Committee: Cabinet  
Date:    22 February 2010
Agenda item: 4  
Subject: Primary School Places
Lead officer: Yvette Stanley
Lead member: Debbie Shears
Forward Plan reference number: 895
Contact officer: Tom Procter

Recommendations:
1. To support the bid from Children, Schools and Families Department to fund the school growth schemes in the capital programme in 2010/11 to 2012/13 as outlined in paragraph 6.3 of the report.
2. To agree that opportunities to provide permanent solutions to 2010/11 and 2011/12 expansions will be considered when the external finance from the DCSF (Department for Children, School and Families) is known, and the most up to date demographic information is available to ensure permanent schemes are sustainable.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 On 14 December 2009 and 18 January 2010 cabinet considered reports on the primary school places strategy. This report is submitted to cabinet at the same time as the capital programme to ensure commitments for school expansion projects are consistent with cabinet’s decisions on the capital programme.

1.2 The report therefore seeks agreement as part of the council’s capital programme for permanent schemes for the 2009/10 reception expansions, the purchase of a site and first phase for a new primary school, and temporary expansions/adaptations for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 academic years pending external finance from the DCSF in 2011/12 and beyond.

2. DETAILS

Review of level of expansion required

2.1 The previous cabinet reports on 18 December 2009 and 18 January 2010 confirmed that to meet demand up to 2009/10, 6 schools have expanded
over the past two years in reception year, with a view to the arrangements becoming permanent. Further forecast expansions from 2010/11 were reported within the following range

High: 12FE (forms of entry - i.e. 12 classes of 30 per year) by 2012/13 then falling 6FE by 2018/19  
Medium: 9FE by 2012/13 then falling 6FE by 2018/19  
Lowest possible: 5FE then falling 4FE by 2018/19

2.2 The council’s projected increase is based on Greater London Authority school projections against existing available school places. The school projections are based on the population projections and the historic relationship between the school-age population and demand for school places. The information is verified by the council’s local analysis. It is inevitably more difficult to forecast demand further into the future, especially beyond September 2012 when it is not based on actual birth data, hence the range stated above. With such a profound change in the demographics and the council working to a lower than the normal level of surplus, the admissions preference information is important to ensure the council provides sufficient reception year places in local schools for the following September.

2.3 The recent admissions applications information for September 2010 reception year entry show over 120 additional first preferences for LB Merton schools. With only a bare minimum surplus in 2009/10, additional places will need to be added in line with this growth so an additional four schools will need to be expanded by a form of entry (30 places per school) for September 2010

2.4 Actual pupil numbers continue to be in line with the ‘high’ scenario. The table below outlines the “high forecast” projections with schools expanded in reception year to date. As the programme rolls forward officers will continue to monitor projections and actual numbers to manage over/under supply carefully. Given the anticipated fall off in numbers in later years the Council will need to secure an appropriate balance of permanent and temporary arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>PAN and projected PAN for approx 3% surplus</th>
<th>FE increase on previous year</th>
<th>Schools providing an additional reception year class with a view to permanent expansion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1 – FE INCREASE/DECREASE “HIGH FORECAST”
### 2008/09
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Wimbledon Chase, Holy Trinity and St. Thomas of Canterbury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>2190 *</td>
<td>3FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>2280 *</td>
<td>3FE</td>
<td>Benedict, Hollymount and Joseph Hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>2400 *</td>
<td>4FE</td>
<td>TBC **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>2610</td>
<td>7FE</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>2640</td>
<td>1FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>2640</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>2610</td>
<td>-1FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>2580</td>
<td>-1FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td>-1FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>2490</td>
<td>-2FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>2460</td>
<td>-1FE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Actual surplus for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and forecast for 2010/11 based on admissions applications below 3%

** Following admissions preference information, discussions with governing bodies being concluded for four schools to provide an extra reception year class. Announcement of all schools expected by the end of February

#### New school

2.5 On 18 January 2010 cabinet agreed that officers should commence detailed work to identify potential sites and resources for the purchase of a site to enable a new school to be built in the north Wimbledon area. The bid to the capital programme outlined in the financial section of this report would provide the finance for this to be delivered.

2.6 The timescale for the purchase will depend on a number of factors but an optimistic timescale to complete a purchase is by 31 March 2011. The building of the new school would then probably be in two phases (early years and key stage one initially) with the first phase programmed to spend in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to open in September 2013. The key stage two phase would be built in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years. Additional places are required in the area from 2010/11 to 2012/13 so it is envisaged schools will be requested to take bulge classes in this period. Funding is based on a 2-form entry school, but the school will be designed to be able to be expanded to 3-forms of entry if required.

3.1 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.2 This was provided in detail in the 14 December 2009 committee report.

4. **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 This was provided in detail in the 14 December 2009 committee report. The statutory consultations for the permanent expansion of Hollymount and Joseph Hood Primary Schools commenced on 22 January 2010 with a
closing date of 26 February 2010. The council will then decide whether to publish a statutory proposal after which a final decision can be made.

5. TIMETABLE

2.1 Providing sufficient and appropriate primary school places requires multiple projects operating to various timescales. The absolute timescale is always to provide sufficient places each September for reception year.

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

Capital

6.1 The report for the capital programme supports the following funding from LB Merton’s capital programme for primary school places. This excludes DCSF grant and other external finance such as section 106 funding for which known funding is allowed for in recommending these costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Growth - Current</td>
<td>3,070</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Growth – Additional</td>
<td>8,897</td>
<td>14,115</td>
<td>4,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expansions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,967</td>
<td>14,515</td>
<td>4,710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 The “Pupil growth – current” was agreed in the current 2009/10 to 2011/12 capital programme and will support the completion of permanent expansion schemes at Holy Trinity and Wimbledon Chase Schools. Adaptations to allow the return of St. Thomas of Canterbury School to be 3 forms of entry will mainly be funded from the Voluntary Aided Schools capital programme and the children’s centre capital grant in lieu of the displacement of the early years provider.

6.3 The “Pupil Growth – Additional expansions” will fund:

- Permanent schemes for the 2009/10 expansions at Benedict, Hollymount and Joseph Hood Primary Schools
- The purchase of a site for a new school in the north Wimbledon area, and the first phase of the building of the new school in 2011/12 and 2012/13
- Aragon Primary School to return to 3 form entry from 2010/11 - Adaptations to allow this and extended modular accommodation for the displaced children’s centre.
- William Morris Primary School/Harris Academy – Adaptation works to facilitate the return of the school to 2-forms of entry under the possible
management of a single all-through Academy (see cabinet report on William Morris School dated 18 January 2010).

- Temporary accommodation for a further five schools to provide temporary solutions in 2010/11 and 2011/12, pending further finance from the DCSF.

6.4 In recent years the DCSF has provided 3-year capital allocations to Local Authorities for schools after each comprehensive spending review. The next review is due in summer 2010 so it is expected that any external funding will be announced in late 2010. Although this will be in the context of a significantly decreased central government capital spending envelope the government has recognised that the funding of additional primary school places is a major priority. There is therefore a high likelihood that government funding will be provided in this regard and a reasonable possibility that some of this will be grant.

6.5 This possible additional government grant funding could be used to reduce the funds being provided through council borrowing or could be used to provide permanent solutions to 2010/11 and 2011/12 expansions. A review on the level of permanent accommodation required will need to be undertaken on the basis of the most up to date demographic information. Relevant feasibility studies will be completed in the meantime.

6.6 As reported to the 18 January cabinet, the council was not successful in receiving any of the emergency capital grant funding for 2010/11 despite the high level of expenditure required due to the formula taking account of surplus places higher up the schools and previous supported borrowing allocations. The council continues to make its case against this decision and cabinet members are meeting the schools minister on this matter.

Revenue

6.7 An element of the costs for the school expansion is met from the council utilising its borrowing allowances. The revenue effects are detailed in the capital programme report to this committee.

6.8 Other revenue costs are associated with providing teaching staff and other associated costs in the expanded schools and these would fall to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is a grant from the DCSF for the council to fund schools and related spending. In the formula there is a time lapse between the need to provide teachers for the additional pupils and the trigger for funding which does not come until the following April.

6.9 If the Authority were to set up a new 2-form entry school opening in September 2013, in addition to the £402,000 funding triggered via the funding formula, an estimated £250,000 per annum in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 would be triggered by the new school. The estimated
additional costs for the new school includes the establishment of two nursery classes.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal implications were contained in the report to 14 December cabinet. There are no new legal implications.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The expansion of primary schools is necessary to ensure the council provides access to a local primary school place for all its residents who want one.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications to the proposals of this report.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The expansion of primary schools is a major undertaking with a series of financial and political risks. It also involves extensive construction work which requires careful management of health and safety.

11. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

None

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT.


13. CONFIDENTIAL BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

13.1 Potential for strategic land and property acquisitions to contribute to meeting the need for primary schools places

13.2 Table of responses from schools and conclusions on viability of permanent expansion