

Schools Forum Agenda
Monday 14 June 2021

Time: 9.00am
Place: Virtual (Zoom)
Chair: Jolyon Roberts
Vice Chair: Theresa Staunton

Invited:

Headteachers

Academy Representatives: Jolyon Roberts, Chris Andrew, Soumick Dey, Rob Veale, Roger Capham, Tyrone Myton, Neil Ferrigan, Rob Hitch
Nursery Schools: Jaqi Stephenson, Jane Charman
Primary Schools: Vivienne Esparon, Leonore Fernandes
Secondary Schools: Patrick Shields, Nathan Walters
Special Schools: Nicholas Dry, Lorraine Slee
PRUs: Jenny Adamson, Ian Walters

Governors

Nursery:

Primary Schools: Dave Harvey, Keran Currie
Secondary Schools:

Non Schools

Post 16: Kevin Standish
EY providers: Theresa Staunton, Christine Marchant
Southwark CofE Diocese: Josephine Copeland
Southwark RC Diocese: Linda O'Callaghan
Trade Union: Dave Winters, Joe Flynn
Cllr Majority: Group Rep: Joy Prince
Cllr Minority: Group Rep: Helen Redfern

Observers

Councillors: Alisa Flemming, Margaret Bird and Shafi Khan
ESFA: Murial Rant
General: Joe Harrison
LBC: Shelley Davies, Orlagh Guarnori, Kathy Roberts, Sarah Bailey, Kate Bingham

Clerk: Heather Beck/Geraldine Truss

VOTING GUIDANCE

School members - Green	Academy members - Yellow	Non- school members - Pink
<p>Only primary representatives (reps) can vote on primary school de-delegation</p> <p>Only Secondary school reps can vote on secondary school de-delegation</p>	<p>No voting on de-delegation</p> <p>All academies members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Observers – Mauve cards</u></p>	<p>No voting on de-delegation</p> <p>Only PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula</p> <p>All non- school members can vote on any other Schools Forum business</p>

All schools members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula

Croydon Council website Link to Schools Forum:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/statnotice-consult/croydon-schools-forum>

Item	Agenda Items	Lead	Time
1.	Minutes and actions from last meeting (26 April Virtual meeting via Zoom)	Jolyon Roberts	9.00 – 9.05
2.	Proposed use of schools block reserves funds	Shelley Davies/ Orlagh Guarnori	9.05 – 9.10
3.	Interim Key Stage 4 educational provision for in-year admissions	Ashana Graham	9.10 – 9.20
4.	School Place Planning & Admissions a) Overview of primary school vacancies in Croydon b) Overview of secondary school vacancies in Croydon c) Summary page	Denise Bushay	9.20 – 9.40
5.	Update from Schools Forum Work Groups (for information) a) Early Years b) Schools Block c) High Needs	Theresa Staunton Patrick Shields Nick Dry	9.40 – 9.50
6.	Any Other Business	All	9.50 – 10.00

Meeting dates for 2020/21, Monday from 9am – 12noon:

5 October 2020, 9 November 2020, 7 December 2020, 18 January 2021(rescheduled)
8 February 2021 (cancelled), 8 March 2021 (cancelled), 26 April 2021, 14 June 2021, 12 July 2021

Meeting dates for 2021/22, Monday from 9am – 12noon:

4 October 2021, 8 November 2021, 6 December 2021, 17 January 2022
7 March 2022, 13 June 2022, 11 July 2022

Item	12 July 2021	Lead
1.	SRMA verbal update	Orlagh Guarnori
2.	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn report 2020/21 – paper report	Orlagh Guarnori
3.	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget report 2021/22 – paper report	Orlagh Guarnori
4.	School Test Programme	Simon Maddock/ David Phillips
Item	4 October 2021	Lead
1.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Shelley Davies
2.	Chair and Vice Chair of All sub groups appointed by Schools Forum	Jolyon Roberts
3.	Terms of Reference of Schools Forum Work Groups	Work Group Chairs
4.	Ashburton PFI	Orlagh Guarnori
5.	DSG Management Plan, Progress Report (Summer Term / Q2 2021/22)	Orlagh Guarnori
Item	8 November 2021	Lead
Item	6 December 2021	Lead
1.	DSG Management Plan, Progress Report (Q2 2021/22)	Orlagh Guarnori
Item	17 January 2022	Lead
1..	DSG Management Plan, Progress Report (Autumn Term / Q3 2021/22)	Orlagh Guarnori
Item	7 March 2022	Lead

1.	DSG Management Plan, Progress Report (Q3 2021/22)	Orlagh Guarnori
2.	Progress Report – Phase 1 and Phase 2 Expansion of the Locality SEND Support Project	Mark Southworth
Item	13 June 2022	Lead
1.	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn report 2021/22 – paper report	Orlagh Guarnori
2.	2 year project - drop in numbers regarding birth-rate – report update?	Ashana Graham
Item	11 July 2022	Lead

STANDING ITEM FOR JAN – Croydon Recovery Plan

STANDING ITEM FOR OCT – Election of Chair and Vice Chair

STANDING ITEM FOR OCT – Chair and Vice Chair of All sub groups to be appointed by Schools Forum

STANDING ITEM FOR OCT - All sub groups to share revised Terms of Reference and confirm Chair/Vice Chair details

STANDING ITEM FOR OCT- Ashburton PFI

STANDING ITEM FOR JUNE – DSG Year-end Outturn report

SF Work Groups Meeting Dates

Early Years, Tuesday 10am – 12pm: Chair is Theresa Staunton, Vice Chair is Chris Marchant
29 September 2020; 3 November 2020; 1 December 2020; 12 January 2021; 23 February 2021;
25 May 2021; 6 July 2021

Meeting dates for 2021/22

28 September 2021, 2 November 2021, 30 November 2021, 11 January 2022, 22 February 2022,
24 May 2022, 5 July 2022

High Needs, Wednesday 10am – 12pm: Chair is Nicholas Dry, Vice Chair – Rob Veale
23 September 2020 (rescheduled); 18 November 2020; 6 January 2021; 3 March 2021 (additional
meeting), 19 May 2021; 23 June 2021

Meeting dates for 2021/22

22 September 2021, 19 October 2021, 17 November 2021, 12 January 2022, 2 March 2022,
5 May 2022, 22 June 2022

Schools Block: Tuesday 10am – 12pm: Interim Chair is Patrick Shields, Vice Chair – Sharon
Oliver

15 September 2020; 13 October 2020; 17 November 2020; 9 February 2021; 11 May 2021;
29 June 2021

Meeting dates for 2021/22

14 September 2021, 12 October 2021, 23 November 2021, 8 February 2022, 11 May 2022,
28 June 2022

Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 26 April 2021 Virtual (via Zoom)

Members Present:

Nicholas Dry	Jenny Adamson
Patrick Shields	Rob Veale
Dave Winters	Lorraine Slee
Neil Ferrigan	Roger Capham
Tyrone Myton	Joe Flynn
Vivienne Esparon	Keran Currie
Jaqi Stevenson	Dave Harvey
Nathan Walters	Leonore Fernandes
Kevin Standish	Linda O'Callaghan
Cllr Joy Prince	Cllr Helen Redfern
Jane Charman	Soumick Dey
Josephine Copeland	

Observers Present:

Cllr Shafi Khan	Shelley Davies
Cllr Margaret Bird	Orlagh Guarnori
Kathy Roberts	Kate Bingham
Emma Watson	Debbie Jones

Apologies: Rob Hitch, Zoe Harris

Chair: Jolyon Roberts
Vice Chair: Theresa Staunton

Clerk: Heather Beck/Geraldine Truss

	Declaration of Interest There were none.	
	<p>As the Chair was experiencing technical difficulties joining the meeting the Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Emma Watson, School Business Manager, Winterbourne Junior Girls attended as an observer;- Leonore Fernandes, Headteacher, the Federation of St Joseph's Catholic Junior, Infant and Nursery as a new member to the Schools Forum;- Debbie Jones, Executive Director Children Families and Education and is new to Schools Forum. <p>The meeting was quorate.</p>	

1:	<p>Minutes and actions from the last meeting (7 December Virtual Meeting – Zoom)</p> <p><u>Matters arising from the minutes</u></p> <p>Page 2, Action 1 - Beneficiaries of Ashburton PFI – Ashburton Services Limited, Annual Report & Financial Statements 31 March 2020 documents are attached at the end of School Forum papers.</p> <p>Page 3, Action 2 – Devise a strategy at POST MEET</p> <p>Dave Harvey asked for an update on the above actions.</p> <p>Theresa Staunton apologised for the actions being overlooked and said an update would be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>Kate Bingham to update Forum at the next meeting on the 2 actions raised by Dave Harvey ACTION</p> <p>Dave Winters commented on the extensive and detailed minutes, in particular the discussion that was had about the sad lack of knowledge that councillors appeared to have about the education service in Croydon. He felt that every councillor in the borough should read the minutes so they are put in the picture about how serious the situation is in the borough, how conscientious and hardworking members of Forum are in trying to ensure that the education service in the borough is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Theresa Staunton said that training had been organised for the councillors and that Jolyon Roberts had attended a GPAC meeting to highlight this fact to councillors. Orlagh Guarnori has also organised training for councillors and the Select Committees around the budget and the way that Forum works. The minutes are published so hopefully councillors will read them.</p> <p>Shelley Davies (SD) followed up on Theresa Staunton's response and said that DSG training has been delivered to the Scrutiny Committee, The Conservative Group, the Labour Group and GPAC. The training is providing a much wider knowledge of the DSG.</p> <p>Dave Harvey (DH) referred to Page 9, a) '... Lisa Taylor speaks about 'overspending DSG particularly the High Needs....'</p> <p>Q1: DH asked whether Lisa Taylor clarified the overspend and if she is now acknowledging the that Forum have been assiduous in monitoring every aspect but that the High Needs block deficit is beyond our control, basically because of government control;</p> <p>A1: SD informed Schools Forum that Lisa Taylor had left Croydon council and that there is a new Director of Finance. The council have been very clear during training sessions, in Scrutiny, Cabinet and GPAC that the deficit is in the High Needs area. There is a paper on today's agenda - Dedicated Schools Grant</p>	<p>Kate Bingham/ Jolyon Roberts</p>
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	<p>(DSG) Management Plan which outlines how we will work spending within our means within the High Needs budget.</p> <p>All other actions have been completed and the minutes approved following amendments above.</p>	
2:	<p>Schools Forum membership</p> <p>Nick Dry's membership has come to an end. Theresa Staunton said it had been discussed in PRE MEET that the LA would allow Nick Dry to remain on Schools Forum until end of the academic year.</p> <p>Nick Dry informed Forum that he is semi-retiring and will be leaving his post at the end of August 2021 but is happy to carry on attending the remaining meetings. He is the Chair of the High Needs Working Group and is now looking for Rob Veale, Vice Chair to take over in September 2021. If Schools Forum agree for him to remain as a member and Chair of High Needs group he would be happy to do a handover with Rob Veale before September. It would also mean that Schools Forum will have to look at the Special Schools Representative role for September.</p> <p>Forum members were unanimous in their approval of Nick Dry remaining in post.</p>	
3:	<p>Schools Forum DfE guidance update</p> <p>This note from the Education & Skills Funding Agency is to advise that Regulations 2021 amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable Schools' Forum meetings to be held remotely.</p> <p>This has been approved by Forum.</p>	
4:	<p>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Management Plan – April 2021</p> <p>a) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Management Plan</p> <p>Kate Bingham (KB) and Shelley Davies (SD) presented this paper</p> <p>SD said as this paper has been discussed in length in previous Schools Forums she will give an update of where we are in the process. This paper relates to the High Needs deficit. Forum members will be aware that the LA was required to submit a recovery plan which was approved 18 months ago by the DfE. The plan discussed how the LA would be working to spend the in-year budget within the year, not have a deficit budget and was not in relation to the cumulative deficit.</p> <p>The LA was then asked to deliver a second recovery plan and this outlined how the repayment of the cumulative deficit would happen.</p>	

The plan was submitted to the DfE and the pandemic happened so a response did not come back from the DfE.

All LAs who have over 5% of the High Needs budget deficit have to submit a Management Plan. This paper outlines what the LA will do within the Management Plan so there is no deficit in-year.

The paper shows that the deficit will remain at the end of 2022/23 but that the LA are looking at bringing the expenditure in line in the year 2023/24. The recovery of the cumulative deficit will follow in future years. This might best be described as Recovery Plans 1 and 2. The Management Plan has reverted in essence to Recovery Plan 1 where it was outlined how the LA would spend within its means and not concentrate on the cumulative recovery.

The paper illustrates that the deficit goes up slightly and then goes down dramatically. The LAs overall deficit is moving in the right direction with overall deficit of £14.5m and an overspend this year at Quarter 4 was £4.4m which is approximately more than £1m less than in previous years. The LA has a number of things it will undertake namely:

- Inclusion Funding which is front loading a budget into the LAs mainstream schools to meet the needs of children earlier;
- much earlier; provision within the LA developing the Post 16 Pathways with Croydon College;
- the opening of Addington Valley Academy and LA being able to educate more of the its children within the borough.

A large percentage of the LAs High Needs budget goes on educating children outside of the borough. With Addington Valley Academy opening, the increase of spaces in some special schools and the Pathways Project, the LA will be able to reduce its spend in these areas as children will be educated within the borough.

This is not just about money but about supporting children where the LA know it is best for them to be educated which is in the borough the children live. As well as looking at more children being educated in mainstream schools, through that Inclusion Funding project, it is to enable the LA to meet the needs of the children much earlier without going through the 20 week process. There is a lot of detail within the plan.

The Management Plan is taking us back to where the LA were at the end of the first recovery plan, looking at how best to spend within its means, bringing back expenditure and being realistic that this will not be until 2023/24. The children currently being educated outside the borough will have to stay at their current school until they go through the education system and then look at the impact of the places at Addington Valley Academy, compared to the costs of children being placed in independent schools outside the borough.

The Management Plan sets a structure to be completed in a certain way and is based very much on pupil projection within the LA, based on pupils currently in the borough. There are risks to this as there are risks to all of the LAs budgets e.g. children coming into the borough with special educational needs and disabilities, that will be educated in special schools, birth of children within the borough. These risks are outlined in the paper on Page 8, Item 7.

What is different from 18 months ago, is the governance of SEND. There is Board that sits at the top of the governance structure and has membership from lead members, parent representatives, councillors, children social care and health professionals. This meeting is chaired by Debbie Jones, Executive Director Children Families and Education. There is also Forum and each of the five delivery groups who all provide challenge and oversight of the DSG Management Plan.

The LA now have colleagues across both health and children social care as part of the conversation. It is really important to have this tri-party conversation going on through our governance structure.

To reassure Schools Forum that our focus is on finance there are two things to look at; one is improving the outcomes for our children with special education needs and disabilities and making sure there is a strong path way for them and strong provision within the LA. The other is that the LA have to keep a close eye on the finances to ensure it does what it said and will be held to account about this.

A new SEN Finance Board has been set up and the chair or vice chair of the High Needs Working group have been invited to join this board along with SB and colleagues from finance. Detailed conversations with be held within the meeting in relation to how well the LA is meeting the KPIs and milestones set through the Management Plan. Members from this board are invited to attend the GPAC committee where we will be going through the same things as with you, such as how well are we doing in relation to the KPIs and how well we are meeting those milestones in relation to the finance within the Management Plan. There is a DfE advisor working closely with OG in the finance team who is also doing the support and challenge in relation to the plan.

The strategy is not only about finance but about outcomes. There is already impact on the strategy and if you compare Quarter 4 of last year the LA is making inroads into the in-year deficit, not the cumulative.

Q1: Neil Ferrigan asked why 2 options were put forward –1) keep it in order or 2) do nothing, yet he felt Option 1 would be the sensible one;

A1: SD said it is important to put 'do nothing' in as an option so the impact of doing nothing can be seen. The DfE advises the LA to

put in the do nothing option. It is important for Forum to see the impact of what doing nothing could entail;

Q2: Neil Ferrigan pointed out that in Item 4a, headed Financial, on line 21 it shows three figures for the High Needs block – outturn, mitigated budget and unmitigated forecast for 2020/21. He asked if these figures were totals? He said Table 2 gave two overall figures of the High Needs current budget £61, 240k and the proposed budget £67,644k, the figures in Table 2 did not match up with any of the figures covering that period and asked for comment;

A2: OG said that Item 4a is the detail behind the paper already looked at and that the table in the paper is a proposed High Needs budget, based on indicative allocation from the DfE. As per the DfE regulations the LA must set a balanced budget and that the £67,644k is part of the DfE allocation. Table 3 sets out how the LA proposes this allocation will be spent.

OG said that the management plan the table talks about mitigated and unmitigated. As per the template, the DfE asks the LA to set out what would happen if it did not have a management plan or did/ did not generate the savings, hence the two columns.

Q3: Neil Ferrigan asked could it be expected to see the variations next year in those terms, in other words they will not marry up;

A3: OG said the LA will always have a difference of what the actuals would be verses what the budget would be and said as an LA we must produce a balanced budget. The actuals on outturn will show the variations and that is why we see the increase spend but year on year the LA is looking to bring that spend back in line with what the budget is e.g. living within our means;

Q4: Dave Harvey welcomed this paper and said it is a step in the right direction. For many years there have been attempts to reduce the number of pupils educated in independent provision outside of Croydon. There are two big figures, Croydon special schools at £20m and Pre & Post 16 independent at £11m. Could Forum be informed at a future meeting on how many pupils' the £20m figure given represents and how many pupils the £11m figure represents? He would be prepared to 'bet his house' that there is not twice as many and that the ratio is not 2:1 but more like 4/5/6:1 in terms of Croydon special schools as opposed to independent provision. This is important as it is about places and it is vital that when Addington Valley Academy is established fulltime next September, those places are filled so that we do not see the leakage of pupils outside the borough to very expensive alternative provisions. What are the head counts, individual pupils and the number of Croydon children involved in this budget;

Nick Dry informed Forum that there is a SEN data dashboard which the LA has put together and that this is a very comprehensive illustration of all the data relating to SEN and High Needs spending. The dashboard will hold the information that Dave Harvey has

requested. The Dash Board shows about 70% of the population in mainstream with EHCPs as well, this information is absolutely right that proportionately the level of individual costs of those places is going to be much higher and that £11m represents quite a small proportion of the EHCP population but is extremely costly. The strategy is to keep children in mainstream, more children in borough special schools and reduce the number of children from going out of borough. The LA has done a good job in pulling this data together and it might be possible to share this at a Schools Forum.

A4: Share SEN Data as a paper with Schools Forum members.

ACTION

Kathy Roberts said that data is monitored in real time and that it is part of helping plan the strategy for those high cost independent placements.

Dave Winters thanked SD for the comprehensive summary of the paper and the detail that OG provided. The problem facing most local education authorities in the country is the underfunding of the High Needs block. The LA have not shied away from the extent of the problem we face. He only wishes the government did not shy away from the problem being created throughout the country because of underfunding.

Debbie Jones said she is observing her first Schools Forum meeting in Croydon and understands the challenges being faced and wanted the opportunity to address the paper discussed. She has sat through a number of other Schools Forums and certainly the discussions around the High Needs funding block is similar here as they are everywhere else. What is different here in Croydon regarding the paper discussed earlier, is the approach taken which is being very proactive. The Schools Forum and SD team have done a large amount of work and the information made available through the data is really excellent and not necessarily replicated everywhere else. The pressures that Dave Winters referred to are experienced elsewhere and a lot of pressure is put on the DfE and on government generally around these pressures. The reality is the current review that is ongoing may or may not provide us with some leeway but in the meantime, we are under huge pressure to achieve what this plan is trying to accomplish. This is a robust plan, whatever happens that pressure will continue and the direction which is really well set out in the paper is one which we should be moving on for all the right reasons.

Those in favour = 13

Abstention = 3

Kathy Roberts

5:	<p>Individual Schools Budgets (ISB) 2021-2022</p> <p>a) Appendix A – Individual Schools Budgets (ISB) allocations 2021-2022</p> <p>Orlugh Guarnori (OG) presented this paper</p> <p>This paper is a summary of the budget noted back in November 2020 by the Schools Forum and has been reviewed and voted on the formula factors that Croydon schools would use for 2021/2022 for the schools budget. The paper sets out these factors and the summary shows the allocation.</p> <p>Schools all received their ISB budgets by the 26 February 2021 as noted in Appendix A.</p> <p>Table 1 sets out the provisional allocation for 2021/2022. There was a £16m increase which included the teachers' pension and teacher pay grants which was approximately £13m. The formula factors are set out below in Section 3 and the rates used following on from the votes in November. The paper then sets out each of the tables showing the amount going into each of the factors.</p> <p>The MFG is moving in the right direction this year for 2021/2022. It is now £87k distributed through MFG which means the bulk is being distributed more fairly across the pupils.</p> <p>The Appendices on Page 51 are a summary of all the schools with their numbers on roll and their entitlement. We include the notional SEN budget figure which appears on the schools ISB. We feel this is important as the initial funding for pupils with SEN comes through this tranche.</p> <p>The year on year percentage change has been driven by pupil numbers. Forum members will notice that Beulah Juniors has had a decrease in pupil numbers, the other percentage changes (where the year on year amount decreases) have been as a result of schools having had significant increase. The lump sum amount is a set amount - 30 pupils sharing across that, 60 pupils sharing that percentage is reduced.</p>	
6:	<p>Pupil Premium Grant – census date change impact</p> <p>Orlugh Guarnori (OG) presented this paper</p> <p>The background of the paper shows that maintained schools in England get additional funding for their Pupil Premium (PP) to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The evidence has shown that the deprivation factor is driving that and this looks at Free School meals (FGM) and Free School Meals 6 (FGM6). When PPG is reviewed for April 2021 onwards the data census date from October 2020 will be looked at rather than the January census data. Within</p>	

that census data they are looking at pupils who receive FGM and FGM6.

Section 2 shows the impact that has. The census data has been looked at and broken down over the periods from autumn 2019 through to spring 2021. We can see in the fifth column across the movement, the increase in the number of eligible pupils for FSM from autumn 2020 to spring 2021. Bigger increases from spring 2021 through to autumn 2020 could be attributed to Covid-19.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the number of eligible pupils by primary school, secondary school, PRUs, special schools.

Table 4 illustrates the financial impact, assuming the standard rate of PPG which is £1,345 for primary and £995 for secondary. Overall this shows the potential lost grant income for primary schools and secondary schools as a result of the changes.

Q1: Neil Ferrigan asked is there a figure of who has claimed FSM and an understanding of those who have not claimed. Not all parents claim, do we know the percentage of parents who have claimed for FSM and those who have not?;

A1: OG said her colleagues in education may be able to help with that. This paper is purely taking the census data from January and relying on what schools have completed and what parents have signed up for. This does not highlight the parents who have not signed up for FSM for their children;

Vivienne Esparon said schools do their utmost to ensure they capture all those parents and the school keeps sending them the links to check allowing parents to take some responsibility themselves. It is also knowing your parents really well.

Chris Andrew said his school are seeing fewer parents who in the past have not claimed. Due to the circumstances they are in now they cannot avoid the need to make a claim. There are significant numbers of parents now claiming and it is also worth noting that the effect of the changes highlighted in this item is a net loss to schools of about £120m nationally which is a scandal. The potential lost grant income for Croydon was £792k and this is set out in Table 4.

Q2: Theresa Staunton asked why the government had changed the date for the collection of census data;

A2: OG said the government had not given a clear steer as to why this has been done;

Q3: Theresa Staunton asked why there was such a big jump from October to January. Was it just the take up of places in the schools;

A3: Chris Andrew said the effects of Covid-19 are being felt. There have been lots of parents made redundant. Also a lot of mobility where his school is losing lots of children to the outer reaches of Surrey and Kent and gaining children from Lambeth and

	<p>Wandsworth. It is slightly about changing demographics and parental situations. As to why the government have done this is very clear and said it is in line with savings which need to be made but conveniently spending funding on IT hubs which no one needs.</p> <p>Dave Winters said what we have seen in the figures and what we have heard in the discussions is a sad reflection on the level of child poverty within the country. He said it is quite revealing the extent of the increase in the claims for FSM will put additional pressures on school budgets, making it even more difficult for head teachers to manage their schools. This is a reflection of a national problem. He is pleased that the Welsh government has acknowledged that they need to fund school meals in a way that the government in Westminster does not seem able to appreciate or commit itself to.</p> <p>Theresa Staunton said this is a paper to note and will have a big impact, particularly on primary schools.</p>	
7:	<p>Early Years Budget 2021/2022</p> <p>Orlagh Guarnori (OG) presented this paper</p> <p>Table 1 sets out the indicative allocation the budget for early years for 2020/21 including the 5% top slice, which has a 95% pass through rate for the budget for the Early Years.</p> <p>Table 2 talks about the movement in the rates which is a 6p movement across the two sections and an 8p increase in the hourly rate for 2 year old entitlement.</p> <p>Part 3 discusses the supplementary funding provided to maintained nursery schools. In the indicative allocation the budget has remained the same as the prior year, however it is expected this will be reduced once the final allocation is announced. This could potentially be as much as 20% and this is because the funding is based on the actual number of pupils in the setting.</p> <p>The paper looks to Forum to agree the methodology rather than the amount. There are two options and Table 4 sets out the 5 maintained nurseries and how much each would receive under Option 1. Option 2 is to distribute based on the number of funded children as per the census data, meaning the number of pupils rather than the forecast number. The actual funding amount will be based on per pupil numbers which is the census numbers in Column 4 in the table.</p> <p>The forecast numbers are included so there is a reference to what schools submit. At the start of the financial year schools submit what they forecast their numbers to be. This is what the funding is based on. The summer term and spring term adjustments are made once the actuals are received.</p>	

The funding will be distributed and is a difficult conversation within the early years working group which is why this paper has returned to Schools Forum.

Based on the allocations of Option 1 and Option 2, there is a significant difference in the amount that some schools receive.

The amounts in Table 4 are not a guarantee of what the schools will receive only an indicative allocation of this.

Q1: Teresa Staunton asked if Option 2 is based on Column 4 and not on Column 3 which is the information taken from the census;

A1: OG said yes and that it should be based on the per pupil numbers census and not on per pupil numbers forecast.

Theresa Staunton said the supplement has been in place since the introduction of Early Years funding formula. Until last year it was allocated as an equal amount among the 5 nursery schools. Last year it was voted on by the Schools Forum to go to head count, so it was distributed on the number of children each setting had rather than the forecast.

A decision is being looked for now, on how to distribute the funding, taking into account that the 5 nursery schools have the same statutory duties or to distribute the funding on the number of children attending each setting.

Last year the Spring 2020 the forecast was 529 but on census we had 372 children and the money received was based on this. This year the forecast is 427 but census indicates 294 children. We have a £536,405 indicative budget which will reduce by 20% and that budget needs to be distributed and it is the distribution that we are looking at.

Q2: Neil Ferrigan asked if a school like Tunstall forecast 93 but does not hit the number, where does that clawback money go back to. Did it go back to another school to keep within a ring-fenced budget?;

A2: Theresa Staunton said there are 2 points to that - the MNS budget is a set budget for all 5 nursery schools and then distributed on the number of children. The children may have gone elsewhere and then will not be part of the MNS numbers and will not get funding for them. Each nursery school adds up and then distributes. Last year if the nursery school had 65 pupils they got funded on that. Previously the distributed total amount has been divided between all 5 nursery schools as indicated in Column 1;

Q3: Nick Dry asked what the initial purpose of the supplementary funding is? Why is there a change from the rationale from last year back to the flat rate approach?;

A3: Theresa Staunton said it is not a change in rationale. How it is distributed always come to Schools Forum for a decision. If there is no agreement within the Early Years Working group then both

	<p>options are brought to Schools Forum. Maintained nursery schools do not get a lump sum and this additional funding is to use in exchange of this, until the way they are funded changes and becomes equal to all.</p> <p>OG said that maintained nursery schools have to have a Headteacher as part of their status and do not get any additional funding, other than the hourly rate, this fund is a way of sustaining this. There is discussion within government for the long term plans for maintained nurseries school. Government have noted the importance of them but have yet to get any clear guidance out on how they will be funded going forward.</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts joined the meeting and took over as Chair.</p> <p>Jaqi Stevenson said she thought one key thing is to decide today. As Theresa Staunton said up till last year it was divided by a 5 way equal split. Last year the fairer decision was to do it in line with pupil numbers. The really unsettling thing for maintained nursery schools is to keep revisiting this on an annual basis. If it could be determined by Forum that this is the best for Croydon at this point and agree to run with this, until central government comes up with a proper way forward for maintained nursery schools. In terms of nursery schools planning, this would make things easier. Indicative budgets were sent back in February, a longer time decision would be useful. Nursery schools are paid by pupil numbers so logically it should go out by pupil numbers.</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts agreed with Jaqi Stevenson and said he thought it should follow the pupil numbers. Forum made that decision last year. The funding is allocated on the pupil numbers and this appears to be the fairest way of doing it. He agrees it is a shame that this paper has to be revisited yearly.</p> <p>OG agreed with Jolyon Roberts that the paper has to be revisited yearly as this is an annual allocation. Schools do get 3 year funding but not nursery schools, hence the revisit yearly.</p> <p>Those in favour of Option 1 = nil Those in favour of Option 2 = 16</p>	
8:	<p>Expansion of the Locality SEND Support Project</p> <p>Mark Southworth (MS) presented this paper</p> <p>Shelley Davies said it is really important to illustrate and note the links between the Management Plan and this paper as the strategy plan is strongly linked to it.</p> <p>Nick Dry said within the Management Plan this project, as part of the High Needs recovery plan has been fully funded for the next few financial years. The paper has been extensively discussed at High</p>	

Needs Working group and has had full approval by members of this group.

Jolyon Roberts said it was also discussed extensively at PRE MEET.

MS said the Locality SEND Support Project is a key part of the deficit recover plan. Schools Forum voted for a pilot which has been running full time since September 2020. This was an Early Adopters pilot and 33 schools were recruited in 4 different localities. This paper discusses how the project has gone. Two excellent area SEND leads have been recruited, one of whom is a member of Schools Forum. Keran Currie and Sonal Desai work with him and the 33 schools on this budget, which is effectively delegating money straight to schools for student's educational needs. The SEND leads help to get support to those students who need it straight away. They are also able to support the SENCOs where they need it with advice, support and strategies to help work with the students. A lot of work has been done to support individual students from each of the localities. The locality SENCOs meet once a month to discuss support for students and various strategies come forth e.g. offering advice and resourcing. The good thing about resourcing that is offered is it can be done quickly and got into the schools within 30 days, without the 20 week process to go through the EHCP process.

The number of EHCP applications have been reduced by approximately 47% between the last 2 year average and you can start to see the impact on students not being ramped up the system in terms of the EHCP process. The team work in groups with children or individually and are able to target support quickly to schools.

The EHCPs are not being cancelled but are issued where necessary. Quite often a child can be supported without an EHCP as the money is already there. We are looking to expand this project in 2 phases so as not to overstretch the current resources and staffing. If approved this September (2021) we will expand to 2 more localities taking us to 6 localities and then expand to a further 2 localities in September 2022. The budget is already there and we are now looking for Schools Forum's encouragement and support to expand over the 2 phases as indicated.

Keren Currie said this pilot is really about the thorough assessment of need and about getting the need and support to the children quickly, so as not to escalate concerns among parents and teachers.

Rob Veale said he was an advocate of the project and is part of the smaller Head Teachers Steering Group for each of the localities. From his perspective, at Atwood it has been incredibly useful to provide support to SENCOs and challenge practice and processes in school. To discuss past issues where perhaps a SENCO has been stuck but it very much allows for more of a strategic approach at a local level. More so where the needs of the locality are more

understood than potentially schools working in silos e.g. speech and language behaviour.

There is no way overspend on the High Needs Block can be ignored. This is understood and so strategically this has to be one of the best ways we can be proactive, in order to tackle that in-year overspend and get the cumulative deficit under control.

Vivienne Esparon is one of the heads on the steering group. She went on to say this is a collaborative approach, particularly helpful to have external additional support e.g. speech and language and EPs as we know the LA is stretched with that.

MS said they have managed to get extra support for speech and language therapy, extra EP support, extra support around ASD and are also working on 6 to 7 transitions for students with SEN, all of which are priorities schools have told them about.

Jolyon Roberts said there is a more up to date paper on the Expansion of the Locality SEND project. That paper shows feedback from parents, stakeholders, head teachers and SENCOs and a section on EBIs. In the absence of the up to date paper he asked MS to take Forum through some of the challenges of the project.

- SENCOs have had concerns of the amount of paperwork requested and the team are trying to streamline this moving forward.
- There was a lot of concern from parents at the beginning of the project as they feared this was all about new EHCPs. Parents had thought this project was a 'plot' to withdraw EHCPs at the next annual review – this is not the case.
- Some professionals have suggested there may be a lack of challenge between the SENCOs in those meetings but actually we have made sure we put that challenge in, as MS attends all the meetings along with the SEND leads
- There were some concerns that some schools may dominate the locality and obtain more than their fair share. MS monitors this every month. There was also concern in the early months about parents and making sure they understood about how it worked as there was misconceptions about it.
- There was some early delay in receiving funding due to Croydon's financial situation but this has been resolved. There were a couple of GDPR concerns but a privacy notice has now been issued and is fully compliant with GDPR.

Jolyon Roberts said that going back to the start of project, it was not clear what the responsibilities were. Now it is much clearer and the project is much better formed. The new EHCPs, although not the existing ones, are issued without resources attached. The issue with EHCPs is that they go all the way through to age 25 years and when they were issued with resources attached it is a job to 'un-attach'

those resources at any point. It is very difficult to un-attach even if the child makes great progress. Once an EHCP is issued it seems to be for a very long time and few children come off them. This is a different way of doing this.

Dave Winters said earlier in this meeting he mentioned the need to be positive, reading the report and listening to what has been said this morning, this is like a ray of sunshine. .

Q1: Tyrone Myton asked for firstly, if we are going to a local hub for funds to be allocated and new EHCPs come on board, will there be a reserve if all those funds have been allocated at that time, to ensure the support is there for the new EHCPs;

Q2: Secondly, when working towards the budget we are assigning the need and not making sure any money is left in the pot in case more come on board. This would be his concern;

A1: MS said Tyrone Myton is absolutely right, there is no reserve. The way it has been funded for each of the localities looked at, what they have spent in EHCPs over the last 3 years, taking an average of that and added 20% that is a fixed amount. In addition, there is the Development Grant which supports schools with extra EP support or speech and language support. It is really important that the need is met and equally important we keep within the budget. When giving a resource it is timed either to next key stage or the end of the academic year or the time in primary school. This helps the budget. Not all cases which are put through to the SENCO forum actually get resources. The SENCOs are not just responsible for students with special needs but for all students within their localities.

Keren Currie said there are positives all round for the schools. We are at the stage when cases are being reviewed, contacting schools, talking to SENCOs, finding out the impact of the funding. This is an important process as we are not just providing the money and walking away. We ask what happens to that young person, ask how the funding is being used and if everything is in place.

Q3: Tyrone Myton said it is a great idea and is solution focused. What is the technical time for the funds being released to getting more support should it be needed;

A3: MS said the meetings are held once a month. The SENCO can bring it back to the next meeting which is never more than a month away. It is really quick compared to the 20 week process for EHCPs. Often the delay has been with the schools not sending in their invoices;

Q4: Jaqi Stevenson said this sounds exciting. MS mentioned that work has begun with the Early Years team to consider scope for a further roll out, for early years;

A4: Keren Currie said the starting point is that SEND leads have been attending the Early Years funding panels and have got an understanding of what schools are requesting. We are not actually providing funding for early years children at this point.

Moving forward we are working with Kathy Roberts and Pam Sokhi and others on the opening strategy and joining in that process as we have many maintained schools with nurseries. There is a big piece of work to come;

Q5: Jolyon Roberts asked if the money allocated to the localities is underspent, what happens?;

A5: OG said this is part of the High Needs budget and forms part of the High Needs DSG budget. It would show as an underspend against that line where we got it and that would be offset against any overspend elsewhere or any other expenditure;

Q6: Jolyon Roberts asked is there an argument to be made if a locality underspends, that they have not put out the funds which might have been expected in that locality;

A6: OG said it could be asked, why the funding was not catered for that particular locality and perhaps there was not the need or the schools had not invoiced. Therefore that money is better spent elsewhere rather than holding onto it. We would not hold onto it as it is not ring-fenced and is DSG funding and is part of the High Needs Block funding;

Q7: Jolyon Roberts asked if this is based on historical amounts in that locality and 6/7 children come in with high needs who need a lot of money spent on them. The argument might be that the allocation is based on historical spend and the money is not there anymore;

A7: OG said year on year we would bring it back and also bring back more termly ones. It is reviewed alongside the High Needs budget in the same way as the High Needs budget review. If year on year one locality was spending less than other localities it would return to MS and his team and questions would be asked why that was the case.

Q8: Jolyon Roberts said we are setup so that we cannot overspend. Parents have made comments, as MS previously said, that if there is underspend would that money go to pay the High Needs overspend;

A8: OG said we have to be clear that the strategy is for building a High Needs offer which is suitable for the pupils of Croydon. The secondary driver is living within our budgets and finally in the long term future we look to how we pay off the outstanding deficit.

MS said OG and Charles Quaye from the Finance team are supplied with regular budget sheets. This project has not been going for a full year and because it took a time to ramp it up there may be some underspend, this though should even out. There may be a need for a bit of ring-fencing as we have not run for a full year.

Q9: Nathan Walters questioned MS, firstly, as this scales up, what checks are in place so one school does not dominate a locality and does not take a lot of funding;

A9: MS said before every meeting a budget sheet is produced by him and this goes out with the agenda for the meeting. This sheet shows the percentage of the budget each school has received within the particular locality. It would be obvious if one

	<p>school was to dominate. There has been no evidence of this happening;</p> <p>Q10: Neil Ferrigan asked is there a facility where the locality leaders could look at their budgets and if there is a surplus offer it to another locality to support a certain task or does it go back to centre;</p> <p>A10: MS said there are two funds – one is allocated per locality and ring-fenced based on that localities need. We split it up to 70% in the locality and 30% in High Needs funding across all 4 localities. For the Higher Needs budget we have to ensure any one locality does not take more than its fair share. That final higher needs pot is helping to even out. There is a bit of flexibility in that funding;</p> <p>Q11: Neil Ferrigan asked how is this 70% or 30% set up;</p> <p>A11: MS said the 70% and 30% split pre dates him and it might be to do the previous consultant who may have based it on the Nottinghamshire model.</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts said to sum up, this is a project which allows us much tighter control over what the spend goes on. Not only this, the section in the paper with feedback from head teachers and particularly the SENCOs is an interesting read. It shows that SENCOs feel isolated and have found this very helpful. We know from the past there have been disparities in the issuing of EHCPs. It also means as MS said that EHCPs continue to be issued and this is important particularly for parents at point of their children entering secondary schools. As Nick Dry said this is commended by the High Needs Working group and he will support this paper.</p> <p>Q12: Jolyon Roberts said, the decision asked for is to approve the two phase expansion of the project. The whole authority will be in this project at the end of September 2022. Is there any plan to revisit to say how it is going;</p> <p>A12: Shelley Davies said it does need to return regularly and as often as Schools Forum would like and thinks the more schools and localities come on board, the more changes we might need to make to the project. The key thing is linking this to savings, as much as we want this to be pupil focused, we have to be realistic it is about budgets.</p> <p>Circulate the correct paper on the Expansion of the Locality SEND paper ACTION</p> <p>Agenda item for March 2022 is to look at the progress of Phase 1 and 2 of the project ACTION</p> <p>Those in favour = 16 Abstention = 0</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts thanked all who worked on this project and said it is now fully formed and comes with support but also obligations of joining the project in September 2021.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Mark Southworth</p>
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<p>9:</p>	<p>Update from Schools Forum Work Groups (for information)</p> <p><u>Early Years Working Party (Theresa Staunton)</u></p> <p>Theresa Staunton said Early Years have met several times since January. There are still issues outstanding around the Early Years High Needs spend. We would like to look at the Locality SEND Support project for our 0-5 year olds. The biggest issue is that there are no figures around the Early Years High Need spending and the 5% in relation to Early Years spending, as information is still yet to be produced on this.</p> <p><u>Schools Block Working Party (Patrick Shields)</u></p> <p>Patrick Shields said the key highlights are a paper is outstanding for Forum on the Assurance for part of the growth fund, particularly to do with unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC). This should come to the Schools Block meeting in 2 weeks' time. A paper on the SRMA reports and quarterly returns and a paper on School Place Planning & Admission by Denise Bushey, will be presented to the working group.</p> <p>Y10/Y11 ESOL funding paper to be presented to Schools Forum in June 2021 ACTION</p> <p>SRMA verbal update to be presented to Schools Forum in July 2021 ACTION</p> <p>School Place Planning & Admission ACTION</p> <p><u>High Needs Working Party (Nick Dry)</u></p> <p>Nick Dry said there was a discussion on the Management Plan around High Needs and this has been covered in the meetings. Other items not discussed were that the LA went through a process to find a way maintained special schools in Croydon are funded. For the last couple of years there has been a flat rate per pupil which has not been sensitive to changes in need. The profile of needs in each school could be ascertained and moderated, we went through this process with the LA including the moderation, but it was complicated and not enough time to get into this financial year, so this has been shelved for another year. A lot of refinement needs to be done before we can get to the point of using this as a funding mechanism, hopefully from April 2022. It will come as a future agenda for a High Needs Working group which the group felt needs resolving. There is indication that this work will continue quite soon.</p> <p>The other item on High Needs which Schools Forum should be aware of is that the DfE have consulted on revising the way the national formula for High Needs funding is given. This has been around for a few years and has been more or less stagnant. The paper put out for consultation was broadly putting in a short term fix for 2022/23. This</p>	<p>Ashana Graham</p> <p>Orlagh Guarnori</p> <p>Denise Bushay</p>
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	<p>was to look at LA spending in 2017/18 year and make adjustments in the formula based on what LA had spent. This is obviously not a long term solution. We would be better if the spending was based on more recent financial years.</p> <p>This High Needs issue has been due to not enough money coming into the block. A large number of other LAs are also in deficit in High Needs.</p>	
10:	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts would like the Audit Framework for maintained schools to be on a future agenda. There should be an annual overview. Pick up in POST MEET</p> <p>David Phillips is the officer in charge of the Audit Framework. He would like to bring a paper to Schools Forum. Pick up in POST MEET</p> <p>Nick Dry said St Nicholas has just been audited and a schedule was made available in advance and you are expected to put in a lot of preparation into it. It would be useful if David Phillips can present this schedule and a summary of the findings at the next meeting.</p> <p>Vivienne Esparon said her school also had a schedule in advance and Nick Dry is quite right, most of it was done in advance and remotely. The information is available on the Croydon Council website. All the maintained schools audits are there to be viewed.</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts said this is good and is good practice but Forum used to be presented with an annual summary that he would like to see reinstated</p> <p>Kate Bingham said these are internal audits and assurance levels on internal controls, the accounts direction for academies cover external audit of your financial accounts. Maintained schools are covered by the council's external auditor, so slightly different audits. This can be picked up in POST MEET</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts said he was pleased to hear that there are two cases where the information was provided in good time.</p> <p>Chris Andrew (CA) wanted to come back to the point Dave Harvey raised at the very beginning of the meeting about the Ashburton Grove issue with the PFI. It is really important that work is done behind the scenes by Croydon Council and Oasis that we do not end up with this being a 'can being kicked down the road' and we end up having the same difficult decision to make. It is a difficult decision because it is not the fault of the school and not the fault of the students or staff at the school. He highlighted the recent stories in the educational press which revealed how Oasis have given every single child an iPad in lockdown.</p>	<p>Jolyon Roberts</p> <p>Shelley Davies</p> <p>Kate Bingham</p>

	<p>CA said that this felt like a little bit of a 'kick in the teeth' at the time since Oasis had told Forum that there were no funds within the MAT to support the PFI costs and yet they were able to make a very generous IT offer to their students that other schools could not make. He felt that Oasis need to take responsibility to get themselves out of this utterly ridiculous PFI agreement they found themselves in, with support from whoever it takes to get that renegotiated.</p> <p>Tyrone Myton seconded what Chris Andrew had said. When the head of Oasis went on TV saying that everyone is going to get an iPad and children his school could not do the same he did reflect on whether he may have been able to do so if not for the PFI contribution.</p> <p>Jolyon Roberts said this will form part of the formula for next year and there will be a discussion around this again at that time. The information Chris Andrew and Tyrone Myton and others have brought to our attention will form part of that discussion.</p> <p>Dave Harvey said under the matters arising in the minutes, he asked if there had been any consideration at POST MEET about the questions being asked at the previous Schools Forum meeting. Hopefully at the June meeting we will get feedback from those questions, ahead of a decision which needs to be made in October. He wanted to say there was very strong feeling against Ashburton school becoming an academy under Oasis but it went ahead nevertheless. Previous to that he had been involved in action against the PFI rebuild of Ashburton school</p> <p>Return to the outstanding actions on Page 1 and Page 2 of the December 2020 meeting ACTION</p> <p>Roger Capham asked if the Schools Forum membership could be published.</p> <p>List to be circulated with papers for the next Schools Forum meeting in June. ACTION</p>	<p>Shelley Davies/ Jolyon Roberts</p> <p>Clerk</p>
	<p>Next meeting 14 June 2021</p>	

Abbreviations used within the minutes

AVA	Addington Valley Academy
AWPU	Average weighted pupil unit
BWH	Bernard Weatherill House
CALAT	Croydon Adult Learning and Training
CHTA	Croydon Headteachers Association
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
EAL	English as an additional language
ESOL	English as a second/or other language
ESFA	Education Skills Funding Agency
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
E-PEP	Electronic Personal Education Plan
ESG	Education Services Grant
EY	Early Years
FSM	Free School Meals
GPAC	General Purpose Audit Committee
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
INM	Independent/non-maintained
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LLW	London Living Wage
LPA	Low Prior Attainment
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
MFG	Minimum Funding Guarantee
MNS	Maintained Nursery Schools
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NEOST	National Employers Organisation for School Teachers
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFF	National Funding Formula
PAN	Planned Admission Number
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PPG	Pupil Premium Grant
PPL	Private Public Limited, Consultancy Firm
PVI	Private, voluntary sector and independent providers
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SRMA	School Resource Management Adviser
STPCD	School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document
STRB	School Teachers Review Board
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPA	Teacher Professional Association
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
UPN	Unique Pupil Number

Academies and their Trusts

Type	School	Trust	Single Trust or MAT
Primary			
Academy	Aerodrome Primary Academy	REACH2	MAT
Academy	Applegarth Academy	STEP Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Ark Oval Primary Academy	ARK	MAT
Academy	Atwood Primary Academy	Atwood Primary Academy	Single
Academy	Beulah Infant School	Pegasus Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Broadmead Primary Academy	The Pioneer Academy	MAT
Academy	Castle Hill Academy	The Platonos Trust	MAT
Academy	Chestnut Park Primary School	GLF Schools	MAT
Academy	Chipstead Valley Primary School	PACE Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Courtwood Primary School	The Collegiate Trust	MAT
Academy	Cypress Primary School	Pegasus Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	David Livingstone Academy	STEP Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Davidson Primary Academy	Chancery Education Trust	MAT
Academy	Ecclesbourne Primary School	Pegasus Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Fairchildes Primary School	Fairchildes Academy Community Trust	MAT
Academy	Forest Academy	Synaptic Trust	MAT
Academy	Gilbert Scott Primary School	The Collegiate Trust	MAT
Academy	Gonville Academy	STEP Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School	Good Shepherd Catholic Primary and Nursery School	Single
Academy	Harris Primary Academy Benson	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Harris Primary Academy Haling Park	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Harris Primary Academy Kenley	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Harris Primary Academy Purley Way	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Heathfield Academy	STEP Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Kensington Avenue Primary School	The Manor Trust	MAT
Academy	Keston Primary School	PACE Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Kingsley Primary Academy	Cirrus Primary Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Monks Orchard Primary and Nursery School	Fairchildes Academy Community Trust	MAT
Academy	New Valley Primary School	PACE Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Byron	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Ryelands School	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Shirley Park	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Park Hill Junior School	The Folio Trust	MAT
Academy	Robert Fitzroy Academy	REACH2	MAT
Academy	Rowdown Primary School	Fairchildes Academy Community Trust	MAT
Academy	St Aidan's Catholic Primary School	St. Aidan's Catholic Primary School	Single
Academy	St Chad's Catholic Primary School	St Chad's Catholic Primary School	Single
Academy	St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy	St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy	Single
Academy	St James the Great RC Primary and Nursery School	St James the Great R.C. Primary and Nursery School	Single
Academy	St Mary's Catholic Infant School	St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust	MAT
Academy	St Mary's Catholic Junior School	St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust	MAT
Academy	St Peter's Primary School	The Folio Trust	MAT
Academy	St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School	St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School	Single
Academy	The Crescent Primary School	The Pioneer Academy	MAT
Academy	The South Norwood Academy	The Pioneer Academy	MAT
Academy	The Woodside Academy	Synaptic Trust	MAT
Academy	Tudor Primary Academy	STEP Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	West Thornton Primary Academy	Synaptic Trust (due to change on 31/12/19)	MAT
Academy	Whitehorse Manor Infant School	Pegasus Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Whitehorse Manor Junior School	Pegasus Academy Trust	MAT
Academy	Winterbourne Boys' Academy	The Platonos Trust	MAT
Secondary			
Academy	Harris Academy Purley	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Harris Academy South Norwood	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Harris City Academy Crystal Palace	Harris Federation	MAT
Academy	Meridian High School	GLF Schools	MAT
Academy	Norbury Manor Business & Enterprise College	The Manor Trust	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Arena	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Coulsdon	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Oasis Academy Shirley Park	Oasis Community Learning	MAT
Academy	Orchard Park High School	Greenshaw Learning Trust	MAT
Academy	Riddlesdown Collegiate	The Collegiate Trust	MAT
Academy	Shirley High School Performing Arts College	Shirley High School	Single
Academy	St Joseph's College	St Joseph's College Delasalle	Single
Academy	The Archbishop Lanfranc Academy	The BEC Trust	Single
Academy	The Quest Academy - Coloma Trust	The Collegiate Trust	MAT
Academy	Woodcote High School	Woodcote High School	Single
SEN			
Academy	Beckmead family of schools	The Beckmead Trust	MAT

ARK - Absolute Return for Kids

GLF - Grown, Learn, Flourish

PACE - Partnership Achievement Community Excellence

STEP - Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership

CROYDON SCHOOLS FORUM - MEMBERS VOTING RIGHTS											
Version 3 - 2019											
Ref 6.10	Academies and Free Schools	Maintained Nursery Schools	Maintained Primary School Governors	Maintained Secondary School Governors	Maintained Primary	Maintained Secondary	Maintained Special Schools	Maintained Pupil Referral	Early Years Provider	Non Schools	Overall Total
	YELLOW	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	PINK	PINK	
	8	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	22
a			2		2						4
b				1		1					2
c			2	1	2	1	optional	optional			6
d			2	1	2	1	1	1			8
e		1	2	1	2	1	1	1			9
f	8	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1		18
g	8	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1		18
h	8	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	22
i	Local Authority officers and all observers have no voting rights. They have PURPLE cards and do not vote										

ITEM 2

Proposed use of schools block reserves funds

Schools Forum – 14 June 2021

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is asked to:

Agree to the recommendation to allocate funding for the pupils moving from the closing school Virgo Fidelis

Members of Forum allowed to vote: - All school and academy members are able to vote. Only early years representatives from the non schools members are able to vote. Non-school members even if represented by school staff are not eligible to vote.

1. Background

- 1.1 The APT for 2021/22 has correctly accounted for Virgo school to be funded only until 31 August 2021 as the school is then set to close.
- 1.2 The decision has since been made to place a group pupils that are currently in Year 10 and will be going on to take examinations in the academic year 2022 in one block to an individual Croydon school.
- 1.3 Therefore the paper sets out the request to fund the pupils at the current Virgo per pupil rate and for that funding to be provided to the school (St Mary's High) that will take the group of pupils.

2. Schools block reserves funding

- 2.1 The DSG 2020/21 outturn will be presented in a separate paper in detail, the schools block element of the DSG has a grant underspend. The underspend an transfer to reserves is a result of funding that was provided to the LA in respect of a school that converted mid year but has been fully funded by the ESFA.
- 2.2 There is an expectation that there will be a recoupment made by the ESFA for the over funding in a future period. However the LA we will make the case for the retention of the element of the funds set out below.

3. Option for funding

- 3.1 The proposal is to fund the transferring pupils as per the current rate per pupil from the schools ISB for 2021/22 at £5,465.00

3.2 The proposal is to fund the school that is accepting the pupils (St Mary's High) for the period September 2021 to March 2022 (7/12ths). The total funding would therefore be calculated once the final pupil's numbers have been confirmed.

Recommendation: that Schools Forum -

Agree to the recommendation to allocate funding for the pupils moving from the closing school Virgo Fidelis

ITEM 3

Interim Key Stage 4 educational provision for in-year admissions

Schools Forum – 14 June 2021

For information only

The Schools Forum is asked to:-

1. Approve funding from DSG schools block for academic year 2020/21 for the provision for UASC and other Key Stage 4 young people in need to a school place of £600k.
2. Approve funding of £25k from DSG schools block for 2020/21 to provide on-going funding to commission EWO support and oversight regarding the attendance of young people referred to the Key Stage 4 commissioned provision and enable the local authority to comply with statutory responsibilities around this area

Members of Forum allowed to vote :-

All school and academy members are able to vote. Only early years representatives from the non-schools members are able to vote. Non-school members even if represented by school staff are not eligible to vote.

1. Provision for UASC and other young people in Key Stage 4 without a school place

- 1.1 For several years Schools' Forum has agreed funding from DSG schools block to fund provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and other pupils in Key Stage 4 without a school place.

Table 1 – Funding by Schools' Forum in previous years

	A	B
1	Academic Year	Funding
2	2015/16	£630.5k approved
3	2016/17	£630k approved
4	2017/18	£630k approved
5	2018/19	£625k approved
6	2019/20	£525k approved
7	2020/21	£625k approved

- 1.2 Since September 2010 Croydon has received a significant number of applications for young people requiring school places in years 10 and 11. This demand for places is continuing in response to population growth as a result of inward migration to Croydon principally from abroad but also elsewhere in the UK.
- 1.3 There has been an on-going challenge identifying school places for these children, particularly for young people in year 11. As a response to this demand Schools' Forum has in previous years agreed funding from **centrally retained DSG funding** for additional Key Stage 4 places for this cohort.
- 1.4 From 2016/17 it was decided to use a range of providers to educate this cohort rather than a single provider as had been done in previous years. The reason for this was to

increase provider competition; diversify the available offer; obtain a wider geographical spread of provision; and build capacity and expertise.

- 1.5 It was also agreed, in order to reduce demand and therefore costs, that only students in Year 11 would be referred and that Year 10s would no longer be referred. These pupils would instead be admitted to secondary schools. The cohort consists of a mix of UASC and other young people who have moved into Croydon from abroad. The vast majority of this cohort require ESOL provision across the curriculum.
- 1.6 In previous years commissioning places was structured in such a way that not all places are commissioned at the beginning of the academic year and are only opened up in response to demand. Places were then funded on pro-rata basis and therefore the earlier in the academic year a place is commissioned the more it costs.

2. Current Issues:Continued demand for school admissions at Key Stage 4

- 2.1 The challenge associated with identifying mainstream school places for UASC and other pupils new to Croydon from overseas in Year 11 has been recognised by Schools' Forum for a number of years now. There continues to be a significant number of UASC requiring an education place in Croydon. Croydon has some of the highest number of UASC in England and the numbers are beyond the control of Croydon Council.
- 2.2 Whilst the number of UASC that are looked after to Croydon has reduced over the years, in part to due to the introduction of the Home Office's transfer scheme, Brexit and subsequently the pandemic; the number of UASC in Croydon is not limited to those who are looked after to Croydon. A number of other local authorities place their UASC with Croydon foster carers, which means the local authority continues to have responsibility for ensuring suitable education provision is available.
- 2.3 In order to manage the demand for provision, referrals from 2016/17 onwards have been restricted to those in Year 11. Pupils in Year 10 who, in previous years, might have been referred to commissioned provision are instead redirected to be admitted to mainstream school. This approach resulted in a reduced number of commissioned places required as there is no longer the legacy cohort of Year 10s transitioning into Year 11.

Table 2 – Statutory School aged UASC Looked after to Croydon since 2011

	A	B
1	Academic Year	No. of UASC
2	2015/16	273
3	2016/17	196
4	2017/18	157
5	2018/19	179
6	2019/20	136
7	2020/21	78

- 2.4 Demand for places in (2018/19) academic year was higher than in previous academic years. The reasons for this appears to be that despite fewer UASC looked after to Croydon, UASC accommodated by other LAs are resident in Croydon coupled with a higher number of applications for new arrivals into the country between July and September. Similarly, despite the introduction of the Home Offices National transfer scheme, the scheme has become redundant in Croydon, as **there have been no**

transfers of UASC CLA since October 2018, resulting in increased demand for school places.

Table 3 – Commissioned learner numbers 2018/19 vs 2020/2021(September-June)

A	1	2	3	4	5
	Provision	2018/19 Autumn Term	2018/19 Spring/ Summer Term	2020/2021 Autumn Term	2020/2021 Spring/ Summer Term
B	Croydon College	29	43	15	0
C	John Ruskin College	30	45	30	15
D	RISE Education	4	11	0	0
E	Totals	63	99	45	15

2.5 Following a competitive procurement process, an Approved Provider Panel (APP) has been established which provides LA and schools with a list of providers which have agreed to deliver services at an agreed price with clear deliverables, KPIs and contractual arrangements. The APP is a four-year agreement operational between 2020-2024. The LA reserves the right to re-tender for some or all the lots, providing an opportunity for new providers to become approved providers. All providers are subject to biennial tri-borough (Croydon, Merton and Wandsworth) approach Quality Assurance with a focus on Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Quality of Education, Personal Development and Behaviour, Leadership and Management and Learner Entitlement.

2.5.1 In relation to the KS4 cohort, there are six different providers on the APP who can deliver services, three of which are also able to deliver these said services to learners with challenging behaviour (a small cohort that has proven difficult to place previously). Of the six providers, two are new to being commissioned by the LA.

Table 4 – Lot 3A Providers (Young people who are new arrivals to the UK in academic year 11 with limited English language).

1	Provision
2	Croydon College
3	Harris Federation
4	John Ruskin College
5	Supreme Education
6	SV Academy

2.5.2 Provider costs vary (some in a 1:3+ ratio) and although mini-competitions are carried out to drive down costs where possible, this process is voluntary and providers do not have to respond to the request/invitation. The funding being requested ensures that there are enough funds to commission services in line with previous peaked demand.

2.6 Places for this academic year were commissioned in November 2020 and May 2021. All November commissioned places were utilised within weeks of being commissioned. Of the 15 places commissioned for service delivery from 10th May, 10 learners have been referred. Careful monitoring of supply and demand is undertaken to ensure adequate places are available when required, whilst considering feasibility for suppliers and budget protection for the LA.

In an attempt to keep costs as low as possible and ensure demand for September can be met in a timely manner and of good quality, commissioning for September will be undertaken in June/July this year.

3. Monitoring and oversight of referred young people

- 3.1** Schools' Forum has recognised the importance of attendance as a safeguarding matter, especially given the size of the cohort of UASC and looked after children.
- 3.2** In 2017/18 Schools' Forum approved £25k of funding to support the attendance of this cohort. As with academic year 2016/17, a competitive commissioning process enabled us to secure Education Welfare Services (EWS) at a lower cost than in the previous academic year. An independent EWS provider was commissioned to ensure compliance with statutory requirements around school attendance, safeguarding and children missing from education and as a result, WP Associates were awarded the contract for the academic year.
- 3.3** Upon reviewing the EWS provider and the services received over the course of the academic year 2017/18, the decision was made to directly provide EWS for this cohort directly in-house by Croydon Council and as such, a one year fixed term, term time only Attendance Improvement Officer role was created and recruited into. It is therefore recommended that Schools' Forum approve £25k for 2019/20 to provide funding to enable us to part-fund the role of an Attendance Improvement Officer within the Learning Access Team for this cohort and provide quality, timely expert intervention around attendance that ensures absences can be followed up in a swift manner and young people are supported and safeguarded. This role has proven to be invaluable in supporting both provisions and young people and their families accessing the commissioned services.

4. Business Case

The detail of the funding proposal is set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – business case for Key stage 4 commissioning

Provision for UASC and other young people in Key Stage 4 without a school place	
Funding for UASC and ESOL in-year admissions for new arrivals in Key Stage 4 (Year 11). This will:	
a) Provide sufficient, good quality provision for Year 11 newly arrived into Croydon from overseas	
b) Provide specialist support for ESOL learners	
c) Provide appropriate qualifications at EL, L1 & L2	
d) Provide planned pathways into post-16 study	
Cost	£600k
Provision of attendan support for students	
Provide funding to provide EWS support for the attendance tracking of all young people referred under the KS4 contract and provide additional support to those young people that are looked after.	
Spend from the budget approved for this purpose	£25k
Total cost requested from 2017-18 DSG schools block	£625k

5. Risks

- 5.1** If Schools' Forum is minded to not approve the funding it needs to be satisfied that from September 2021
- a) Schools can admit and provide appropriate education for 100-120 UASC and ESOL young people in Year 11.
 - b) Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities around safeguarding young people in alternative provision through oversight of attendance for those students referred to the Key Stage 4 commissioned provisions.
- 5.2** If Schools Forum approves the funding for 2020/21 it should note that in the event of demand for places rising above current anticipated levels there is a risk that the current funding will be insufficient to fund the number of places required. In the event of this occurring further funding may be requested to ensure the local authority can comply with its statutory responsibilities.

Recommendation: that the School's Forum

1. Approve funding from DSG schools block for academic year 2020/21 for the provision for UASC and other Key Stage 4 young people in need to a school place of **£600k**;
2. Approve funding of **£25k** from DSG schools block for 2020/21 to provide on-going funding to commission EWO support and oversight regarding the attendance of young people referred to the Key Stage 4 commissioned provision and enable the local authority to comply with statutory responsibilities around this area.

Ashana Graham

Education Commissioning and Quality Assurance Manager

May 2021

ITEM 4

School Place Planning and Admissions

Schools Forum – 14 June 2021

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is asked to:-

1. Note update of the current position in Croydon in relation to school place planning and admissions
2. Note changes in demand leading to high level of surplus places

Members of Forum allowed to vote :- NA

1. School Place Planning and School Vacancies

1.1 Each Local Education Authority (LEA) has a statutory duty to plan school places and ensure that the number of places and type of provision available is appropriate for local children. This means ensuring that there are sufficient places to meet demand or to manage surplus places. For school place planning purposes, Croydon uses six educational planning areas for primary schools; North West, East, Central, South East, South and South West. As secondary aged pupils tend to travel further to school, only two planning areas - North and South - are required.

1.2 Each year, Croydon works in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to produce a new set of School Roll Projections (SRP). There are many factors to consider when planning school places, such as; Croydon's birth rate, planned housing, cross-border flow, numbers on roll and parental preference. The data influencing the pupil projections is ever changing and therefore annual projections are produced to capture any changes and the effects they may have on the demand for school places. Croydon's Education Supply Strategy uses three years of projections to help ensure that the right number of places are available in the right area at the right time.

2. **London context.** In the early 2000s, London's increasing population presented significant challenges for local authorities to meet the demand for school places. Between 2001/2 and 2011/12, London's birth rate rose by almost 28%. This rapid increase kick-started a large school build programme across London's boroughs as local authorities worked to ensure they met their statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

2.1 **Croydon's school build programme.** In order for Croydon to ensure it could meet its statutory duty and supply enough school places to meet the higher level of demand, from 2011, eight new primary schools and four secondary schools were built. The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A (the free school presumption). As a result of section 6A, all new schools built in Croydon were academies or free schools.

2.2 Additional school places were also provided by permanently expanding existing schools. Since 2010, 25 of Croydon's schools have been permanently expanded. Temporary expansions were used to provide additional school places until sufficient places were available via the permanent expansions and new schools.

- 2.3 Changes in demand – primary.** Following London’s rapid population growth in the early 2000s, in 2013, London experienced an unexpected drop in birth rate. In Croydon, the birth rate dropped by 5% which later impacted the 2017/18 Reception intake. Between 2014 and 2016, Croydon’s birth rate recovered however, since 2017, the rate has consistently fallen each year. This is expected to affect the 2021/22 – 2023/24 Reception cohorts.
- 2.4** Another important factor to consider when place planning is the survival rate. This is calculated by comparing the number of children born in Croydon, to the number of Reception aged pupils on roll within a Croydon school five years later. In 2014, Croydon’s survival rate was 89%. The rate has since fallen year on year and in 2019, the survival rate was 79%; 10% lower in comparison to 2014. It is important to note that Croydon’s cross-border flow (the number of Croydon residents attending an out of borough school and vice versa) has remained the same since 2014, with approximately 95% of Croydon’s primary school places being occupied by Croydon residents.
- 2.5 Changes in demand - secondary.** The majority of the additional primary aged pupils have now moved through the year groups and transitioned into the secondary phase. Within three years, the bulge will have fully transitioned and the drop in demand that was seen by primary schools will be felt in the secondary phase. When place planning, it is important to monitor the borough’s transition rate. This is calculated by taking the number of children on roll in Year 6 and comparing it to the number of Year 7 pupils on roll the following academic year. Between 2014 and 2019, Croydon’s transition rate fell from 90% to 84%.
- 3. Managing Croydon’s surplus school places.** Surplus places could be caused by a number of factors, ranging from demographic changes, changes to the education system, over projection of demand, parental preference, and pupil mobility/migration. In order to allow for in-year migration and parental preference, Croydon aims to have a 5-10% surplus of school places within each planning area, the higher percentage in areas where there is planned housing developments. Pupil projections are done at entry points; Reception for primary and Year 7 for secondary. Schools have the flexibility to vary/reduce their in-year admission number without formal consultation if there has been a drop in demand. As it stands, the primary planning areas that are facing the highest number of surplus places are the North West and the East. For secondary, the majority of the vacancies are within the North planning area.
- 3.1** A large proportion of funding received by schools is determined by the number of pupils on roll. Because of this, it is not financially viable for a school to have a high number of vacancies. Croydon is working with its schools and academies to manage the higher than necessary surplus places. To date, 1260 primary places (Reception – Year 6) and over 950 secondary places (Years 7 – 11) have been removed. By lowering the Published Admission Number (PAN), schools are able to better manage the number of vacancies, required staff and their budget. For those schools who still have a high percentage of vacancies, the local authority continues to work with and support reductions in PAN / admission number where appropriate. Should demand for school places increase in the future, there is no formal process required for schools to return to their original higher PANs.
- 4. Summary**
- 4.1. Primary schools.** Croydon has a total of 87 primary, infant and junior schools:
- a) 22 Community schools
 - b) 11 Voluntary Aided schools

- c) 52 Academies
- d) 2 Free Schools

There are:

- e) 35820 primary school places available across Reception to Year 6, of which
- f) 5130 are in Reception.

Based on the Spring 2021 School Census data, there are:

- g) 4179 vacancies across Reception to Year 6 (11.7%)
- h) 619 vacant Reception places (12.1%)

4.2 To date, 1260 places have been removed across primary year groups (Reception – Year 6). Most of these vacancies are in the North West and East planning area. It is important to note that the number of vacancies across Croydon's primary schools can change daily. *(Please refer to Appendix 1 for detailed breakdown of primary school places and vacancies)*

4.3 National Offer Day. The percentage of Croydon parents/carers getting their first choice primary school for their child this year has risen to 85% - up one per cent from last year. The percentage of parents/carers receiving one of their top three preference schools has also risen to 96.5% - up 0.5% from last year. This is above the London average of 96%. Overall the number of primary applications received on time was down to 4,472 from 4,815 last year. Across London there was also a 7% decrease in applications compared to 2020. This could be due to a number of reasons including the instability caused by Covid-19 leading to families missing the application deadline and families moving out of London due to changes in their circumstances and working patterns.

4.4 Secondary schools. Croydon has a total of 23 secondary schools:

- a) 15 Academies
- b) 5 Voluntary Aided schools
- c) 3 Free Schools
- d) Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School (Voluntary Aided) will be closing on 31 August 2021.

There are 19990 available secondary school places across Years 7 to 11, of which 4183 are in Year 7.

Based on Spring 2021 School Census data, there are:

- e) 1853 vacant places across Years 7 to 11 (9.3%)
- f) 498 vacant places in Year 7 (11.9%)

4.5 The majority of vacant places are concentrated in the North of the borough. It is important to note that all of Croydon's secondary schools are their own admissions authority and therefore manage their admissions arrangements and in-year applications. *(Please refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown of secondary school places and vacancies)*

4.6 National Offer Day. Overall the number of secondary applications received on time increased by 2.1% for the 2021 intake (compared to 2020). A total of 4667 applications were received compared to 4571 in 2020. There has been a 4% decrease in the percentage of parents receiving a place at their first preference, 60% compared with 64% in 2020. One of the contributory factors could be the fact that parents were not able to attend open events

in person and based their decision when selecting school preferences on things like Ofsted reports. The Pan London Admissions Board has overall responsibility for the school application co-ordination scheme in the capital.

5. **Detail**

- 5.1 Context.** In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 ("EIA") Croydon has a statutory duty to "secure that sufficient schools for providing— (a) primary education, and (b) secondary education are available for their area" as well as to "secure diversity and increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of school places" in the borough. The Council also has statutory duty to manage a potential surplus of schools places.
- 5.2** In discharging its duty for sufficiency of school places, the council works in partnership with different education providers – Academy Trusts/Free Schools and Diocesan Authorities – to determine the need for places and to secure diversity in educational provision across the borough, taking into account parental choice. There have been several changes to the London's population in recent years. The number of children being born in Croydon has been reducing each year, and this has led to an increasing higher level of vacancies than necessary at some schools across the borough. Central government funding to schools is based on the number of children registered on roll. Therefore, when the number of children on roll is lower than expected, resulting in less funding, this can lead to financial and organisational challenges which can affect recruitment of staff and maintenance of high standards of teaching and learning.
- 5.3 Population.** Croydon is the second largest of all the London boroughs in terms of population, with approximately 386,700 residents (ONS 2019). Nearly a quarter of this figure (24.5%) is made up of young people aged 17 years or under.
- 5.4 Population growth.** Croydon's population is growing. The borough population recorded in Census 2001 was 330,587 and in the 2011 Census it had increased to 363,378. Based on ONS midyear estimates 2019, Croydon is home to 386,710 people and this is expected to increase to just under 500,000 by 2050.
- 5.5 Migration.** For 2018, domestic migration in Croydon showed a net loss with 22,897 migrants entering the borough against 27,263 leaving the borough to live in other areas of the UK. The reverse was true for international migration. Inflows of migrants from outside the UK coming into Croydon exceeded the number of migrants leaving Croydon for other countries.
- 6. School Place Planning.** School place planning is essential to ensure sufficiency of places and to allow for some parental choice and movement across schools. Having the right amount of places, at the right time and in the right area is not always achievable due to fluctuations in future demand based on demographic change and parental preference. Croydon forecasts the future demand for school places by splitting the borough into educational planning areas (based on groups of schools): six for the primary phase and two for the secondary phase to reflect reasonable travel distances. In conjunction with our regular review of the demand for school places, we commission the Greater London Authority School Roll Projection service to undertake an annual forecast of the number of pupils who will need a school place in the future.
- 6.1 Pupil Forecasts.** Pupil forecasts are produced so that the council can make strategic decisions about how many places are likely to be needed (where, when and for how long). The forecasting and planning of school places is based on probabilities backed up by available data and trends, including population projection incorporating births, migration and

housing development; and school factors including applications and number of pupils on roll. The GLA provides the baseline projections to which local knowledge is applied to make reasonable adjustments in line with pressure at Reception, Year 7 and other school year groups.

- 6.2 The number of births in a primary planning area gives us a good estimate of the number of four year olds that will be looking to start school in that area four years later. One of the key challenges facing Croydon and other London boroughs, is the unexpected decrease in the demand for primary school places due to a substantial reduction in births.
- 6.3 **Croydon Birth trends.** Over the 10 year period to 2019, the number of births has averaged around 5,600 a year. The last 3 years has seen a reduction in the number of births from 5,761 to 5,304. The latest ONS Mid-year estimate (MYE) indicates that 1 in 4 Croydon residents (24.5%) is aged between 0-17 years.
- 6.4 Birth rates have continued to fall at a greater rate than had been expected and families are increasingly moving out of London. A review of the demand for pupil places has shown that the rate of growth for primary school places has slowed due to the drop in birth rate in 2013. This resulted in a high level of surplus places in some schools. The demand for primary school places is expected to keep falling due to the continued drop in Croydon's birth rate.
- 6.5 **Demand for school places.** Following unprecedented growth in demand for primary school places in Croydon from 2006-2012, the number of children on roll in Reception has decreased year on year since September 2017. The latest Greater London Authority (GLA) projections (based on January 2020 school census) indicate that borough wide, the demand for Reception places will continue to fall for the next three years. This means that Croydon will continue to have a high number of spare places across the system. The council will therefore continue to support particular schools where necessary in managing the impact of reduced numbers on roll with measures such as variation of their Published Admission Number (PAN). The agreement with schools is that should demand increase, the school will revert to its original PAN to take additional pupils.
- 6.6 There are a number of factors that impact on pupil numbers and demand for school places, including:
- a) Birth rates
 - b) Migration / population movement
 - c) School standards
 - d) Popularity of schools
 - e) Location
 - f) Mobility
 - g) New housing developments
- 6.7 When school place planning, the focus is on the demand for places at the entry points - Reception for infant and primary schools and Year 7 for secondary schools. These year groups reflect key points when demand patterns can shift. However, planning for school places also takes into account in-year growth as a result of in-migration and new housing.
- 7 **Surplus places.** Croydon and other London boroughs are seeing many primary schools with a higher number of surplus places than necessary. However, in Croydon, there is a stark contrast between the situation in the different planning areas and individual schools. A significant number of schools in the North West and East planning areas have experienced the biggest fall in the demand for primary school places and therefore have the highest number of surplus places. Additional/new school places were created in this planning area when the council experienced significant growth in the pupil population. The

increasing pupil numbers have now transferred to secondary schools as the pupils move from primary phase to secondary. New housing developments in the South West have attracted young families resulting in an increased the demand for school places.

- 7.1 Currently, there are more places than pupils at both primary and secondary levels, but the balance between the two varies across the borough, within educational planning areas and particularly school-by-school. Shortages of places at popular schools can exist alongside surplus places at others. The council will also need to ensure that it provides enough school places in the future. The aim is to reach a position where the council and schools are confident that the right provision is in the right place at the right time.
- 7.2 Number of vacancies. Currently, 28 (35.9%) of Croydon's 78 primary and infant schools have more than 10% of their Reception places vacant. These schools are mainly in the North West and East planning areas. 7 (31.8%*) of Croydon's secondary schools have more than 10% of their Year 7 places vacant. These schools are mainly in the North planning area. (* Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School has been omitted from this data due to the suspension of entry to Year 7 for September 2020, approved by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator [OSA].)
- 7.3 Falling rolls can lead to financial and organisational challenges which can impact on schools' budgets and sustainability, especially small schools. Primary schools organise their classes into groups of no more than 30. If a school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60 places but there are only 35 applications there would still need to be two classes and two teachers but funding will only be provided for the 35 pupils. If the PAN is formally reduced to 30 then the school can reduce its budget.
- 7.4 It has been accepted that it is not possible to have a perfect match of pupils and places at each school. It has been recommended by Audit Commission that local authorities should aim to retain no more than 10% surplus places across the whole school estate to allow for flexibility in the system to respond to parental choice, unexpected changes in demand and pupil movement throughout the year. A higher percentage of surplus places is accepted in areas where pupil yield from planned housing developments could increase demand.
- 7.5 If demand for places decreases, the number of places at existing schools can be reduced through an in-year variation of the schools' PAN via the Office for Schools Adjudicator for community schools, or the ESFA/Regional Schools Commissioner for academies/free schools. Alternatively, schools and academies may also reduce their PAN through consultation on their admission arrangements.
- 7.6 The ESFA operational guidance on falling rolls funding states that "Local authorities may set aside schools block funding to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls, where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next three financial years. The schools forum should agree both the value of the fund and the criteria for allocation, and the local authority should consult schools forum before expenditure is incurred. As with the growth fund, the falling rolls fund is within the NFF schools block."
8. **Next Steps.** Following our annual pupil projections from the Greater London Authority School Roll Projection service about the number of pupils who will need a school place in the future, and our subsequent school capacity survey submission to DfE in July, we will undertake a further review of the projected demand to identify short, medium and long term capacity requirements of the school system. The review will be used to ascertain where there are excessive numbers of surplus places and working with our finance team we will undertake a targeted piece of work to identify schools at risk of or already have a deficit budget as a result of falling rolls.

- 8.1 As part of this, we will work with the affected schools leadership team / governing body to agree re-organisation strategies, for example:
- a) Variation of published admission number;
 - b) Decommissioning classrooms;
 - c) Multi-agency working;
 - d) Allocate school space to other use, e.g. for pupils with additional learning needs or early years provision;
 - e) Closure of school – last and not preferred option

9 School Admissions

- 9.1 **National offer day.** Overall the number of secondary applications received on time increased by 2.1% for the 2021 intake (compared to 2020). A total 4667 applications were received compared to 4571 in 2020. There has been a 4% decrease in the percentage of parents receiving a place at their first preference, 60% compared with 64% in 2020. One of the contributory factors could be the fact that parents were not able to attend open events in person and based their decision when selecting school preferences on things like Ofsted reports.
- 9.2 The Pan London Admissions Board has overall responsibility for the school application coordination scheme in the capital. Croydon is the Admission Authority for community schools and is therefore responsible for determining the Admission Arrangements for these schools including the criteria by which schools places are allocated when a school receives more applications than places. It must act in accordance with the School Admission Code, and the School Admission Appeals Code. The Council is also responsible for having in place a scheme for coordinating admission arrangements. Croydon has participated in a Pan London arrangement for the Co-ordinated Admissions rounds for both primary and secondary applications for sixteen years.
- 9.3 The School Admission Service primary role is to offer advice and support to parents/carers and schools on all aspects of school admissions. They team deliver three main admissions cycles:
- a) The admission to the Reception Class for 4 year olds who will be turning 5 during the academic year in which they start.
 - b) The transfer from primary school (year 6) into secondary school (Year 7) and the transfer from Infant school (Year 2) into junior school (Year 3).
 - c) They coordinate these processes with 38 inner and outer London local authorities

Two National Offer Days follow these processes:

- d) Secondary National Offer Day on 1 March and
 - e) Primary National Offer Day on 16 April.
- 9.4 However, the work to complete these cycles carries on up until the end of August during which time the team process late applications and make subsequent offers to on-time applicants, who were not successful for their higher preference school(s), as vacancies arise at the schools. They also co-ordinate all admission applications outside of the main admission cycles, that is all admissions outside of the entry points for Reception, Year 3 Junior schools and Year 7. The team process these applications, share a continuous stream of data back and forth with schools to monitor children starting and leaving school, vacancy data and pending offers.

- 9.5** One of our main priorities is to secure school places for children who are not in education and focus on limiting the time they are missing from education; for our complex or hard to place cases we often collaborate with our Learning Access colleagues to achieve this. Another priority for the team is to fill as many vacancies as possible in time for the October census, schools receive funding for the number of children they have on roll on this census date and it is therefore paramount they process applications and co-ordinate accurate waiting lists and vacancy data to make offers in time for children to go on roll. Another major area for the team is the statutory work on appeals which parents submit following Primary National Offer Day as a result of not being successful for their most preferred school(s). The appeal hearings usually start mid-June and depending on the volume could run up until the end of July.
- 9.6** **The Pan London Reception co-ordination process.** The Pan-London Admissions Scheme simplifies the application process and increases the number of pupils who receive an offer at one of their preferred schools. Co-ordinating admissions in London has meant a fairer distribution of available offers and has resulted in more parents getting an offer from one of their preferred schools earlier. It has substantially reduced the number of pupils who receive multiple offers or no offer at all.
- 9.7** "The Equal Preference System" is the model whereby all preferences listed by parents on the Common Application Form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil is eligible to be offered a place at more than one school within an LA, or across more than one participating LA, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the school ranked highest of those which can offer a place.
- 9.8** **How school places are allocated?** Parents/carers fill in a single application form even if they are applying to schools in more than one borough. They enter up to six schools in order of preference and submit the form to the borough where they live. The application is then considered under the equal preference system and schools are not aware of where parents/carers have ranked their school. This means that all preferences are considered without reference to the order listed by the parents. Each child is considered separately for each school using the published admission criteria to decide whether or not a place can be offered. If more than one school can offer a place, the local authority will allocate the highest (most preferred) of these listed in the application. Every time a multiple offer is eliminated an offer can be made to another pupil who would otherwise have received a less satisfactory offer or no offer at all.
- 9.9** **Appeals for families who did not get their top preference.** If children are offered a place at a school which is not their first choice, they will automatically go onto the waiting list for the schools which were a higher preference than the one they were offered. Places will be filled in the order of the school's oversubscription criteria from the waiting list as vacancies arise over the coming weeks. Parents who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their primary/junior school application, or of the secondary transfer process may appeal to an independent panel - these arrangements are set out in law and parents will find more details on the individual secondary school's website.
- 9.10** **Processing** Applicants resident within this LA must return the Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted online, to Croydon by **15 January** each year.
- 9.11** **Offers.** On 16th April, Croydon residents will be notified of the outcome of their primary/junior application by email.

- 9.12 Post Offer.** Croydon will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by **30 April**, or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer, by logging into their eadmission account. Where an applicant resident in this LA accepts or declines a place in a school maintained by another LA by **30 April**, this LA will forward the information to the maintaining LA by **7 May**. Where such information is received from applicants after **30 April**, this LA will pass it to the maintaining LA as it is received.
- 9.13** Where a place becomes available in an oversubscribed maintained school or academy in this LA's area, it will be offered from a waiting list ordered in accordance with paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code 2014.
- 10 In-Year applications.** In the 2018/19 academic year we received 4,747 In-Year applications and 2,264 of these were for children out of school. In the 2019/20 academic year we received 3,944 In-Year applications and 1,814 of these were for children out of school, the decline in these figures was due to Covid. So far for the current 2020/21 academic year we have received 3,030 In-Year applications, 1,260 of these have been for children out of school.
- 10.1 Primary School Admissions.** Croydon Admissions administer the in-year admissions for all primary schools with the exception of Voluntary Aided schools and Harris academies, whilst the remaining Academies, Foundation and Free schools are their own admission authority, the responsibility for accepting/processing applications and making offers is delegated to the admissions team in Croydon who act as a central base for school admission applications. This co-ordinated process ensures:
- a) A straight forward application process for families avoiding the need to complete multiple applications and liaising with multiple schools . One application for all preference schools avoids schools processing an application unnecessarily – perhaps where multiple applications could be submitted to different schools and an offer made by one but parent has not informed the others they do not require the place at the other schools, this also allows the waiting lists to be up to date without children sitting on them who no longer require a place at other schools.
 - b) Families are not holding multiple offers – Enabling vacant places to be offered to other children who require them.
 - c) Available places are released swiftly – where preference school is offered.
 - d) Waiting lists are ordered in line with each school's admissions criteria and kept up to date with children who actively require a place where possible.
 - e) Where no preference school can be offered for children without a school place, the nearest alternative school can be swiftly determined and offered.
 - f) Knowledge of where vacancies exist across the borough through sharing of migration data
 - g) Processing of migration data ensuring we can track all migration in and out of schools and the borough and that children are safeguarded from going missing from education.
- 10.2 Secondary School Admissions.** All secondary schools in Croydon are their own admission authority and all have chosen to apply criteria and make offers themselves. Croydon admissions have an application process for all applicants to apply to one central base with the exception of Harris academies who require applicants to apply direct. Application information is then sent weekly to each individual school with a list of new applicants, where a SIF is required parents are required to complete this and return directly to the school. Croydon School Admissions then follow up with schools to obtain an outcome to applications where parents have not received one from the school directly. The team monitor all applications from children out of school and assist in securing a school place. The process for secondary applications can in part be quite convoluted:

- a) Some schools accept direct applications as well as the applications sent from Croydon Admissions where parents have completed the Croydon School Admissions application;
- b) Applicants are often not given their right of appeal if applied direct to schools.
- c) **Vacancy information is not regularly shared from all schools** and we are therefore often unclear on the accuracy of where vacancies exist across the borough;
- d) An alternative provision is available for year 11 ESOL children however there is a grave difficulty in securing places for all other children within a reasonable timeframe in Year 10 and 11 without a school place. Schools advise they have reached their maximum admission number for the year group which can differ significantly from the PAN for the entry year, whilst there is no statutory barrier for a school to maintain the PAN throughout each year group, it does cause concern where this number has been reduced without discussion with the council - to include demand, resulting in the possible requirement of additional school places to be sought if demand exceeds the places available. Other reasons provided why schools cannot admit children into these year groups include lack of resource - this in turn negatively impacts our ability to secure school places for in year applicants who are out of school, whilst we recognise the difficulties school's experience, all children must receive an education and too often we have to result in referring these cases to the Fair Access Panel, ultimately the child is left without receipt of education for prolonged periods of time.

Recommendation: that Schools Forum:

1. Note update of the current position in Croydon in relation to school place planning and admissions
2. Note changes in demand leading to high level of surplus places

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