

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 4th July 2013

Agenda item: 8

Subject: Scrutiny Review of the Provision of Secondary School Places – Progress Report

Lead officer: Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor James Holmes and Councillor Peter Walker, Co-Chairs of the Secondary School Places Task Group

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel note the progress made to date by the Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group.
 - B. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel agrees to receive the draft Final Report of the Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group at their September 2013 meeting, with a view to endorsing the report and recommendations to forward to Cabinet for consideration and approval.
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel on progress to date of the Task Group review of the provision of secondary school places.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 At the first meeting of the 2012/13 Municipal Year, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of the provision of secondary school places, with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet and partner organisations on how to best manage and meet the increasing demand for secondary school places in the borough, and the strategic, land and financial pressures the council faced as a result.
- 2.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel agreed the task group membership and that the review report would be considered at it's meeting on 4 July 2013.
- 2.3 The Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group has considered evidence in relation to the following terms of reference over a seven month period:
 - Review the planning assumptions relating to the projected increased demand;
 - Examine the public policy factors, which impact on the provision of school places;
 - Examine options available to the council and their funding implications; and
 - Identify strategies employed by other councils with similar challenges

- 2.4 A range of stakeholders, including the Secondary Headteacher Group, Youth Parliament and School Governors have been engaged in the review. In addition, Members have considered detailed officer reports and evidence and have sought best practice in neighbouring local boroughs and undertaken site visits to schools.
- 2.5 During this time, the Task Group have focused their efforts on ensuring that the council has the financial resources and land/sites available to meet demand, as well as determining the right teaching and leadership in schools, of various types, considering the best models for Merton.
- 2.6 The Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group have formed a number of evidence based recommendations that it will present to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel for endorsement, and subsequently to Cabinet for consideration and approval. However, the Task Group were made aware that the Children, Schools and Families Department had commissioned two studies to determine how it would meet demand for secondary school places. These studies were:
- Land audit; and
 - Site feasibility study
- 2.7 The Task Group felt that the outcomes and findings of these reviews were crucial to the findings and recommendations the Task Group would make. It was agreed that the Task Group would therefore continue its work and report to the Children and Young People Panel in September 2013 with their final report and recommendations further to deliberating the findings of the departmental reviews.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 Appendix 1 of the task group's report gives a list of whom we spoke to and the equalities impact assessment is provided at appendix 2. This report will be presented to the Panel in September 2013.

5. TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel established the task group and will receive the draft final report for the Panel's approval at their meeting on 4th July 2013.

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this progress report. The Final Report of the Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group will note the financial, resource and property implications arising from their recommendations.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None for the purposes of this progress report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory implications of the topic being scrutinised. The Final Report of the Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group will note any implications arising from their recommendations.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None for the purposes of this progress report. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the review process and will be available in the final report.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None for the purposes of this progress report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the crime and disorder implications of the topic being scrutinised. The Final Report of the Provision of Secondary School Places Task Group will note any implications arising from their recommendations.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None for the purposes of this progress report.

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

11.1 None for the purposes of this progress report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None for the purposes of this progress report.