

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Children and Young People - Lead Cabinet Member - Councillor Mrs. A. McCoy**

#### **SUPPLY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES ACROSS THE BOROUGH**

1. Summary

Between 1999 and 2009 the number of primary school pupils in the borough fell by almost 3,000. During that time the pupil capacity of many primary schools was reduced, and 1,700 places were removed in order to maintain the level of unfilled places at around 10% overall.

The latest projections (based on January 2010 data) show a rising trend in the number of pupils of primary school age in the borough beginning in September 2010 and continuing for at least four years.

It now seems likely that pupil numbers will rise more rapidly than projected last year. The number of applications for reception places in September 2010 was over 100 greater than projected. In some areas of the borough there will be very few vacant reception places in September. There is now a need to identify options for increasing capacity in those areas of the borough for 2011 and beyond, and to consider how those options might be funded.

In all areas of the borough the number of pupils attending Catholic schools is projected to increase beyond present capacity. It will be necessary to discuss possible options with the two Catholic dioceses.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the present position, that options be developed to ensure a sufficient supply of places in all areas of the Borough taking into account the availability of resources and that a further report be submitted to Cabinet later in the year.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In due course changes in capacity of various schools may be required supported by the investment of funds from available grants.

#### 4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

## **CABINET DECISION**

### **SUPPLY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES ACROSS THE BOROUGH**

1. Summary

Between 1999 and 2009 the number of primary school pupils in the borough fell by almost 3,000. During that time the pupil capacity of many primary schools was reduced, and 1,700 places were removed in order to maintain the level of unfilled places at around 10% overall.

The latest projections (based on January 2010 data) show a rising trend in the number of pupils of primary school age in the borough beginning in September 2010 and continuing for at least four years.

It now seems likely that pupil numbers will rise more rapidly than projected last year. The number of applications for reception places in September 2010 was over 100 greater than projected. In some areas of the borough there will be very few vacant reception places in September. There is now a need to identify options for increasing capacity in those areas of the borough for 2011 and beyond, and to consider how those options might be funded.

In all areas of the borough the number of pupils attending Catholic schools is projected to increase beyond present capacity. It will be necessary to discuss possible options with the two Catholic dioceses.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the present position, that options be developed to ensure a sufficient supply of places in all areas of the Borough taking into account the availability of resources and that a further report be submitted to Cabinet later in the year.

### **DETAIL**

Policy background

1. The 1944 Education Act imposed on local education authorities a statutory duty to ensure a sufficient supply of school places to meet the needs of children resident in their area. That duty remains in force. At the same time, authorities are expected to avoid retaining an excess of surplus places. The Audit Commission has recommended that local authorities should plan to retain between 5% and 10% of school places vacant in order to provide scope for increases in population and changes in parental preference for particular schools. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) carries out an annual survey on the level of vacant places in maintained schools and requires a report on any school where the level of unfilled places exceeds 25% of capacity.

2. The Council has an agreed policy of aiming for a maximum of 10% vacant places overall in primary and secondary schools. The School Organisation Plan published annually by the Council includes data showing the capacity of all schools, the current numbers of pupils on roll, and projections for the next five years. The 2009 Plan included the following table showing a projected increase in the number of pupils in our primary schools up to spring 2014.

<b>January →</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
net capacity	16328	16253	16253	16253	16253	16253	16253
pupils	14543	14446	14512	14670	15004	15392	15791
<b>net surplus</b>	<b>1785</b>	<b>1807</b>	<b>1741</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>1249</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>462</b>
surplus %	10.9%	11.1%	10.7%	9.7%	7.6%	5.3%	2.8%

#### Impact of rising numbers on primary schools

3. The challenge posed by the rising numbers of children entering primary school is not apparent from that table. It is best illustrated by considering a typical one-form entry (1FE) primary school. Such a school has capacity for 30 children in each of the seven year groups, 210 places in total. That school might actually have 182 children on roll, organised perhaps into seven classes with between 24 and 27 children in each class (depending on the actual number in each year group). There appears to be a high level of vacant places at this school (28 places, or 13% of capacity). However, the capacity of each year group remains 30, and if, say, 35 children of reception age are seeking places only 30 can normally be admitted. The other five children would need to be accommodated elsewhere, but what if the next school is in a similar position? This, in effect, is the issue that will confront the Council in the coming years: the number of children of reception age seeking school places will exceed the total reception capacity of the schools across the borough as detailed in the projected intakes outlined on page 7. As a consequence, additional resources will be required to increase school capacity in some areas to ensure that as far as possible parents will be able to get places for their children at their preferred schools.

#### The likely scale of the issue

4. The recent projections made by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) using January 2010 data suggested that the numbers of children admitted into Reception in the next five years would be:

<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
2303	2332	2357	2440	2439

5. Work already planned at a small number of schools will increase the total capacity of the reception year across all the primary schools in the borough to 2,344 places for September this year. It now seems likely that that the rise in reception numbers will be steeper than projected only a year ago. A total of 2,395 applications were received for admission to reception in September 2010 (not all of these from residents of the borough) and it has been very difficult to allocate parents preferred schools for September 2010. There were 96 parents who did not receive any of their 3 preferences. 30 of those parents have still not accepted a place in any primary school and are awaiting the outcome of their appeals before deciding on a school. In 2009 we were able to give 98.8% of parents at least one of their three preferences, this has dropped for 2010 to 96.3%. In particular there are areas in Stockton on Tees where schools have filled up, leaving no spaces for reception in September 2010. The areas concerned are Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Hartburn, Fairfield, Norton, Billingham and Stillington. 33 out of 60 schools are full. Some schools in these areas have agreed a higher intake for this year of admission (in line with the net capacity of the school) to enable parents to obtain a school without having to travel too far.
6. There are approximately 130 places remaining in primary schools across the Borough so we will be able to accommodate all pupils who need a place but it will not be the parents' preferred school. This situation does not give much flexibility for people moving into the area through the year and who want places for their children in reception.
7. The scale of the projected increase in pupil numbers does not at present match the scale of the decline that preceded it. From 1999 to 2009 numbers overall (excluding nursery children) declined from 17,361 to 14,446, a fall of 2,915 in ten years.

#### Options for increasing capacity

8. In the face of a decline of almost 3,000 in primary pupil numbers it was necessary to take action over the past decade to reduce the number of surplus school places. In total more than 1,700 places were removed. Structural changes to school organisation (school closures and amalgamations) cannot easily be reversed, nor can many of the physical alterations to school buildings such as the conversion of unused classrooms to ICT suites, and the creation of integrated Foundation Stage Units bringing nursery and reception classes together.
9. Some excess capacity was removed by re-designating unused classrooms for other purposes. The system of assessing the pupil capacity of a primary school – net capacity – is based on the space available in those rooms or spaces that are actually used as the full-time teaching base for a class of children. Classrooms or other spaces that are not currently used for teaching are not counted in the net capacity calculation. During the period of demographic decline some unused classrooms were re-designated for uses such as resource storage, staffrooms, specialist teaching rooms (e.g. science or music) or parents' rooms. Some of these spaces could return to use as classrooms in the future, increasing the pupil capacity of those schools.
10. In some schools there is scope to accommodate additional children by increasing the admission number. Because of the regulations that prohibit infant classes of more than 30 many primary schools have adopted an admission number of 30 or a multiple of 30, but some schools have admission numbers below 30 or around 40. These schools can be reviewed to identify potential additional capacity. In some cases it might be appropriate to enlarge a school with some additional classrooms to take its admission number up to 30 or 60.

11. Some schools in the borough have unused classrooms but already have an admission number of 30 or 60 and would not wish to increase it because of the class size regulations. One strategy used in previous population bulges has been to ask certain schools to take one additional class of reception children for one year only. The admission number for that year group would increase from 30 to 60 (or from 60 to 90) while all other year groups would remain at the previous capacity. That particular year group would carry one additional class of children as it moved through the seven years of primary school. This arrangement would require only one additional classroom (which some schools already have) and probably additional staff (as determined by the school governing body). One such school might be identified in each area of the borough where necessary. If no spare accommodation exists it would be necessary to consider the use of temporary buildings.
12. Schemes already planned under the Primary Capital Programme include replacing some schools with new buildings and carrying out major refurbishment at others. This provides an opportunity to increase capacity at some of those schools.
13. It is clear that planned housing developments will lead to a sustained increase in demand for school places in particular areas of the borough. It will be necessary to consider enlarging some existing schools and possibly providing one or more additional schools in those areas.
14. At present the following sources exist for capital funding :
  - Primary Capital Programme
  - Other DCSF Grants
  - Locally Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (DCSF grant funding for Voluntary Aided Schools)
  - Developer contributions through Section 106 agreements
  - Devolved formula Capital, allocated to individual schools

It might be envisaged that the nature and scale of these grants could change in the future.

#### Impact of rising primary numbers on secondary schools

15. Twelve secondary schools are to be replaced or remodelled between 2013 and 2016 under the first wave of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in the borough. Government requires that BSF planning for those schools is based on student numbers in September 2018 *as projected in 2008*. BSF capital funding allows for a margin of 5% vacant places in those schools. The projected increase in primary pupil numbers may begin to affect secondary schools from 2016 onwards (if we assume that primary numbers will continue to increase at the present rate). All BSF schools will be designed to allow easy extension if necessary to cope with increases in population or changes in parental preference.

Projected reception intakes by area. Figures are based on 2010 projections. Dates refer to September each year.

**All schools**

	Billingham		North Stockton		Central Stockton		Eaglescliffe		Yarm		Thornaby		Ingleby Barwick		Borough	
	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places
<b>2010</b>	447	455	566	552	424	435	137	159	107	134	303	279	319	330	2303	2344
<b>2011</b>	442	455	568	552	437	435	150	159	111	134	290	279	334	330	2332	2344
<b>2012</b>	445	455	577	552	444	435	149	159	113	134	294	279	335	330	2357	2344
<b>2013</b>	460	455	596	552	461	435	155	159	116	134	306	279	346	330	2440	2344
<b>2014</b>	457	455	596	552	463	435	152	159	116	134	307	279	348	330	2439	2344

**Non-RC schools**

	Billingham		North Stockton		Central Stockton		Eaglescliffe		Yarm		Thornaby		Ingleby Barwick		Borough	
	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places
<b>2010</b>	335	347	501	484	334	352	137	159	107	134	216	209	286	300	1916	1985
<b>2011</b>	326	347	495	484	344	352	150	159	111	134	199	209	301	300	1926	1985
<b>2012</b>	328	347	504	484	349	352	149	159	113	134	203	209	302	300	1948	1985
<b>2013</b>	339	347	520	484	363	352	155	159	116	134	213	209	311	300	2017	1985
<b>2014</b>	338	347	521	484	364	352	152	159	116	134	213	209	313	300	2017	1985

**RC schools**

	Billingham		North Stockton		Central Stockton		Eaglescliffe		Yarm		Thornaby		Ingleby Barwick		Borough	
	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places	pupils	places
<b>2010</b>	112	108	65	68	90	83	0	0	0	0	87	70	33	30	387	359
<b>2011</b>	116	108	73	68	93	83	0	0	0	0	91	70	33	30	406	359
<b>2012</b>	117	108	73	68	95	83	0	0	0	0	91	70	33	30	409	359
<b>2013</b>	121	108	76	68	98	83	0	0	0	0	93	70	35	30	423	359
<b>2014</b>	119	108	75	68	99	83	0	0	0	0	94	70	35	30	422	359

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

16. The financial implications will emerge as further work is undertaken on options to provide additional places and future grant allocations are confirmed.

### **Legal**

17. The legal basis for the provision of school places is identified in Paragraph 1.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

18. The position is categorised as medium to high risk as some doubts about the availability of resources exist.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

19. The provision of school places is fundamental to the objectives of the Children and Young People's Plan.

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

20. The options to be identified must ensure equal opportunity of admission to primary schools for all primary age children.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

21. Consultation with stakeholders including Dioceses, Schools and Members will take place as options emerge.

**Contact Officer:** Tony Beckwith  
**Post Title:** Head of Support Services  
**Telephone No:** 01642 527052  
**Email Address:** [tony.beckwith@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:tony.beckwith@stockton.gov.uk)

### Background Papers

School Organisation Plan 2009.

### Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

All Wards

### Property Implications

The options could have an impact on a number of Primary Schools across the Borough.