of growth in demand, places have been added in the areas of pressure. In total around 5000 primary places have been added since 2006, bringing a very high level of capital investment to create new schools, expansions and amalgamations. As a result of this work we have been able to retain a very high proportion of families being offered a place at a preferred school – 97% in 2015/16. Whilst there may be localised pressure, we are not expecting demand for primary school places to continue growing in the next period and the scale of the programme to add places should significantly reduce.

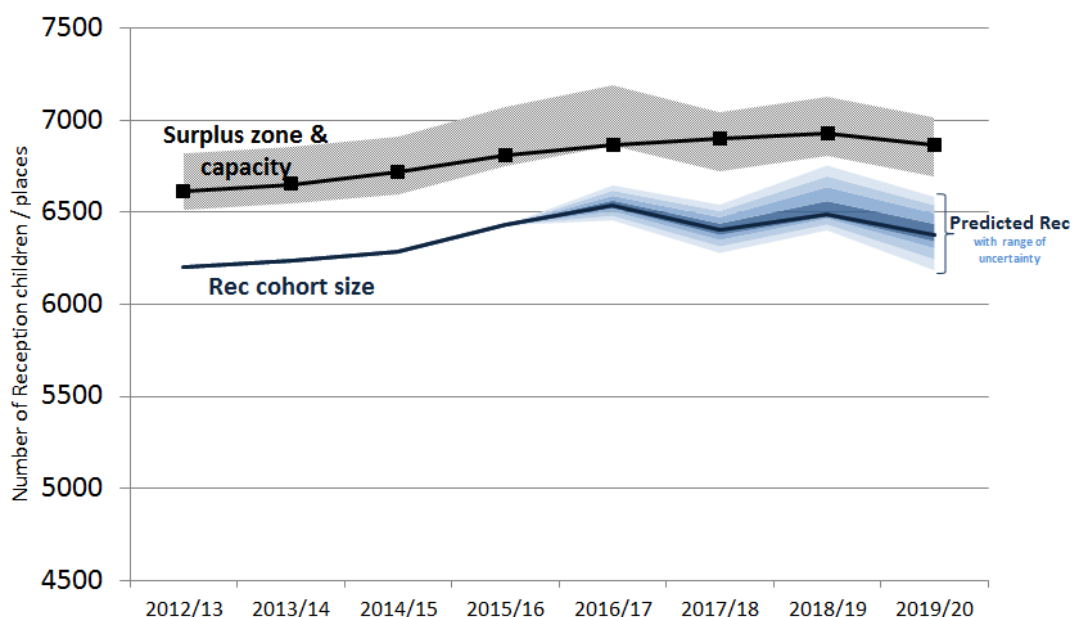


Figure 1: predicted Reception places needed for Sheffield. From 2015/16 the dark blue line represents a forecast based on GP registration data adjusted for average historical error. The shaded areas display a range of uncertainty.

Secondary Places

2.3 The growth started to come through into Year 7 from 2014 and the most significant rises are expected in 2018 and 2019. In response the city has commissioned new secondary schools for 2018 in the northeast at Pye Bank/Woodside, the southwest at Bannerdale, and Oasis Don Valley, a through primary-secondary school, will also open its Year 7 for the first time in September 2018. Beyond this point we are anticipating continued pressure on places in the first half of the next decade, albeit not on sufficient scale to require further new schools. The Council will need to work with the secondary sector to ensure that sufficient places are available during this period.

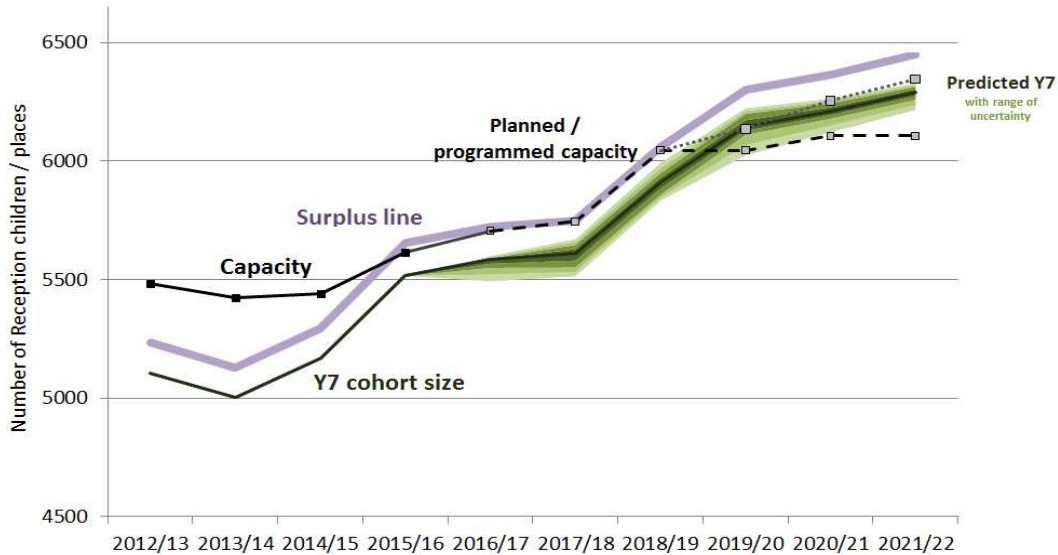


Figure 2: predicted Y7 places needed for Sheffield. From 2015/16 the dark green line represents a forecast based on primary numbers on roll adjusted for average historical error. The shaded areas display a range of uncertainty.

The Future

2.4 The 2013-15 birth pattern could be seen as a sign of stabilisation and Office for National Statistics’ projections show a steady increase in births until 2023. Historically the pattern of crests and troughs in birth numbers continues a picture seen since the post-war baby boomer generation. It is possible that births could reduce in the future, consistent with the fall and rise pattern seen in previous decades. However, it is important to be aware that births are only one driver of demand for school places, particularly when looking at smaller local areas. For example, both the southwest and northeast have established patterns of young families moving in, which add to existing high levels of demand. To date there has been no clear change in patterns of inward or outward movement of pupils following the EU referendum before the summer.

3 Grammar Schools

3.1 The Government has recently announced a consultation called “Schools that work for everyone”. It describes a number of proposed measures including, “allowing existing selective schools to expand and new selective schools to open”. It also proposes permitting existing non-selective schools to become selective.

3.2 The introduction of a possible return of selective schools has been widely referred to in both the local and national media as a return of grammar schools. The consultation closes on 12 December 2016 with the results expected to be published in Spring 2017.

- 3.3 Sheffield currently has no grammar schools. In the context of improving results in Sheffield the Council's position on grammar schools is clear. The Council does not support their re-introduction and believes providing extra support and impetus to the existing progress that we have made would better meet the long term needs of Sheffield children and the city as a whole.

4 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

- 4.1 Effective planning is essential in ensuring that there are enough school places for every school age child in Sheffield. This is a statutory responsibility of the Council. It is essential to Sheffield's focus on enabling children to have a great start in life, achieve their full potential, and contribute to the success of the city. At the heart of the vision for planning school places in Sheffield is the Council's role in enabling excellent education outcomes and equitable access for all to high quality education.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report and note its contents.
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SOUTH WEST PRIMARY PLACES: Analysis of Need

Need for Places

As we know, the primary system in this area is currently tight. We have turned away catchment pupils for Dobcroft, Dore, Ecclesall, Greystones, and Totley in recent intakes. The note below considers the current need for primary school places in this area as far as can be known based on available data.

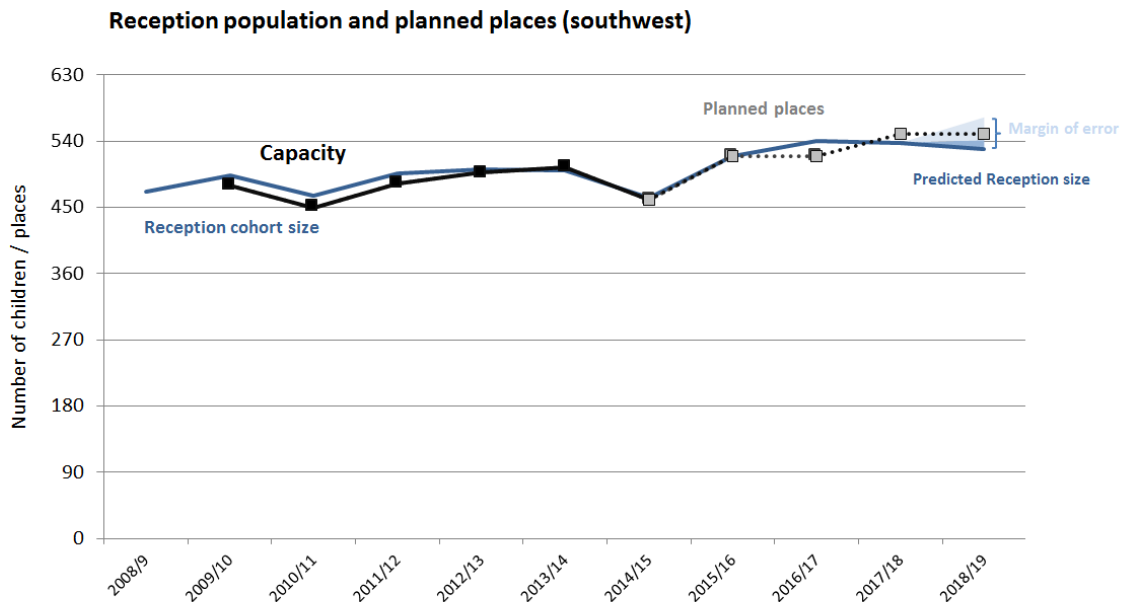


Chart 2: predicted Reception places for southwest. From 2015/16 the dark blue line represents a forecast based on public health records of the local population. The shaded areas display the margin for error. The absence of shaded areas in 2015/16 and 2016/17 indicates the high accuracy of forecast figures in this area 1 year and 2 years ahead.

The chart shows the recent and expected match between Reception places and pupils in the southwest area (Dobcroft/Greystones/Ecclesall/Dore/Totley). The current demographic trend in the area is for significant numbers of young families to move into the area before starting primary school. With this growth factored in we can see ongoing pressure is expected for the next three years. It therefore supports the need for the current additional 30 places proposed in Ecclesall and 30 in Dore/Totley. Whilst places may remain tight, it does not currently look likely that a further addition of places would be necessary in this area.

Could demand go up again? Forecasts of births have proved inaccurate at a national level, so the confidence in any predictions at primary catchment level would be very low. As an alternative we have looked back at cohorts in these catchments over the last 25 years. This includes cohorts from the previous peak in births (1991). This gives a sense of how many families each catchment area is likely to be able to accommodate during a peak – an estimate of a saturation point. This shows numbers across the area over the next three years to be at or around the previous peak. In some localized parts, such as Greystones, the current cohorts are higher than seen previously (which links to the change in demographic from students to young families).

Whilst there is no certainty, the current pre-school cohorts, trends in growth, and long term picture all currently suggest that it is unlikely the demand will grow significantly beyond our current estimates. On the other hand, with some pupils

refused catchment places in recent years and an expectation of continued pressure based on existing populations, the level of demand is now well-established.

Site Comparison in the Dobcroft/Ecclesall/Greystones area

The table below shows a comparison of each school site in the Dobcroft/Ecclesall/Greystones area. Any calculation purely based on site area has some limitations. They do not take into account the usable site area, i.e. slopes, trees or other barriers, nor do they take into account schools such as Greystones where the building is over three floors in order to ensure the amount of playspace and internal floor area are maximized.

Example from the table: Clifford Infants has 90 places, it has a current site of 1966sqm. Guidance on site areas for 90-place infant schools suggests 2990sqm, so Clifford's current site is 66% of the guidance. Dividing the site size by the number of pupils gives 21.85 sqm per pupil.

School	Total Number of Places	Site Area (sqm)	Govt Guidance Site Area	Comparison to Guidance (as %)	Area per Pupil (sqm)
Clifford CE Infant School	90	1966	2990	66%	21.85
Clifford CE Infant School + 110 Psalter Lane (Through Primary)	210	3116	8993	35%	14.83
Dobcroft Infant School	270	8384	4970	169%	31.05
Dobcroft Junior School	360	15669	20000	78%	43.52
Ecclesall Infant School (current)	180	19810	3980	498%	110.06
Ecclesall Infant School (proposed - through Primary)	630	19810	22979	86%	31.44
Ecclesall CE Junior School	360	4616	20000	23%	12.82
Greystones Primary School	630	8013	20979	38%	12.72