

THE EXECUTIVE

9 SEPTEMBER 2003

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES

DRAFT SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2003	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is submitted as part of the Council's statutory duty to prepare a draft School Organisation Plan for consultation.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The draft School Organisation Plan sets out the Council's proposals to provide school places within the borough. It was submitted to the School Organisation Committee on 24 June 2003 for approval before being published for consultation by 1 August 2003. A copy of the plan has been circulated separately as it is over 80 pages. It is also available in the Members Rooms and is available on the Intranet / Internet.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to make any comments on and to agree the Draft School Organisation Plan as part of the consultation process for the plan.</p> <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a draft School Organisation Plan and to consult on it.</p>	
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1. Background

- 1.1 The School Organisation Plan identifies how the Council as the Local Education Authority intends to meet its statutory responsibility to secure sufficient education provision within its area in order to promote higher standards of attainment. It is designed to help key stakeholders, schools, parents and local communities to understand what school places are needed both present and future and how they will be provided.
- 1.2 In February 2003 the DfES published new draft Guidance and Regulations to revise the current regulations and guidance on School Organisation Plans and statutory proposals. The new regulations have been prepared against a background of changes made in the Education Act 2002, which come into force on 1 June 2003. The changes have implications for the publication of the plan in terms of timing.
- 1.3 One of the changes from previous years is the proposal to require a revised plan every 3 years as opposed to annually. The demographics of the borough will remain updated each year and where there are exceptional changes in local circumstances a full plan will be published in the intervening years. The School Organisation Plan should describe:

- How the LEA intends to secure the provision of primary and secondary education (including the provision for children with special needs) to meet the needs of the local population
- Demographic information about the borough and provision of school places
- The LEA's policies and principles
- Conclusions about the need to add or remove school places

1.4 For this year **only** the timings for the publication of the Plan will differ from that for 2004 onwards. For LEAs to take account of the new DfES guidance and regulations, the draft Plan was not required to be published until 1 August 2003. An eleven-week consultation period is given for comments/objections and thereafter the School Organisation Committee will be given one month to approve the final Plan.

1.5 In subsequent years the Plan is to be published in draft form by 1 June and a ten-week period is provided for any objections to be received. The process requires the unanimous approval of the SOC who will consider the Plan and any written objections that have been made. If the SOC fail to reach a unanimous decision, then the matter will be referred to an Adjudicator. The SOC then has up to one month to approve the Plan.

2. The Plan

2.1 The draft Plan has been updated from last year's Plan to include:

- Details of the new admission arrangements
- The Council's response to government initiatives relative to the provision of school places including the transformation agenda and the extended school model
- The latest forecasts showing the anticipated demand for school places and associated impact on school provision and additional capacity in schools
- A new section covering the extensive new house building programme in the borough and the associated impact on the provision of places
- Information concerning new DfES guidance and regulations affecting the provision of the Plan
- Information concerning the new method of calculating the physical capacity of schools
- Details of the Action Plan on School Places and the progress made towards achieving it
- A link to the Ofsted quarterly monitoring report detailing progress in the first year.

3. New School Provision

3.1 The plan identifies that demand for school places in the Borough is driven by a range of factors, investment in new housing being one of the most significant of factors. DEAL will be working closely with colleagues in other departments to ensure that the provision of places grows in line with the provision of new housing. The LEA has already identified that new school provision is needed in the south of the borough. Initial indications show that two primary schools are required on Barking Reach, though much depends on upon the mix of housing. The size of the schools will depend on the outcome of continuing discussions concerning the housing density proposed for the site.

3.2 Effects of the new development planned on the Lymington Fields site and Borough wide pressure on schools places will also mean that additional two form of entry primary

school will be needed. The scale of the development of Barking Town Centre, South Dagenham and the potential for the development of University of East London site is also expected to mean that demand for school places will increase still further. As soon as details concerning the development of these sites are confirmed, a more detailed assessment can be made.

4. Consultation

4.1 The draft Plan was published for consultation on 1 August 2003 for an eleven-week consultation period, via:

- A public notice in the Dagenham Post
- Copies sent to all schools, chairs of governors and other related bodies
- Copies held in all Libraries
- A copy available on the LEA web site

4.2 *Feedback:* The School Organisation Committee, which met on 24 June 2003 endorsed the plan

4.3 *Objections:* Responses will be provided for any objections, which are received. An update report will be provided to the Executive before the papers are submitted to the School Organisation Committee for final approval. The Plan will then be published.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Plan is part of the ongoing statutory requirement to produce a draft School Organisation Plan for consultation and is part of the Council's process to provide a school place within the borough for all children who need one. The Executive are asked to endorse the Plan as part of the consultation process.

Background Papers

- DfES Guidance on Statutory Proposals
- School Organisation Plan 2002