

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 12 October 2022
Executive – 19 October 2022

Subject: School Places

Report of: Director of Education and The Head of Access and Sufficiency

Summary

This report provides an overview of Manchester's current school age population and the numbers forecast for future academic years. It also details work previously undertaken and that which is planned to achieve a sufficiency of school places.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) To consider and comment on the information contained in this report.

The Executive is recommended to:-

- (1) Support the principle that High Needs Capital and Basic Need funding is used to fund the new special high school;
- (2) Agree that the Council undertakes consultation to gather views on the plans to develop a new special high school as a first step towards identifying a provider for the new school;
- (3) Delegate responsibility to the Director of Education in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services to:
 - a. progress the publication of a specification for the new school and invitations to sponsor based on the outcomes of the consultation.
 - b. Identify a preferred sponsor for the new school to be recommended to the DfE.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

All new development and expansions of existing schools are subject to environmental considerations and are designed to standards which promote zero-carbon. This is achieved through the design, planning and procurement processes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

This report highlights the ambition to develop a new secondary special school. To establish a new school local authorities must follow the Department for Education Free School Presumption guidance.

The presumption process is the main route by which local authorities establish new schools in order to meet the need for additional places, both in terms of basic need and the need for diverse provision within their areas.

As part of the planning process for new schools, local authorities must also undertake an assessment of the impact of the proposal, both on existing educational institutions locally and in terms of impact on particular groups of pupils from an equalities perspective.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The ongoing growth of the City's education sector will continue to create opportunities for employment in schools and those businesses which are involved in the supply of goods and transport services.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	A sufficiency of high-quality education provision which is easily accessible to families will provide future generations with the skills and behaviours to benefit from the City's economic success.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Schools are environments in which the diversity and talent of Manchester's children and young people is celebrated. Pupils are supported and encouraged to achieve their aspirations and maximise their potential.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Investment in modern, energy efficient and high-quality education infrastructure drives reductions in carbon across the estate of schools.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Investment in existing and new education provision will enhance the City's attractiveness to potential residents and contribute to the development of high-quality neighbourhoods.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The additional primary and secondary school places will be funded from Dedicated School Grant. The funding is based on pupil numbers and pupil characteristics. Start-up costs of new mainstream school's set-up through Local Authority free school presumption will be funded by Manchester's Dedicated Schools Grant growth fund.

The additional special school places will be funded through the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Investment in a new secondary special school will be resourced from the Unallocated High Needs Capital and Basic Need grants within the current Capital Programme

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

Not applicable

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of Manchester's current school age population and the numbers forecast for future academic years. It also details work previously undertaken and that which is planned to achieve a sufficiency of school places.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council has a legal duty to secure sufficient school places and achieves this through the commissioning of additional capacity in existing schools or by developing new schools using its basic need capital allocation and undertaking a free school presumption process or through the national free schools' route. This additional capacity is commissioned based on forecasts of future demand across primary, secondary, and specialist provision.

3.0 The School Age Population

- 3.1 Our Manchester has a focus on children having the best start in life and a positive and successful educational experience, attending a good or better school. Ensuring that residents have access to high quality schools within their local area is central to achieving the Our Manchester Strategy. Achieving a sufficiency of high-quality school places to meet need continues to require considerable investment, strategic planning and partnership with schools and school providers across the city, as the overall number of pupils continue to increase year on year and, increasingly, throughout each year.
- 3.2 The range of factors which influence demand for school places is extensive and complex. It includes birth rate, migration to and movement around the City, the impact of welfare reforms, new housing developments, and changing patterns of parental preference for schools, restrictions on the supply of school places outside the City e.g. neighbouring authorities, changing economic circumstances and successful regeneration.
- 3.3 The COVID19 pandemic, associated lockdowns, and restrictions of movement resulted in reduced in-year demand for school places. Since restrictions have ended there has been a significant increase in demand for school places by those arriving in the city. This is placing considerable pressure on secondary schools across the city and some primary settings in specific locations and year groups.
- 3.4 In addition to the growth in demand post pandemic, Manchester has also received a significant volume of international new arrivals including Afghan and Ukrainian nationals who arrived in the city as part of the Government's resettlement schemes requiring school places.
- 3.5 The school census (PLASC – Pupil Level Annual School Census) is a statutory data return to the Department for Education which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms and collects information about individual pupils. The annual school census completed in January 2022

showed 81,922 pupils attending Manchester Schools compared to 80,144 pupils in January 2021 – this snapshot shows growth of 1,778 pupils across the mainstream primary and secondary phases within a year.

- 3.6 Projections of anticipated pupil demand were submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) in July 2022 as part of the School Capacity Survey (SCAP). The forecasts will identify the projected number of places required to meet the Council’s sufficiency duty and determine its Basic Need funding allocation for future years.

Academic Year	Y0	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
2022-23	6415	6864	7074	7225	7147	7350	7322
2023-24	6301	6529	6900	7128	7298	7194	7434
2024-25	5722	6414	6563	6952	7200	7345	7277
2025-26	5710	5824	6447	6613	7022	7247	7430

Academic Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
2022-23	6890	6767	6646	6427	6331
2023-24	6985	6986	6831	6723	6471
2024-25	7066	7083	7050	6909	6771
2025-26	6900	7166	7149	7130	6958

- 3.7 As part of the overall growth there is ongoing demand for specialist places. Nationally, the actual numbers and proportion of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have increased with the overall percentage now at 4.0% of the whole school population. Within the Manchester school population, the January 2022 census showed that 4.7% of the school population have an EHCP (4,350 pupils). In Manchester the number of pupils attending special schools is growing and now stands at 2.2% of the total school population.

4.0 Approach to Securing Sufficient School Places

- 4.1 In response to the increasing demand for school places the Council continues to work with its partners to develop additional places in targeted areas, utilising capital funding provided by the Government to the Council for this purpose (known as Basic Need capital funding), as well as through access to some additional sources of funding where possible and the development of free schools through the Government’s free school scheme.
- 4.2 The development of new schools by a local authority requires that the DfE free school presumption process is undertaken. The presumption process is the main route by which local authorities establish new schools in order to meet the need for additional places, both in terms of basic need and the need for diverse provision within their areas.

- 4.3 Local authorities are responsible for determining the specification for the new school and will fund and deliver the site and buildings through its Basic Need Funding allocation, and work with the approved sponsor to establish the school. All new schools established through the presumption process are classified as free schools. This reflects the fact that ‘free school’ is the department’s term for any new provision academy. ‘Academy’ is the legal term for state-funded schools that are independent of local authority control and receive their funding directly from the government.
- 4.4 The presumption process requires local authorities to seek proposals to establish a free school where they have identified the need for a new school in their area. The process is broadly outlined as follows:

Step	Description
Local authority consultation	Stakeholder views gathered on proposed new school and used to inform specification Impact and equalities assessment Identify impact of proposed new school on existing educational institutions and pupils
School specification	Development of specification to enable proposers to understand the needs of the local authority and submit the strongest proposal possible
Seeking proposals	Marketing of the presumption competition as widely as possible to ensure that the broadest possible range of groups or organisations that might be interested in establishing the new school are aware of the opportunity to do so and have sufficient time to develop proposals
Assessing proposals	Submitted proposals to be assessed and scored by the local authority
Local authority recommendation	Local authorities should provide their assessments of each application to the Secretary of State at the earliest opportunity, including the scoring given for each proposal. This assessment will enable the RSC, on behalf of the Secretary of State, to decide on the most suitable proposer to take forward the new free school.

- 4.5 In recent years the Council has undertaken four successful free school presumptions which led to the establishment of three new secondary schools and one new primary. The most recent being a new secondary school in Longsight Ward known as Co-op Academy Belle View which opened in September 2021. New schools established through the Free School Presumption route will be expected to work to local admission arrangements and contribute to the City’s priorities for its children and young people.

5.0 Actions to Secure Sufficient School Places

Primary Phase

- 5.1 The continued attractiveness of the city centre as a place to live and work and ongoing residential growth is expected to result in additional demand for primary school places as more residents choose to remain in the area when starting a family.

- 5.2 In response to this forecast demand the Council is working with Renaker Build to establish a new primary school as part of the Crown Street phase 2 development. The school will provide 210 places for primary age children along with a 26-place nursery. It will be funded by S106 and basic need capital and is expected to open in 2024. A free school presumption has been completed with The Laurus Trust appointed as operator.
- 5.3 Olive School - a centrally funded free school - remains in the pipeline and is expected to open in 2024 at a site in the Cheetham area. The School will be part of the Star Academies Trust and offer a total of 420 places.

Secondary Phase

- 5.4 Historical growth of primary cohorts is continuing to drive increased demand for places at secondary schools along with new arrivals to the city. In response to this demand the Council commissioned a significant programme of expansions and new schools funded from Basic Need capital and worked with the DfE to secure the delivery of centrally funded free schools.

School	Age Range	Delivery Route	Opened	Places
Dean Trust	11-16	MCC Free School	2015	1200
MEA Central	11-16	MCC Free School	2016	1050
Eden Boys Leadership Academy	11-18	DfE Free School	2017	600
Eden Girls Leadership Academy	11-18	DfE Free School	2017	600
CHS South	11-16	DfE Free School	2018	1200
Co-op Academy Manchester	11-16	MCC Expansion	2018	720
Didsbury High School	11-18	DfE Free School	2019	1050
Dean Trust	11-16	MCC Expansion	2020	150
Co-op Academy Belle Vue	11-16	MCC Free School	2021	1200
Our Lady's RC High School	11-16	MCC Expansion	2022	150
Dixons Brooklands Academy	11-16	MCC Bulge Class	2022	30
Manchester Enterprise Academy	11-16	MCC Bulge Class	2022	60
St Paul's RC High School	11-16	MCC Bulge Class	2022	15

- 5.5 A further two pipeline secondary schools are planned to open and will be delivered by the DfE as part of the central free school programme. Dixons Newall Green Academy will open in 2023 and is set to provide a total of 700 places at the former site of Newall Green Academy in Baguley. The Dean Trust will open a new school in 2027 providing 1050 places at a site in Newton Heath.

- 5.6 Work is currently being undertaken to identify further opportunities for creating additional places in secondary schools in areas where there is significant in-year demand.

Special Schools

- 5.7 There are currently 15 Special schools established in the City organised across primary and secondary. In addition, 20 schools have resourced provision (RP) for between 7 and 15 children at each site in excess of their mainstream cohorts. Resourced provision is setup in dedicated environments within the school's accommodation.
- 5.8 Special schools and resourced provision in Manchester are operating at or close to capacity with few options remaining to create additional places in existing accommodation. Data shows that there is continuing demand which correlates with growth in the City's population and mainstream pupil cohort as well as earlier identification of children who will require specialist provision. Meeting the needs of this vulnerable cohort will require that Specialist provision is organised effectively and efficiently across the City.
- 5.9 A significant number of council commissioned expansions have taken place to increase capacity within the specialist sector. In addition, the DfE have delivered one new primary special school in the north of the city. Details of capacity increases are noted in the following table.

School	Age Range	Delivery Route	Opened	Places
Prospect House	3-11	DfE Free School	2020	100
North Ridge High School	16-18	MCC Expansion	2021	36
Grange	4-19	MCC Expansion	2021	30
Camberwell Park	2-11	MCC Expansion	2021	80
Southern Cross (Roundwood site)	9-16	MCC Expansion	2021	67
Southern Cross (Castlefield site)	9-16	MCC Expansion	2021	50
The Barlow RC High School (Resourced Provision)	11-16	MCC Expansion	2022	16
The Birches	2-11	MCC Expansion	2022	8
Lancasterian	3-16	MCC Expansion	2022	26
Rodney House	4-11	MCC Expansion	2022	10
Gorton Primary (Resourced Provision)	3-11	MCC Expansion	2022	18
Melland High School	11-19	MCC Expansion	2023	64
Pioneer House	11-19	MCC Expansion	2024	40
William Hulme's Grammar School	3-18	MCC Expansion	2024	30

(Resourced Provision)				
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- 5.10 Earlier this year the DfE announced a new central free school round for local authorities to propose new special schools. These new schools will be constructed by the DfE and operated by multi academy trusts subject to completion of a competitive tender processes. Manchester has submitted two proposals which, if successful, would secure additional secondary specialist capacity totalling 240 places. The DfE will announce successful applications in early 2023 with new schools expected to open in 2025.
- 5.11 Considering the ongoing high levels of demand for specialist provision across the City it is anticipated that further investment will be required to meet growth in the cohort of children with an EHCP who require places in resourced provision or special schools now and in the future. Work has been undertaken by Capital Programmes and Procurement to identify opportunities for creating additional places in new settings.
- 5.12 It is therefore proposed that a new secondary special school will be brought forward as a local authority presumption at a site located in Miles Platting. The school is expected to provide 150 places for pupils with an EHCP and will open in 2025. This new investment will be resourced from the High Needs Capital and Basic Need grants.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Local Authority has very strong partnerships with all schools and Multi Academy Trusts that work in the City. Through this collaboration, a significant number of new school places have been created as both expansions of existing schools and the development of new schools to meet demand across the City. However, projections show that there continues to be a need for additional places across the secondary school sector and recent pressures have been exacerbated by the DfE's decision to close Newall Green secondary School in 2019, pressure on secondary places in neighbouring Local Authorities, delays in DfE progressing an approved secondary free school as well as a growing child population in the City. The Local authority will continue to work with Multi Academy Trust and school leaders in the City to explore options for creating additional secondary school places.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Children and Young People' Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:-
- (1) To consider and comment on the information contained in this report.
- 7.2 The Executive is recommended to:-
- (1) Support the principle that High Needs Capital and Basic Need funding is used to fund the new special high school;

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