

## **A school on the Stag Brewery site Paper for meeting 19 September 2016**

1. The Council would like a secondary school to be built on the brewery site. The original planning brief for the site, agreed in 2011 following public consultation, included a primary school. This policy was changed to a secondary school at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet in October 2015.

2. The site was sold in November 2015 after this policy was revised. While the agendas and minutes of the Council Cabinet meetings are made public, there was no consultation at the time on this switch but the proposal will have to gain planning permission and, under the Academies Act 2010, public consultation will be required.

*What is proposed?*

3. A six form entry school, meaning c 180 pupils per year (=900 plus, years 11-15) with up to 200 staff. Whether there is to be a 6<sup>th</sup> form is unclear.

*Where are the proposals set out?*

4. In the Richmond Council Revised School Place Planning Strategy 2015-2024. See RBUT Council Cabinet papers for 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Also in the pre-publication Local Plan – consultation period ended August 2016.

*Are more secondary school places needed for children living in the borough?*

5. Yes. The Council have a statutory duty to ensure the provision of school places even though their role is running schools is diminishing and they no longer build new schools.

6. In 2015 there were 47,100 children and young people in the borough. The population of 10-14 year olds and 15-19 year olds is projected to increase by over 15% to 2035 as children born in 2008-14 grow up. These young children are already visible in primary schools.

7. So, even before account is taken of more people coming to live in the borough, there is a gap between secondary school places and future likely demand.

8. The Council concede that it is very difficult to quantify the size of long term-increased demand. A proportion of children study out of borough and Richmond residents are higher than average users of private secondary education. Plus no-one yet understands the Brexit impact on London's population. All three of these features could lead to flattening or downward fluctuations in demand.

9. Recent decisions will affect how demand is met in future. New schools in the borough include St Richard Reynolds Catholic College and Turing School just opened and Richmond upon Thames College due to open 2017. Also a new school in north Kingston, Kingston Academy, opened in 2015 and this is expected to alleviate demand from North Kingston families on Richmond schools. School

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performance can also affect flows – for example, Richmond Park Academy is becoming more popular with local families as its performance improves.

*What are the local issues?*

10. Currently, the Council is finding it harder to place children from Kew and North Barnes in their first preference school compared with children elsewhere in the borough. This is based on the Council's analysis of 2014 and 2015 preference and entry data and does not take account of preferences for Turing school (first year of opening) or, self evidently of RuT College (2017).

11. Looking to the future, the Council are also concerned about expectations arising from the opening in 2016 of a new primary school on the Putney Hospital site (the Oasis Academy) – although this is in Wandsworth.

12. Improvements at Richmond Park Academy are leading to increased demand for places there from families in East Sheen and Mortlake (potentially reducing availability for Kew and North Barnes) and this trend will intensify if RPA in the future achieves an 'outstanding' rating from Ofsted.

13. These and other factors have led the Council to conclude that there is a need for increased secondary places in the eastern part of the borough.

*How can secondary school places be increased?*

14. There are three obvious options – increase places at existing schools; build a new school(s) and co-operate with neighbouring boroughs.

15. Increase places at existing schools– If for example six of the borough's secondary schools were each to take one additional form entry per year the predicted demand could be met. There could be variants on this approach. In the papers on school provision accompanying the Council's discussion on 15 October, there is a clear statement that the option of local expansion at RPA, Grey Court and Christ's should be explored.

16. The Council states that currently, there is no available capital to expand existing schools, however capital is available for new schools from the Education Funding Agency. It is not clear why there is no available capital for expansion, nor how much would actually be needed for this option and how it compares with the cost of a new school.

17. Build a new school – The Education Funding Agency acts on the Government's policy to support new schools as a drive to improve standards and stimulate competition. In order for a new school to be built a Multi Academy Trust needs to be appointed to be the school developer and education provider. This has not yet taken place re the proposed school for the brewery site.

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18. Co-operate with neighbouring boroughs either to encourage new schools or to expand places– Hounslow and Wandsworth each have responsibilities to their own populations, but given the geography it is reasonable to expect co-operation. Chiswick School, just over Chiswick Bridge is the nearest secondary school to Kew and Mortlake. It is easily accessible by bus from Kew and Mortlake, and is one rail stop from Barnes Bridge. However there is no reference to it in the papers considered by the Council last October. However the papers do state “it is vital that account be taken of new or planned secondary school provision in neighbouring local authority areas, most particularly Hounslow”.

*Have all the options been considered?*

19. In brief, no. This is based on the papers before the Council Cabinet on 15 October.

20. Demand – the data before the Council did not factor in the effect of recent and imminent new schools on demand and flow.

21. Hounslow and Wandsworth – apart from a strong conclusion that ‘account be taken’ of actions by neighbouring LAs, there is no evidence that this has been done or any indication as to when it will be done. Given that the pressure for places is showing through in Kew and North Barnes, areas that border with Hounslow, this work is essential if collectively we are not to end up with over provision.

22. Sites for a new build – there is no evidence that a range of sites were considered for a new secondary school or whether the brewery site, along with the other uses for the site, could accommodate the added size/scale impact of a secondary over a primary school. The Barnes Hospital site, for example, is larger than the space on the brewery site allocated for a secondary school, according to the architect’s July presentation.

23. Location of the new build – the architect’s initial design envisages the school on the western side of the site and will probably include building on part of the existing green sports field, with the remaining part being incorporated into the school’s open space. The sports field is one of only two open spaces in Mortlake.

24. In short, the Council Cabinet’s policy decision was taken before the brewery site was sold and based on a case for school places; the likely available funding and the fact the Council had the ability to adjust an existing planning brief without public consultation.

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Questions for Discussion

1. *What are MBCG members' views? Should we support, oppose or remain neutral on the question of a secondary school?*
2. *Whether or not we can reach a considered view at this point on question (1), should we request that the Council fully explore the alternatives and publish the analysis?*
3. *Whatever size or type of school is built on the brewery site, should we*
  - (a) press for the playing field to be retained as open space?*
  - (b) insist that the school should not lead to compromises on the rest of the planning brief?*
  - (c) require that design and materials be sympathetic to and consistent with the rest of the development?*

Prepared on behalf of the MBCG Convening group by  
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11 September 2016

**References**

Children and Young People's Needs Assessment – September 2015  
London Borough of Richmond on Thames

Educational Excellence Everywhere (Cmnd 9230)- March 2016  
Department for Education

Achieving for Children website  
AfC is a social enterprise company created by Kingston and Richmond Councils to provide their children's services

London Borough of Richmond on Thames  
Cabinet Meeting 15 October 2015  
Agenda and Papers  
Item 9 – School Place Planning Strategy Update and  
Appendix 1: School Place Planning Strategy 2015-2024 – revised October 2015