

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Services for Children and Young People Basic Need Programme
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 19 October 2010
Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Watkins
CMT Member: Director of Services for Children and Young People

Authors: Gareth Simmons, Programme Director for Learning Environments
Jayne Gorton, School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager
Les Allen, Programme Manager for Learning Environments

Contacts: Tel: 01752 307161
gareth.simmons@plymouth.gov.uk
Tel: 01752 307472
jayne.gorton@plymouth.gov.uk
Tel: 01752 307421
les.allen@plymouth.gov.uk

Ref: MC.JEG/LA (CAB)(95)(16/09/10)
Part: I

Executive Summary:

This report seeks authorisation from members to commence the feasibility stage of providing additional primary school accommodation to meet the increased number of primary age pupils with effect from September 2011 and to commence consultation with stakeholders on the proposed changes.

Corporate Plan 2010-2013

This programme will align with and supports the following Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs):

CIP 7 – Keeping children safe

Making buildings and schools safer places is a key objective of the *Investment for Children* strategy, in particular supporting anti-bullying and promoting multi-agency spaces in schools.

CIP 9 – Developing high quality places to learn in

The programme is derived from the *Investment for Children* strategy that seeks to align demographic changes and the city growth agenda, while dealing with the liability of an aging stock of assets. This paper includes capital investment options to improve schools' learning environments.

CIP 12 – Delivering sustainable growth

The demographic need in the city has a direct effect on infrastructure being available for housing growth and this paper recognises that housing growth can not be achieved or sustained without infrastructure growth in children's services. The proposal takes into account the residential growth set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the changed nature of school places to promote the city's economic growth agenda.

CIP 14 – Providing better value for money

This paper considers the planning gain in support of the growth agenda and the liability to the Council of the statutory duty to provide education places and the longer term effects of the demographic need on the value for money of services.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

The Basic Need Programme will require investment to deliver solutions across the city to meet the start of the academic year in September 2011. Approval of the recommendations will contribute towards delivering the individual projects across the city in order to manage the increase in pupils forecast. The effect on the Council's capital and revenue budgets will be determined as part of the feasibility stage. Officer time and resources to develop proposals at this stage will be met from within the existing Services for Children and Young People's revenue budget until Initial Project Proposals (IPP) are defined.

Consideration has been given to the availability of land in the city for children's services, of which by far the greatest need is school places. In consultation with the Planning Authority proposals have been made on the allocation of land for future education purposes and these will be brought forward through the planning processes.

There will be an increase in the number of teachers and services to meet the pressure of increased pupil numbers. Predominantly, the cost of these increases will be met from central government as funding for schools is currently formula driven on pupil numbers.

Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

The planning of basic need has been done on the basis of equal opportunity; ensuring that a broad, mixed and diverse provision is available across the city. This will offer parents choice and diversity in a sustainable way. Also a part of the strategic development is work related to the nature of special education and inclusion; making sure that basic need provision is in place for these services; to ensure that the diverse pattern of education contains sufficient places for more vulnerable groups.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Approval of the following recommendations is requested to enable formal consultation to commence. It will also improve communications and the Council's ability to understand the financial exposure and any risks. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- Authority is given to officers to commence consultation with schools, partners, sponsors and stakeholders.
Reason: To improve communications and raise awareness of a growing issue in the city, to gain stakeholder support to solutions and generate a common approach.
- Authority is given to officers to propose the safeguarding of land for future expansion of education infrastructure related to housing growth.
Reason: To meet the Council's obligation to plan for education places and protect the interest in future facilities for local communities.
- Authority is given to officers to develop and submit Basic Need funding applications to support the capital programme.
Reason: To protect the Council's liability in meeting its statutory obligations where there are gaps in funding generated through housing growth.
- Authority is given to officers to develop proposals to meet Basic Need growth.
Reason: To understand the financial exposure and risks to the Council.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

The Council would be failing in its statutory duty to provide sufficient places in schools for parents and pupils within the city.

Background papers:

- Investment for Children Cabinet Paper approved 11 November 2008
- Plymouth City Council Children's Services Strategy for Change *Investment for Children*
- National Pupil Projections: Future Trends in Pupil Numbers. Published 24 June 2010 OSR 15/2010
- Local Development Framework: Adoption of Planning Obligations & Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, including the first review July 2010

Sign Off:

Fin	ChS0 308 AM 14/09/ 10	Leg	9665 /DS	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member: Colin Moore, Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning											

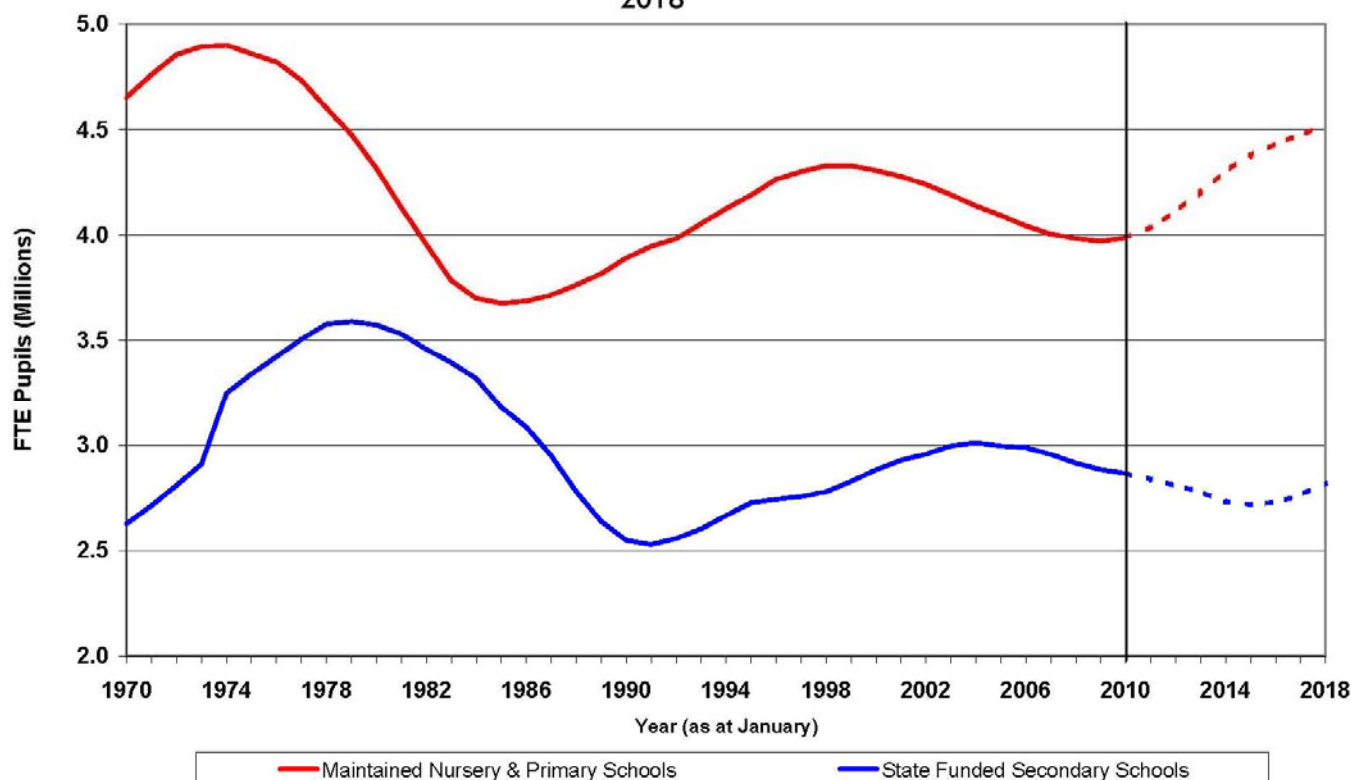
1.0 Introduction

1.1 For some time there has been a national decline in pupil numbers in state funded schools. This trend is about to turn and pupil numbers are projected to increase from 2011 onwards. The rise in the national pupil population is chiefly brought about from an increase in the birth rate, which is now feeding into early years and reception classes. Numbers in maintained nursery and primary schools have started to rise and are expected to continue to rise. By 2018 numbers are projected to reach levels last seen in the late 1970s. In the national context pupil numbers in maintained nursery and primary schools are projected to be around eight per cent higher in 2014 than 2010. The number of pupils aged five and six is projected to increase by some 12 per cent.

1.2 National state funded secondary school rolls, of pupils aged up to and including 15, started to decline after 2004 and they are expected to decline further until around 2015 when the increases in primary pupil numbers start to flow through. These numbers are expected to be almost five per cent lower in 2014 compared with 2010.

1.3 The following graph, published by the Department for Education (DfE) in June 2010¹, demonstrates the cyclical nature of school place planning with the population birth rate bulge passing through primary into secondary and then resulting in a population boom again when they become of child bearing age in the cycle.

Numbers of FTE pupils in state funded schools in England 1970 to 2010 and predictions to 2018

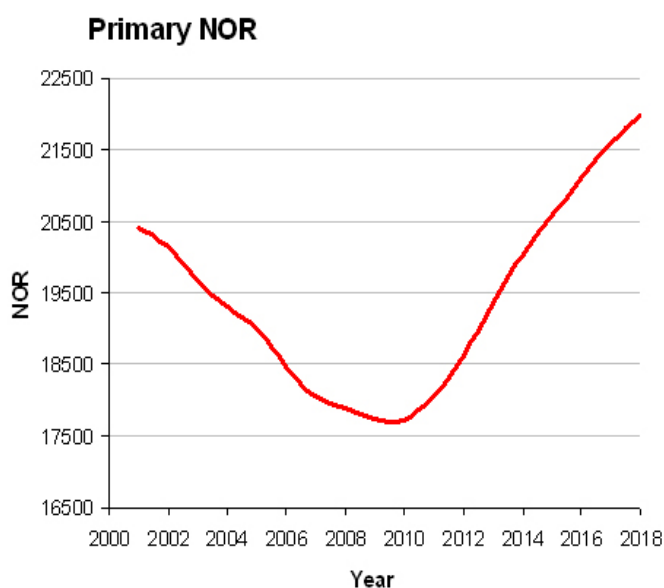


Notes

1. Pupil projections use ONS mid-2008 based population projections.

¹ National Pupil Projections: Future Trends in Pupil Numbers. Published 24 June 2010 OSR 15/2010

1.4 The position in Plymouth is similar to the national picture with primary numbers starting to rise in 2009 and secondary numbers declining until 2015. The following graph shows the prediction for Plymouth's primary numbers until 2018.



1.5 Within Services for Children and Young People, the School Organisation Team monitor live birth data obtained from Plymouth NHS Trust. This is used to inform the strategic direction for the Council's policies to ensure that sufficient school places exist to meet the needs of the population and to promote high standards of education.

1.6 The Council's *Investment for Children* strategy, adopted in December 2008, used live birth data at the time to predict the demographic change in school places. The following extract is from the 2008 adopted Investment for Children strategy.:

"In recent years there has been a steady increase in the birth rate in line with the national trend, the main factors of which are:

- an increasing number of women who had delayed starting a family now deciding to have children;
- an increasing number of children born to mothers not born in the UK.

The impact of this trend is that the number of children in primary schools should 'bottom out' in 2009 at 17,720 pupils, and then increase to 18,577 pupils in 2015, a rise of 5%. If the city achieves its ambition to significantly increase the population through regeneration and development the rise would be 9%.

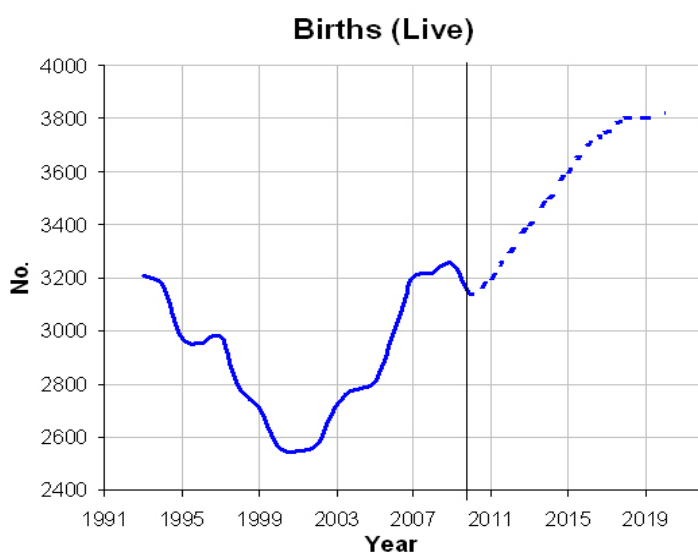
The implementation of the *School Implementation Plan* has meant that the Council has kept pace with the supply of primary school places, surplus capacity reducing at about the same rate as the numbers on roll. School place planning in future, through the strategy outlined in this report will seek to ensure that, as far as possible; there will be an overall level of surplus capacity of 8% to allow for sudden, unpredictable changes in pupil numbers and for parental preference to operate.

The long decline in the number of primary school pupils has already started to affect secondary schools and will continue to do so until at least 2015. Current numbers on roll stand at 18,253 pupils and are predicted to fall to 16,084 pupils in 2015, a drop of 12%. If the city achieves its ambition to significantly increase the population through regeneration and development the drop would be limited to 8%."

1.7 Live births have continued to rise as broadly predicted in 2008 and the number of children in Primary Schools are now predicted to increase to 20,294 by 2015, a rise of 14%. However, there has been a flattening out of the growth in recent years and births this year

appear to be slightly lower than last year. An analysis of the number of women of child bearing age leads to a prediction that the birth rate over the coming few years will turn

around again and rise sharply until 2019. This is demonstrated on the following graph:



1.8 This analysis is consistent with national trends which show increases in the birth rate and also with the studies that have been completed to consider the population of the city growing to 300k by 2026.

1.9 There have been some notable cases that have reached the Press when parents have found that there are insufficient school places in their locality, which has resulted in their children and young people

making longer and sometimes more inconvenient journeys to school. If Basic Need is not addressed there will come a point when there are insufficient places in the city to meet demand and the Council will at this point have failed to meet its statutory duty.

1.10 The Services for Children and Young People Basic Need Programme has arisen as a direct result of the monitoring of the live births. This programme seeks to develop an economic and effective solution to this new growth in births across the city. The primary objectives and benefits are to:

- Meet the basic requirements of the Education Act 1996 to provide sufficient education spaces for Plymouth;
- Maximise the efficiency and capacity of buildings already in existence that are located in suitable positions by refurbishing, adapting and bringing into more efficient use buildings that are used for education purposes;
- Maximise parental choice wherever possible by expanding popular and successful schools;
- Improve standards of education by targeting expansion at schools with the managerial and leadership quality to manage change;
- Deliver a coordinated programme of works that is part of the delivery of the Council's adopted strategy to raise aspirations; meet and stimulate economic growth; and reduce the Council's backlog liability of poor assets.

1.11 The Basic Need Programme focuses on the primary school estate and is consistent with the *Investment for Children* strategy and in particular the *Primary Capital strategy*, which is a document required by the Government and which we submitted in June 2008. It should be noted that increasing primary school places is still in line with the current reduction in secondary school places as these continue to decline until 2015. However, what will need to be considered in the secondary sector is the rate of growth out of this decline post 2015.

2.0 The Education Act and School Organisation

2.1 The Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that sufficient school places exist to meet the needs of the population and to promote high standards. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 amends the 1996 Act to require local authorities to promote diversity and increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the supply of

school places. Local authorities engage with parents and pupils to find out their needs and aspirations when assessing local need to inform their school place planning. In undertaking this planning, we are expected to take robust measures to remove surplus places as well as identify the need for any new places and ensure that school places are where parents want them and offer the kind of provision parents want.

2.2 School organisation is driven by improvement in outcomes for children and young people. Changes to the pattern of school places are made through the statutory proposals process involving five stages: consultation, publication, representation, decision and implementation. It is this process that is recommended to commence.

2.3 The Council's role in planning school places has four main strands of activity. These are as follows:

- Establishing the demand for school places, obtaining and using robust demographic data to establish where, when and for which age group school places will be needed in the future, and engaging with pupils and parents, as the users of the school system, to establish their needs and aspirations;
- Planning the organisation of school places in consultation with Children's Trust partners, Dioceses, Academy Sponsors and other stakeholders, including negotiation with developers and planning over the implications of housing growth;
- Implementing strategic plans for reorganisation, and ensuring sustainable delivery, including brokering partnerships between schools and potential providers such as Academy Sponsors, Trust Partners and potentially (depending on legislation) Free schools. It also includes the running of competitions for new schools where necessary;
- Supporting and challenging schools, in the use of buildings for efficient use and gathering data needed for returns to the DfE, in order to create sustainable and viable schools able to gain maximum advantage through their size.

3.0 Birth Rates in Plymouth

3.1 The live birth figures provided by the Plymouth NHS Trust are compared with the number of children arriving at school four years later to produce a trend, which is used to forecast future school years' reception cohorts.

3.2 The historic trend suggests that currently 94.42 per cent of births in Plymouth arrive at school within the city. This current percentage is based on the data for the previous three years' reception cohorts.

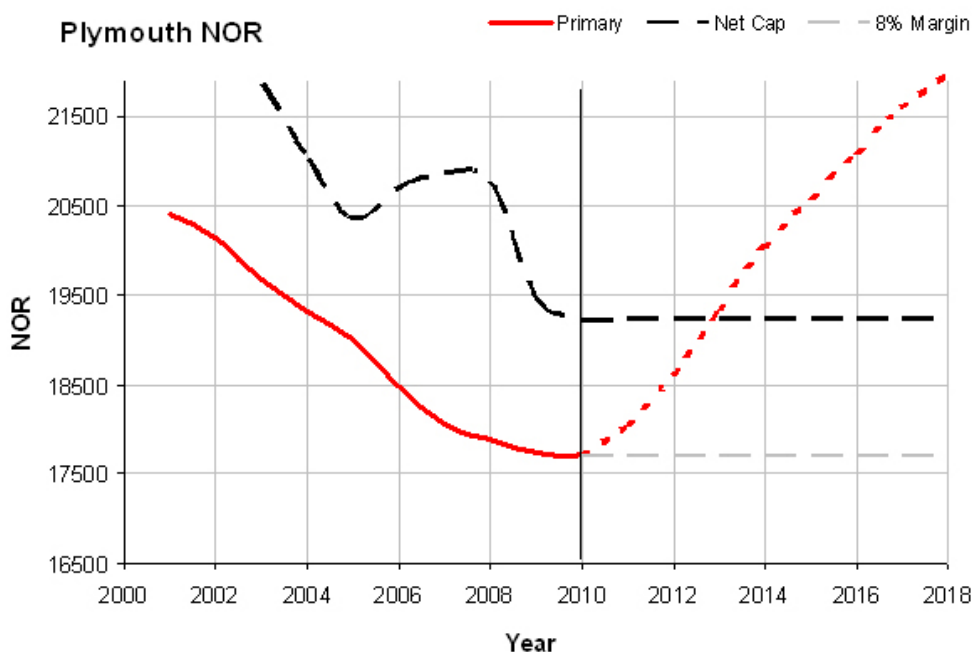
3.3 This demographic information has been benchmarked against the '2008-based Sub-national Populations Projections', published in June 2010, and a recent statistical release by the Department for Education (DfE), OSR 15/2010 – 24 June 2010, both of which correlate well with the Council's projections of a total primary cohort increase of 12 per cent by January 2014 and an increase of 19 per cent for five and six year olds by January 2014.

4.0 Schools' Capacity

4.1 There are a number of measures that are used in school place planning to manage admissions and the planning of school places. The key measure is the Net Capacity (Net Cap), which is a measure of how schools use their accommodation. The current Net Cap for primary schools in Plymouth is 19,229, which has been reduced over the past five years from 21,035 in line with government requirements. The Net Capacity of a school also calculates an Indicated Admission Number (IAN), which is the number of children in any cohort, or year, that the school is capable of accommodating. However, the Admissions Code of Practice uses Published Admission Numbers (PANs), which control the number of children admitted

to a school in any one year. The city currently has a PAN of 2,849. This means that at reception age there are 2,849 places available for a cohort of children. The number of children in preceding cohorts may have been admitted below or above PAN, depending on the popularity of individual schools and in-year admissions. The Number on Roll (NoR) is the number of students at a school, which should be a number below the Net Capacity.

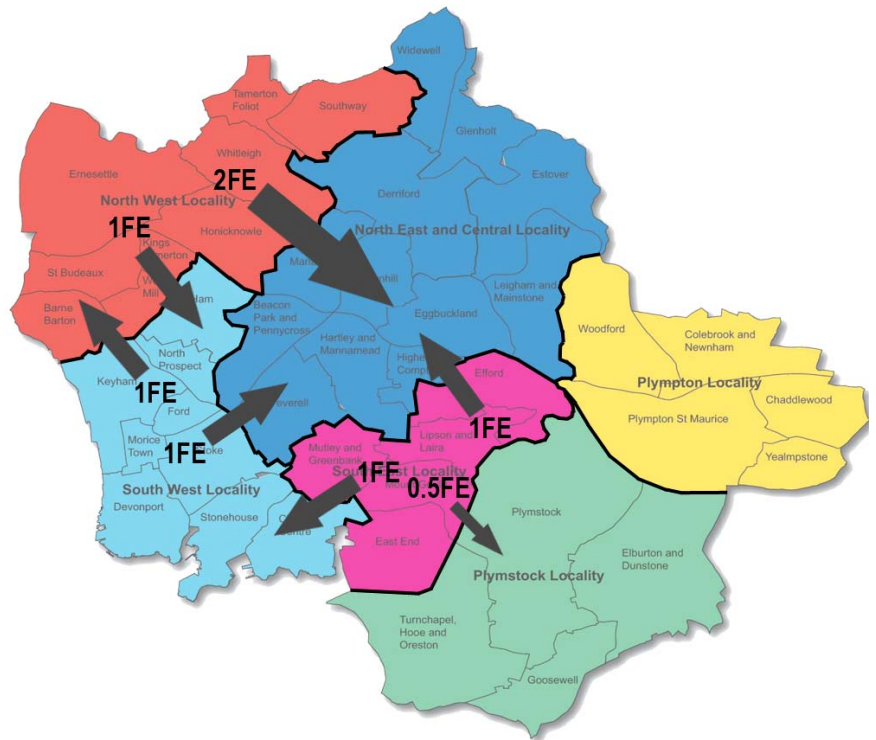
4.2 In the *Investment for Children* strategy there is a guiding principle that for planning purposes an 8 per cent surplus capacity should be built into the system to allow for inward migration, parental preference and military migration. The following graph shows the primary age PAN capacity and the predicted demand for places derived from the birth data described above:



4.3 This data indicates that the demand for primary school places is now reaching the point where it will outstrip supply; in certain localities this has already been reached. In these cases supply from neighbouring localities is meeting this demand, not necessarily a detrimental factor. However, as demand is increasing in all localities it is becoming much more difficult for the Council’s School Admissions Team to place children in a school that is convenient for parents. The data also shows that unless Basic Need is addressed, the city will not have sufficient primary places by 2013.

5.0 Localities and Intercity Migration

5.1 This picture shows the migration of Reception pupils averaged over the last three years. It attempts to show the related proportion of pupils attending a school in a locality other than the locality they live in. It illustrates the ability of the 'North East and Central' locality to draw in pupils from neighbouring localities because it contains popular and successful schools and that the 'South East' locality loses a proportion of its reception aged pupils to neighbouring localities because of its high housing density and low number of Primary schools.



6.0 School Organisation Effect on Standards

6.1 It is the policy of the Council, wherever possible, to arrange schools in whole number PANs. This means that classes can be arranged in year groups and within key stages. It also means that teaching staff have an efficient class size and the school budget is more sustainable, offering suitable resources to all the children within the school. When a school's admissions are not a multiple of 30, either by virtue of an odd number PAN, a low intake or in-year admissions, it means that the year groups have to be mixed. This can have a detrimental effect on school standards, especially in small schools where the flexibility to organise the school is much less. There are some educationalists who argue that a mixed year group can have positive effects but this is not considered the normal approach.

6.2 The increase in birth rates as they feed into primary schools can be a challenge to the policy of whole number PANs. This is because there may be capacity in a school in the upper years that using mixed year groups could release. Realising this capacity is a capital efficient method of meeting the Council's obligations to have school places available because it releases classes for additional reception children without the capital investment of building extra classrooms.

6.3 During periods of steady decline in primary school places, schools naturally reduced capacity by converting spare classrooms into specialist teaching areas. The development of ICT, in particular, has seen a number of redundant classrooms converted into ICT suites. These conversions have enriched the curriculum and undoubtedly contributed to the raising of attainment in the city. As the pressure for additional capacity now increases, a cost effective way of achieving this would be to reverse this trend and convert specialist teaching areas into general classes. This does not need to be to the detriment of specialist teaching, as advances in technology and changing methodology means that the integration of ICT throughout the school can make more accommodation available.

7.0 Alternative Methods of Organising Teaching within Schools

7.1 In today's modern curriculum there are examples in the country of alternative models of teaching that offer more efficient use of buildings. Two methods have been explored within Plymouth but do not have universal use.

7.2 One is the development of team teaching and the practice of shared use of general teaching and break out spaces. In this model, when children are in specialist teaching spaces such as PE, music, drama, ICT, or, subject to available accommodation, science, art, and food technology, their general teaching space is used for a different group. This is very efficient at utilising space but has the disadvantage that staff and children don't identify with a unique space for them.

7.3 A second approach, which is more radical, was trialled in Plymouth in 2007. This is a split day approach where the enrichment time of breakfast and after-school clubs is used to generate an early start/early finish day and a late start/late finish day. The enrichment activity is used either side of the day for those parents who work. Using a timetable that splits the day into thirds, classes can overlap so that two classes can share a single classroom. This is extremely efficient on space utilisation and educationalists have argued that offering flexibility to children in their time of learning can have benefits to attainment. However, the radical nature of this type of organisation would need considerable buy-in as it is not an accepted model of teaching and there are very few primaries in the country that practice this method.

7.4 Whilst the above methods have been trialled for their education advantage and not their ability to save accommodation, the obvious efficiency of space utilisation should not be overlooked. These methods have parallels in the office environment where hot-desking allows for significant accommodation savings, whilst boosting productivity. Schools will be challenged to consider how they deal with the increasing Basic Need, seeking methods to transform their teaching and learning in efficient and value for money ways.

8.0 Section 106 and Tariff

8.1 The Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document sets out to developers the method of calculation of planning gain that contributes to the infrastructure costs for primary schools. It should be noted that secondary schools are excluded from the Tariff as there is currently additional capacity in the secondary sector. Although this can prove problematic, in infrastructure terms, it is not the subject of this paper. The Tariff or s106 will only ever be gap funding and there is a risk to relying upon it as a primary funding source for capital projects. The Tariff has many exclusions, including affordable housing and flats. It also doesn't cover Special Education Needs, Children's Centres, Early Years and (depending on negotiation) community facilities. In addition, the level of the Tariff has been derived using Viability Assessment so does not cover the basic infrastructure cost in full. These gaps in infrastructure costs from the Tariff and S106 have been manageable where adoptions or alterations have been made at a time when central government funding for Basic Need has been available in the formula allocations. However, the combined effect of increased demand for places, housing growth and reduced government funding will change dramatically the pressures on the Council's Capital Programme to meet the gap in Tariff and s106 funding.

9.0 Capital Implications

9.1 At this time there are a number of options under consideration, which could facilitate the solution across the city. Each school identified as a potential site for increase of PAN has

its own particular needs, not only in terms of sustainability and condition but also in terms of site availability, abnormalities and potential statutory improvements. Some increases in PAN can be achieved at no capital cost by deriving capacity from the upper years and the conversion of specialist teaching spaces back to general teaching spaces. These options will be considered before there is a need for capital works. What is clear is that the city is not in a position to deal with all outstanding issues at every location, as this cost would be excessive. As a result each site that is identified will need to have its own individual solution appraised and quantified to ensure that this is an affordable programme for the city.

9.2 A bid for Exceptional Basic Need funding was made to the former Department for Children Schools and Families (now the DfE) in July 2009. Although the city only just met the criteria, this bid was considered as a forewarning of the growing issues in the city, as it was understood that funding in 2009/10 would not be essential. The Department declined Plymouth's request at that time. Future Basic Need funding bids are expected, despite the considerable economic pressures in the country, as the new Government have made Basic Need the highest priority in the criteria for its capital funding review, which is expected to make announcements in February 2011. The Council, having addressed surplus places over the past five years is in a healthy position to access funds for Basic Need. The removal of high liability buildings at a time of surplus and replacement in a time of growth being a prudent method of updating assets over the long term.

9.3 It is anticipated that authority given through this cabinet paper would allow proposals to be worked-up and to determine the cost implications. Individual schemes would be taken through the Capital Development Board for approval.

10.0 Timescales and Key Dates

10.1 At this time only an outline delivery plan exists, which contains some flexibility, however, the proposals will involve statutory consultations and approvals as well as a number of planning consultations. As the proposals will affect a considerable number of schools there will also be a significant number of capital contracts. All these factors will have an effect on a programme. The headline programme and key dates are as follows:

October 2010	Birth figures for 2014 cohort confirmed
October 2010	Comprehensive Spending Review
November 2010	Consultation process commences
November 2010	Schools Condition Surveys due to complete
December 2010	Phased delivery plan completed
February 2010	Cost Plan agreed
April 2011-Dec 2011	Statutory School Organisation Process
October 2011	Birth figures for 2015 cohort confirmed
December 2011	Construction Tenders issued
February 2012	Contract Awards
April 2012 – March 2013	Construction Period
Mar 2013 – August 2013	School internal changes and preparations
September 2013	Cohort 2013 commences

11.0 Recommendations

11.1 Approval of the following recommendations is requested to enable formal consultation to commence. It will also improve communications and the Council's ability to understand the financial exposure and any risks. It is therefore recommended that:

- Authority is given to officers to commence consultation with schools, partners, sponsors and stakeholders.

Reason: To improve communications and raise awareness of a growing issue in the city, to gain stakeholder support to solutions and generate a common approach.

- Authority is given to officers to propose the safeguarding of land for future expansion of education infrastructure related to housing growth.

Reason: To meet the Council's obligation to plan for education places and protect the interest in future facilities for local communities.

- Authority is given to officers to develop and submit Basic Need funding applications to support the capital programme.

Reason: To protect the Council's liability in meeting its statutory obligations where there are gaps in funding generated through housing growth.

- Authority is given to officers to develop proposals to meet Basic Need growth.

Reason: To understand the financial exposure and risks to the Council.