

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
11 NOVEMBER 2024	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Carrie Traill – Service Director for Education John Gregg - Executive Director Children and Young People's Service	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Katy Cole, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Libby Walker – Head of Service – Admissions, Attendance & Transport	07920160244
	Rachel Floyd – Head of Capital & Place Planning	07483373080

ADMISSIONS AND PLACE PLANNING

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Head of Service – Admissions, Attendance & Transport	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee review and comment on the approach to admissions and place planning, and endorse the approach taken by Officers.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is being presented at the request of the Committee following a recent Group Representatives meeting.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 As a request from the committee this report will:

- Explain the Admissions and Pupil Place Planning process; and
- Explain the reasons for the mainstream and special place pressures the Local Authority is currently experiencing.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

2. Education

2.4 How does this report link to the Children in care Promise?

The improvement work being undertaken in Children’s Services supports the delivery of the Children in Care promise. It will ensure that Children’s Services can provide good quality services to children and families in Peterborough that will keep them safe, ensure that they feel valued and respected, and are involved in decision making about their lives.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 This report is presented at the request of the committee to explain the School Admissions process and to provide a forward plan to address school place planning pressures.

School Admissions Process and School Places

- 1.1 The School Admissions Team is a statutory service, led by the Head of Service for Admissions, Attendance & Transport, Libby Walker.

The Pupil Place Planning Team is led by the Head of Education Capital and Pupil Place Planning, Rachel Floyd.

- 1.2 School Admissions are governed by the School Admissions Code. The School Admissions Team allocate school places to the parents/carers/guardians that apply for school places as part of the two coordinated schemes, for parents who live in Peterborough City Council's jurisdiction and wish for their child to start their education in Reception, transfer from an infant school to a junior school and transition from primary school to secondary school. They also process applications for in-year school placements for children who wish to change school between Reception and Year 11

- 1.3 For transition applications parents/carers/guardians need to apply for a school place through the Admissions Team of their home Local Authority (the local authority in which they pay their council tax to). Parents can apply for up to 3 preference schools, but if a preference school cannot be offered then the local authority will offer the next nearest school to the home address with available places.

- 1.4 For in-year applications parents/carers/guardians can apply to schools directly as some schools chose to process their own in-year applications. Parents can apply for up to 3 preference schools. If a place is not available at a preference school, the local authority has a statutory duty to allocate the next nearest school to the home address with available places. If a school processes their own in-year applications this means that the local authority cannot allocate a child a place at this school. This also means that should this be the next nearest school with available places, the local authority cannot direct a child to this school either. This means that PCC must allocate to a local authority in-year school, which could mean, that a child is offered a school further away and depending on the distance of the offered school place could mean that the child is eligible for transport.

- 1.5 Children of compulsory school age qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and any of the following apply:

Primary aged children in Reception to Year 3 who attend their nearest suitable or designated school and live at least 2 miles from the school.

Primary aged children in Year 4 to Year 6 who attend their nearest suitable or designated school and live at least 3 miles from the school; or who attend their nearest suitable or designated school, where the parents are in receipt of the appropriate benefits, and live at least 2 miles from the school.

We will provide free transport for secondary age children in Year 7 to Year 11 who:
Attend their catchment or nearest available school and live at least three miles from the school

In addition to the above, children/young people who cannot reasonably be expected to

walk to school because of SEN, disability or mobility difficulty are eligible for transport under section 508B and schedule 35B (2) of the Education Act 1996.

- 1.6 Nationally, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Placement Sufficiency is an area of concern, as there are more children requiring a special school placement, than there are places available. This is also the case in Peterborough. A Peterborough City Council SEN Placement Sufficiency Strategy is in draft, with a plan to increase in-city specialist placements, including proposals to develop existing special school sites and the repurposing of unused school's space.

The SEND & Inclusion Service will only consider placing a child in out-of-county placements where:

- All in-city maintained, and academy special schools are unable to offer a place and offer a statutory compliant response.
- An appeal which goes to tribunal can result in Peterborough City Council being ordered to place a child at a specified setting, which can be out-of-city, local area, or county.

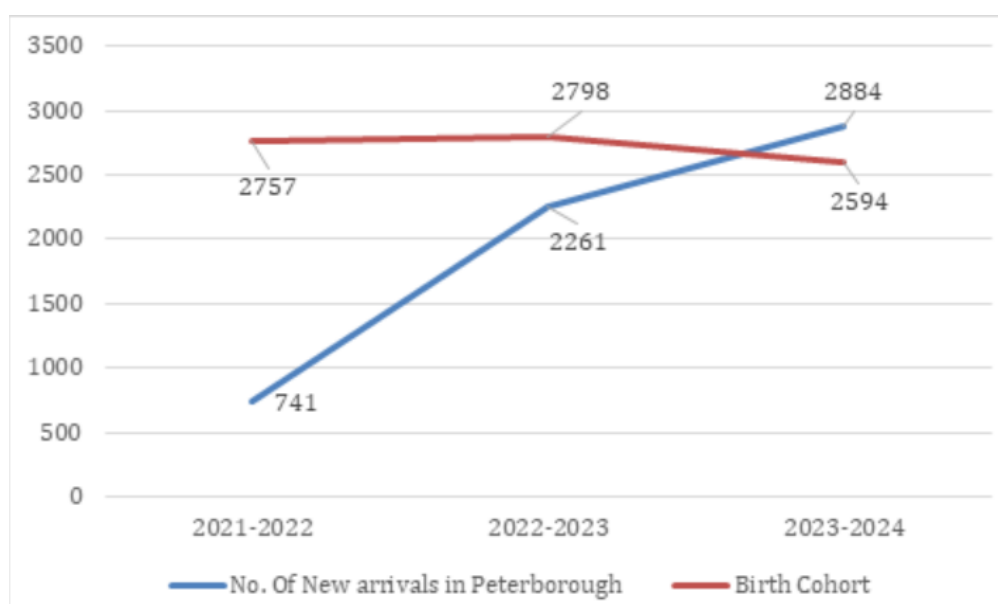
In the last 12-month period 44 children have been placed in out of county independent day placements due to lack of available specialist placements within the city.

- 1.7 Pupil Place Planning officers use demography for the area to calculate how many school places are needed in each planning area to ensure that children born in Peterborough and those arriving during their education can attend a school in their community. PCC demography data is commissioned through Cambridgeshire County Council. Officers use birth rates and growth via new developments to formulate a number of school places within each planning area.
- 1.8 The Department for Education suggest a float of 5% capacity within each year group to ensure that there is enough room for growth across the city. Currently, only Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 have a capacity rate over 5%, in line with the national picture of falling birth rates. All other year groups across primary and secondary schools being below this figure as the table below highlights. All other year groups do not have a 5% capacity. Peterborough is the second fastest growing city within the UK. The capacity issues that Peterborough has been experiencing between Years 2 and Year 11 inclusive are due to inward migration that Peterborough has been experiencing within recent years.
- 1.9 Capacity is calculated by the number of vacancies divided by the published admissions number (PAN) times by 100 to create the capacity within each year group. Capacity within the year group does not mean that PCC can allocate children and/or young people to these places, as detailed in paragraph 1.4.

Year Group	PAN	No. of Children on Roll	Vacancies	Capacity %
Reception	3290	2744	543	16.50%
Year 1	3272	2877	346	10.57%
Year 2	3334	3060	254	7.62%
Year 3	3306	3132	130	3.93%
Year 4	3336	3172	119	3.57%
Year 5	3311	3204	73	2.20%
Year 6	3331	3267	134	4.02%
Year 7	3151	3088	125	0.93%
Year 8	3343	3285	27	0.81%
Year 9	3217	3152	50	1.55%
Year 10	3138	3118	11	0.35%
Year 11	3140	3021	81	3.52%
Total	39169	37120	1893	4.83%

Green = more than 5% capacity across the City
Amber = near to 5% capacity across the City
Red = less than 5% capacity across the City

1.10 The graph below evidences the number of applications the PCC Admissions Team have received from parents who have requested a school place in Peterborough and stated that they are moving into the city either from other areas across the UK or from outside the UK. This table shows that although birth rates within Peterborough are falling, the number of new arrival children in Peterborough is rising.



1.11 Offering a child a school place which is further away from their home can lead to an increase in the number of children missing from education as parents do not always accept the offered school place if it is outside of their community. It can also lead to an increase in attendance issues as children can be late for school due to the commute from their local community to the next nearest school with space which can be some distance from their home. A child attending a school outside of their local community can impact on social skills as children do not make friends within their local community as they access education outside of their community. This also leads to extra traffic and congestion on the roads, extra costs to parents who pay for petrol to transport their children to schools outside of their community.

School Place Planning and Forward Plan

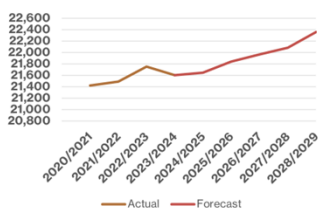
The new Head of Pupil Place Planning and Capital is reviewing the latest demography, along with housing development applications and migration figures.

This will be used to create Peterborough City Council's School Organisation Plan (SOP), which will go through a consultation process with schools, as well as cabinet.

We are experiencing increasing pressures, especially in areas of housing development. Making the need to S106 or CIL contributions vital in future proofing pupil places.

Primary School Forecasts Across Peterborough

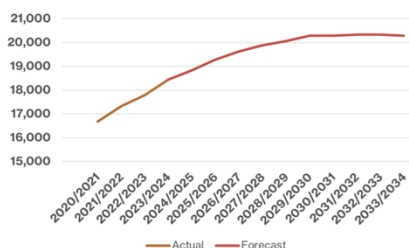
Numbers on rolls for primary are forecast to increase over the next five years. This is predominantly driven by planning inputs in Rural East and Manor Drive, as well as substantial housing development in the Hamptons.



School Year	Pri 4	Pri 5	Pri 6	Pri 7	Pri 8	Pri 9	Pri 10	Total
2020/2021	2,912	3,008	3,029	3,146	3,151	3,077	3,100	21,423
2021/2022	2,901	3,008	3,050	3,097	3,165	3,186	3,082	21,489
2022/2023	2,910	3,017	3,096	3,129	3,164	3,196	3,238	21,750
2023/2024	2,753	2,991	3,089	3,140	3,175	3,225	3,231	21,604
2024/2025	2,867	2,859	3,069	3,164	3,189	3,229	3,271	21,648
2025/2026	2,985	2,982	2,946	3,169	3,222	3,252	3,284	21,840
2026/2027	2,961	3,095	3,064	3,040	3,222	3,280	3,302	21,964
2027/2028	2,996	3,069	3,175	3,148	3,091	3,278	3,328	22,085
2028/2029	3,107	3,113	3,158	3,279	3,208	3,156	3,335	22,356

Secondary School Forecasts

Numbers on rolls for secondary are forecast to increase, then level over the next ten years. The increase is mainly driven by planning inputs.



	Sec 11	Sec 12	Sec 13	Sec 14	Sec 15	Sec 16	Sec 17	Total
2020/2021	2,978	2,978	2,844	2,618	2,502	1,591	1,172	16,683
2021/2022	3,094	2,988	2,980	2,838	2,578	1,487	1,363	17,328
2022/2023	3,106	3,082	3,031	3,011	2,831	1,509	1,225	17,795
2023/2024	3,262	3,128	3,081	3,042	2,998	1,601	1,320	18,432
2024/2025	3,238	3,284	3,111	3,105	3,039	1,686	1,373	18,836
2025/2026	3,335	3,266	3,271	3,139	3,106	1,709	1,457	19,283
2026/2027	3,393	3,360	3,251	3,297	3,138	1,714	1,466	19,619
2027/2028	3,344	3,418	3,345	3,295	3,296	1,724	1,467	19,889
2028/2029	3,358	3,374	3,407	3,393	3,298	1,750	1,479	20,059
2029/2030	3,385	3,390	3,366	3,458	3,399	1,781	1,504	20,283
2030/2031	3,253	3,418	3,381	3,416	3,463	1,837	1,523	20,291
2031/2032	3,325	3,288	3,411	3,433	3,423	1,882	1,576	20,338
2032/2033	3,325	3,356	3,279	3,461	3,438	1,858	1,614	20,331
2033/2034	3,279	3,358	3,350	3,332	3,469	1,897	1,597	20,282

As part of the work undertaken to formulate the School Organisation Plan, Officers will be reviewing those areas where demography identifies falling rolls. Officers will be working with all partners including Head Teachers, Governing Boards, CEOs and MAT Trustees when

considering all options available to address both pressures and concerns.

Annual DfE returns determine the amount of grant funding councils receive for basic need. Almost all of the recently built schools in Peterborough were funded through the Free School Programme (funding and building of the school being directly the responsibility of the DfE) Great Haddon Primary School 1 is the first school this local authority has had to find capital funding for. At this point in time, it is unknown how the new government will provide funding to local authorities for any new schools or expansion projects.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 The Economy & Inclusive Growth

Environment - When looking to allocate a school place we always try to offer a family one of their preference schools. When needing to offer the next nearest school with available places we contact the transport team to try and offer a school where transport links are already in place, to ensure that there is minimal impact (where possible) to the transport budget.

Our Places & Communities

We always try to offer a school near to a family's home so that the child can attend a local school within their community so that families can walk to school, wherever possible and to improve social friendships for the child both in and out of school.

Prevention, Independence & Resilience

Aiming to allocate and provide enough school places where families live to ensure that children can go to school with other children in their local community, and parents can work within Peterborough to ensure that Peterborough can maximise in its growth.

Sustainable Future City Council

We provide detailed information to parents and families of the catchment school to each child's home address. We provide information of how we allocate school places and how many children were allocated to each school on National Offer Day to ensure that parents are aware of the Admissions Processes. Families are sent an outcome letter after an allocation has taken place so that they are aware of the offered school place and what they need to do next. We pride ourselves on being able to help and enable our families to understand each process.

Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)

Environment & Climate Change

The report is answering questions about the current process: explaining the admissions and pupil place planning process and reasons for the mainstream and special place & pressures the local Authority is currently experiencing. There are no changes in the current process and therefore will have neutral impact in the council's and city's emissions.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 This document has not been consulted upon as it is presented at the request of the Committee.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 For the Committee to seek answers to their questions on Admissions and School Place Planning.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 At the request of the committee.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 No other alternative options for this report have been considered as this report was generated at the request of the committee.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 This report details the financial implications of the lack of school places within Peterborough and the impact this has on the transport budget. The Place Planning information details how we will try to tackle the lack of school places through a medium to long term plan.

Legal Implications

10.2 The Admissions team must comply with the School Admissions Code which is statutory guidance issued under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Equalities Implications

10.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 N/A

12. APPENDICES

12.1 N/A

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