

Bristol Schools Forum
School Places

Date of meeting:	20 May 2020
Time of meeting:	3.30pm
Venue:	Virtual

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update Schools Forum on school place planning across Bristol..

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Schools Forum note the contents of this report.

3. Summary

3.1 The city is experiencing a substantial rise in demand for secondary school places. A significant amount of work has already been undertaken to ensure all pupils continue to be offered a school place. Further places are planned through the provision of new free schools.

3.2 Offers of places at secondary schools were made on 2nd March. 76% were offered their 1st preference school and 93% were offered one of their 3 preferences. This is an increase from 72% and 91% in 2019. These increases are a result of some popular schools taking additional pupils and increased applications for schools that were previously less popular.

3.3 Offers of places at primary schools were made on 16th April. 87.5% were offered their 1st preference school and 97.5% were offered one of their 3 preferences. This is very similar to 2019.

3.4 Numbers requiring places at primary schools are now falling and places will need to be managed to avoid large numbers of empty places.

4. Context

4.1 Bristol has previously seen a dramatic rise in primary school pupil numbers. Reception admissions peaked in 2016 and since then numbers have been falling, mainly due to falling birth rates.

- 4.2 These higher primary school numbers are now impacting on secondary schools. A number of schools have already been expanded and other schools are taking more pupils than their Published Admissions Number (PAN). Taking more pupils than the capacity is not sustainable in the longer term.
- 4.3 National Offer Day for secondary school places was 2nd March 2020. Although all pupils were offered a place, this was only possible as some schools agreed to offer above their PAN. 76% were offered their first preference. 7% were made an offer that not one of their preferences.
- 4.4 A total of 4,415 places were offered in Bristol schools, an increase from 4,354 in 2019. 213 of these were for pupils living outside Bristol (an increase from 199 in 2019). After offers were made there were no places remaining (compared to 38 in 2019 and 71 in 2018), This is the first time there were no places left unallocated on 1st March.
- 4.5 National Offer Day for primary school places was 16th April 2020. All pupils were offered a place. 87.5% were offered their first preference. 2.4 % were made an offer that not one of their preferences.
- 4.6 There are 5,763 places available in Reception for September 2020 and a total of 5,244 places were offered in Bristol schools. The number of places available is forecast to reduce to 5,601 for 2021 as some schools look to reduce their admission number.
- 4.7 Pupil projections are prepared annually for the DFE School Capacity Survey. These projections are used to allocate capital funding ('Basic Need') and also contribute towards decisions to approve the opening of new 'Free Schools'. The School Capacity Survey will not take place in 2020 and there is currently no information on the next wave of capital funding for Basic Need will be calculated.
- 4.8 Birth rates are the main factor used in the pupil projection, with factors such as the effect of new housing and historical trends of gain/loss as pupils move through the school years being incorporated. The projections also take account of net 'loss' of pupils to schools in neighbouring local authority areas and the numbers of pupils opting for independent schools.
- 4.9 In addition to expansion of existing schools there is a need to provide additional places through the provision of new schools. The Department for Education (DfE) approved the establishment of 3 new schools. The first of these, Trinity Academy, opened in September 2019 in temporary accommodation with 4 forms of entry. The new school building is currently under construction and will accommodate 6 forms of entry

(180 pupils per year).

- 4.10 Further new Free Schools were approved to serve the East Central and South areas. These schools were planned to ensure sufficient secondary places for the short to medium term growth from primary school numbers and the longer term needs created by new housing developments. The development of these schools is dealt with by the DfE not the local authority.
- 4.11 Development of Oasis Temple Quarter has been slow, with the initial target opening date being revised to 2021. The planning application for the wider development, including the school, is now due to go to Planning Committee on 28th May. Even if approved the decision may be subject to call-in due to concerns from the Environment Agency. Until planning permission is obtained development of temporary accommodation will not begin. It is therefore likely that the school will not open in 2021.
- 4.12 Admissions for 2021 are likely to be very difficult if the new Oasis Academy Temple Quarter free school does not open and Trinity is not at the full PAN. Projected demand is estimated to be around 4,500 with 4,300 places within PAN. There is likely to be a need to ask more schools to admit over PAN to ensure every pupil receives an offer. This may require additional commitments from the Growth Fund.
- 4.13 The planned new schools will provide an additional 600 Year 7 places. CST Trinity will provide 180 places, Oasis Temple Quarter 240 and 180 places at Oasis South Bristol. The table below shows pupil projections based on October 2018 census data and the number of Year 7 places following the opening of the new schools.

Table 1: Year 7 pupil forecasts and capacity 2019 - 2024

Year	2019 Oct Census Data Projection	Year 7 Capacity
2019/20	4,321	4,209
2020/21	4,402	4,209
2021/22	4,573	4,269
2022/23	4,748	4,269
2023/24	4,793	4,269
2024/25	4,825	4,269

Includes 120 places at Trinity from 2019 and additional 60 from 2021.

- 4.14 Demand is projected to start to fall after 2024, in line with primary school numbers and it is unlikely that further additional places will be required in the medium to longer term.

- 4.15 In-year admissions will be very difficult during the 2020/21 year. There will be very few, if any, available places in Year 7 for pupils moving into the city or requiring a change of school.
- 4.16 Planning for secondary school place requirements is carried out using 3 geographical Planning Areas. Pupil projections for each area are included in appendix 1.
- 4.17 The significant issue facing primary schools in the short to medium term is over-provision. Changes to school funding have made the issue of surplus places particularly challenging. Officers have been working with schools to reduce the PAN at some schools where there is insufficient demand. This does not remove the places permanently but makes it easier for the schools to plan staffing levels with more certainty.
- 4.18 Reception admissions peaked in 2016 when 5,581 children started school. Although there was a small increase in applications for 2020 the longer term forecasts indicate that demand will continue to fall. For 2023/24 projections indicate around 4,800 children requiring a place.
- 4.19 Previously, when pupil numbers were falling there was a scheme to provide some protection for schools with falling rolls. This was withdrawn. The Schools in Financial Difficulty fund may be a source of support for schools in this position, but this only applies for maintained primary schools and not academies (or maintained secondary schools).
- 4.20 There has also been a rise in demand for specialist provision with a large increase in the number of Education and Health Care Plans. The rise is significantly above that which would be expected from the rise in the general school population. Existing specialist provision across the city is at or very close to capacity and will require substantial capital investment. Solutions to create additional specialist provision in both special and mainstream schools are currently being explored.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 This report is combining information on school place planning and the capital available to address the consequent pressures. The capital information is summarised in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2 There will also be financial consequences for the Growth Fund. **Appendix 2** sets out the current and future number of forms of entry that are expected to have a financial implication. This would either be through the mainstream formula for new and growing schools, or it would be through the Growth Fund for expanding schools. Either way, the funding received through the Schools Block DSG for growth would

be the main source to pay for this.

- 5.3 The forecast numbers are based on existing plans and average costs for primary and secondary pupils. Actual costs will vary school by school. Actual numbers of pupils will depend on whether new expansions occur at the expected time and if actual pupil numbers account for the expected full forms of entry. Delays to expansions or variations to actual pupil demand will affect these figures. These numbers are very high level and are less easy to predict the further in the future they relate to.
- 5.4 The current Growth Fund, has a budget of £2.7m for 2020/21, consisting of the £2.0m allocated plus £0.7m refund of recoupment. Existing commitments suggest spend of £2.3m, allowing some contingency for arising variation. When adding in “New and Growing Schools” which are funded from the schools formula directly then total funding rises to £3.2m and expected commitments total £2.8m

Table 2: Forecast extra forms of entry and cost to Schools Block 2020-2024

Type of Growth	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
TOTAL number of forms of entry (ie classes of 30)	26	32	28	24	21
Forecast cost (£'000)	2,145	2,750	2,538	2,176	1,904

- 5.5 It is clear that Bristol will need to provide for growth for many years to come.
- 5.6 The report also refers to falling rolls in primary because of a falling birth rate. Schools with falling rolls often experience difficulties in managing the consequent loss of funding. The mainstream funding formula operates on a lagged basis, so a school that had fewer pupils in October, would not bear the loss of any funding for another two terms, at the start of the financial year (or three terms, in the case of academies). Any consideration of a Falling Rolls Fund would need to recognize that this would be a call on Schools Block funding.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Capital Update

Appendix 2: Future Growth Fund forecasts

Appendix 1

Schools Capital Funding

The table below demonstrates the capital budget from 2017/18 to current.

The majority of capital funding from this period has been allocated to the secondary sector in order meet the demand of additional places that had previously been seen in the primary sector. Key projects include:

- Council construction of Trinity Academy 6FE secondary school in Lockleaze – ring fenced grant from the DfE from the Free Schools Programme
- Redland Green 1FE expansion
- Bristol Free School 2FE expansion
- Bristol Cathedral Choir School 1FE expansion
- Cotham 1FE expansion
- St Bede’s 1FE expansion

The DfE are currently due to deliver 2 new free schools:

- Oasis Academy Temple Quarter 8FE to cater for young people from East and Centre – target opening date 2021 (in temporary accommodation)
- Oasis Academy South Bristol – On the site of The Park in Knowle West. Likely opening date 2023.

Failure to deliver the planned schools would require additional provision to be accommodated within existing schools. Funding for this would need to be discussed with the DfE but would in all likelihood need to include some level of basic need grant funding. It should be noted there is also significant pressure on the basic need grant funding to increase provision for pupils with SEND requiring capital investment from the same sources.

The only planned increase to primary provision is at Perry Court Primary where additional place will be required as a result of major new housing. The capital costs of this expansion are being funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The table demonstrates that there is currently £1.069m unallocated Basic Need Grant Funding within the education capital programme. A review is currently underway considering how best to allocate this. Considerations are primarily around SEND sufficiency and how best the Council can deliver its statutory responsibility in this sector,

Summary of capital grants 2017/18 to 20120/21

EDUCATION CAPITAL GRANTS (£'000)	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	TOTAL £'000	Grant Purpose
Basic Need (2020/21 grant confirmed as zero)	3,197	5,114	10,998	0		19,309	Pupil place sufficiency (statutory responsibility).
SEND Capital	0	841	2,600	841		4,281	Capital to improve special provision for children & young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
School Condition Allocation (for LA maintained schools)	2,716	2,271	2,057			7,044	Capital to improve and maintain school estate at LA schools.
Healthy Pupils Grant (from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy)	0	207	0	0		207	Investment in facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health, wellbeing & medical conditions.
ESFA Ringfenced grant ringfenced for 4 Early Years projects	2,229	0	0	0		2,229	Ringfenced for the expansion of 4 specific early years settings.
Devolved Formula Capital - LA schools (excludes VA)	596	540	467	439		2,042	Funding for LA maintained schools (excl.VA) to maintain their buildings & fund small capital project (or can be pooled across the LA with the schools' agreement).
ESFA ringfenced Grant for Cathedral Trust Schools Trinity Academy		215	4,137	17,051	2,597	23,999	Ringfenced for the construction of the new Trinity Academy.
TOTAL KNOWN FUNDING RECEIVABLE 2017/18 TO 2020/21	8,738	9,187	24,131	14,459	2,597	59,111	

ALLOCATION OF GRANTS	£'000	Comment
Ringfenced and devolved funding	28,270	£24.0m Trinity + £2.2m Early Years + £2.1m Devolved Capital
Allocated SEND Grant	4,047	ABW Service AED in education capital programme
Unallocated SEND Grant (Cabinet report on SEND strategy with proposals pending)	234	
Allocated to projects in the Education Capital Programme	25,491	of which £8.5m for secondary expansion, £12.8m for SEN, £3.0m for Primaries, £0.5m for Early Years, £0.7m for project scoping/OR's/feasibilities
Unallocated (Cabinet report on SEND strategy with proposals pending)	1,069	
TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	59,111	

Appendix 2

High Level forecast of Growth Fund for next 5 years

Type of Growth	Sector	School	Additional Forms of Entry				
			Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
Growth Fund	Primary	Ashton Gate	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Primary	Cotham Gardens	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Primary	Southville	1	0	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Primary	Whitehall	1	1	0	0	0
Growing school APT	Primary	Redfield	1	0	0	0	0
Growing school APT	Primary	Marksbury	1	1	0	0	0
Growing school APT	Primary	Fairlawn	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Bristol Free Sch	1	0	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Cathedral	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	City Academy	1	1	1	1	1
Growth Fund	Secondary	Fairfield	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Redland Green	2	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	John Williams	1	1	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Bristol Brunel	2	2	1	1	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Bristol Met	2	2	2	1	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Colston Girls	2	2	2	1	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	Cotham	1	1	1	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	St Bedes	1	1	1	0	0
Growing school APT	Secondary	Trinity	4	6	6	6	6
Growing school APT	Secondary	Oasis Temple Q	0	8	8	8	8
Growing school APT	Secondary	Oasis S Bristol	0	0	6	6	6
TOTAL number of forms of entry (ie classes of 30)			26	32	28	24	21
Type of Growth	Sector	Average amount for 7/12ths of year	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
Growth Fund	Primary	£2,013	4	3	0	0	0
Growing school APT	Primary	£2,013	3	2	0	0	0
Growth Fund	Secondary	£3,022	15	13	8	4	1
Growing school APT	Secondary	£3,022	4	14	20	20	20
TOTAL number of forms of entry (ie classes of 30)			26	32	28	24	21
Forecast cost (£'000)			£2,145	£2,750	£2,538	£2,176	£1,904