

Report to PVFM (Performance and Value for Money Committee)

School Place Planning and Admissions Update

Portfolio Holder:

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Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee on the current position regarding school places and school admissions for September 2019 to include the following: -

- Current Position and Context
- Primary Admissions
- Secondary Admissions
- Percentage of residents who have been offered a school place of choice
- Update on the Education Provision Strategy
- Update on current projects to provide additional places

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Select Committee note the contents of the report and the plans to improve parental choice, specifically in relation to choice in the secondary sector.

School Places and Admissions Update

1 Background

- 1.1 The general population in the borough has increased in the last five years. For schools it means the number of children needing a school place at the start of the academic year is also increasing. In-year transfers have also increased since 2013. This is largely due to additional housing and the number of children and young people moving in to the borough from abroad. In the main the above families are moving in to council owned and private rented housing in two of the six planning areas; East Oldham and West Oldham.

2 Current Position and Context

- 2.1 Total primary aged mainstream pupils at January Census 2018 was 24257. This figure had risen to 24340 in January 2019 Census, an increase of 0.3% in 12 months. There are currently 476 empty places in the primary sector. The majority of these places are in KS1 due to a primary expansion programme over recent years. There are minimal places in year 3- year 6 throughout the borough.

Total secondary aged mainstream pupils Yr 7 – Yr11 at January Census 2018 was 15,388. This figure had risen to 15,735 in January 2019 Census. An increase of 2.3% over the 12 month period. There are currently 154 empty places.

3239 pupils have been offered Oldham schools for Reception 2019. There are currently 272 reception vacancies for September 2019. These vacancies are across all of the six planning areas. The surplus places are as a result of a significant programme of primary school expansion over the last 5 years.

3548 pupils have been offered Oldham schools for Secondary Allocation 2019. There are currently 40 spaces with schools being willing to voluntarily go over PAN. We have also secured 20 extra places at Blue Coat School. Blue Coat have current bulge classes in year 8 and year 9. Oldham was affected by the sudden closure of Collective Spirit which has seen schools in Oldham take the pupils at short notice. Those Collective Spirit pupils are still within the current secondary cohort.

Oldham's local housing need, based on the central government's standard methodology is 692 dwellings a year. This is a significant increase on the housing requirement set out in the current Local Plan (adopted November 2011) which requires delivery of at least 289 new homes a year.

Furthermore, the 2019 draft Greater Manchester Strategic Framework: GM Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment proposes a target of around 201,000 additional homes (net) to be delivered over the period 2018-2037 to accommodate its growing population. It is proposed to phase the provision of these new homes: in Oldham it proposes the provision of 450 new homes per year between 2018-2023, increasing up to 860 new homes per year between 2024 and 2037. This equates to 752 a year over the plan period (2018-2037).

These developments will create additional pressures for school places. A revised strategy of place planning will be put in place to deal with these developments.

2.2 Education Provision Strategy and Current Expansion Projects

In October 2019 a revised strategy for the delivery of school places will be submitted to Cabinet for approval. The strategy will outline plans for the development of school provision for the period 2020 to 2024. The strategy will also include predictions and modelling for the number of places needed for SEND pupils and other pupils who need alternative provision.

There is also considerable activity currently underway to enhance provision of places at good and outstanding schools and the current projects are outlined in the attached document (Appendix One).

2.3 Admissions – Parental Preference Performance

As can be seen in Appendix Two, Oldham has a strong offer for parents in the primary sector with 93% of parents receiving their first choice of primary school in relation to a figure of 91% nationally. The strategy going forward will be to improve on this already strong performance.

In relation to secondary parental preferences Oldham is currently able offer 75% percent of parents a secondary school first choice preference, this is against a national figure of 81%. The developments currently underway and those that will be contained in the new Education Provision Strategy will be designed to bring that to at least national level by September 2022.

3 Key Issues for PVFM to discuss

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the current allocation of places and forthcoming new strategy for education provision.

4 Links to Corporate Outcomes

- 4.1 A key link is the ambition to develop a co-operative service with the LA Admissions Team taking ownership to drive change and continue to work with a resident focus.

5 Additional Supporting Information

- 5.1 Please see attached appendices.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 N/a

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix One – Capital Projects to expand provision.
 - 7.2 Appendix Two – Admissions and Parental Preference
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