



Cllr Richard Watts
Executive Member for Children
and Families
Labour Councillor for Tollington ward

Town Hall
Upper Street
Islington
London N1 2UD
www.islington.gov.uk

Francis Wilkinson
ASAG

PA: Judith Bougas
Tel: 020 7527 4717
Fax: 020 7527 3008
Email: judith.bougas@islington.gov.uk
Date: 12 January 2012

By email

Dear Mr Wilkinson,

Ashmount School site

Thank you for your letter of 8 January regarding the Executive report on the Future Proposals for Ashmount Primary School Site. As the Executive member responsible I have been asked to reply.

The Executive report confirms that, from an Islington education perspective, the current site of Ashmount School will be surplus to requirements once the school has moved to its new location on Crouch Hill.

In answer to the specific points raised in your letter:-

1. No adequate assessment of continued need for the site for educational requirements has been undertaken.

This is simply not correct. In evaluating the case for the development at Crouch Hill an assessment of future education requirements within Islington was undertaken. This covered a number of aspects including an assessment of current and future pupil numbers, changes in education curricula requirements, suitability of the existing Ashmount school buildings and funding. This was the basis on which we agreed that a new two form entry school should be built at Crouch Hill to enable Ashmount School to better meet education and curricula requirements.

In Islington overall, current long term projections show a steady increase in the demand for places through to 2017 with demand levelling off to 2019. The 2019 projected demand for places still shows a projected surplus of 304 places across Islington as a whole. Tables 1 and 2 below show the actual roll data from 2007 – 2011 and the projected roll data across Islington through to 2019. Surplus capacity is based on the current pattern of classroom organisation and not the actual physical capacity of buildings or the number of places according to our Published Admission Number (PAN) – both of which would give a higher surplus.

Year	Projected Roll Data	Projected Net Capacity	Surplus Capacity	Surplus (%)
*2007	12,432	14,054	1,622	11.5
*2008	12,283	14,054	1,771	12.6
*2009	12,186	14,054	1,868	13.3
*2010	12,257	14,069	1,812	12.9
*2011	12,388	13,922	1,534	11.0
2012	12,260	13,948	1,688	12.1
2013	12,566	13,966	1,400	10.0
2014	12,850	13,966	1,116	8.0
2015	13,125	13,966	841	6.0
2016	13,378	13,966	588	4.2
2017	13,624	13,966	342	2.4
2018	13,626	13,966	340	2.4
2019	13,662	13,966	304	2.2

*actual roll data from January Census data

Table 2

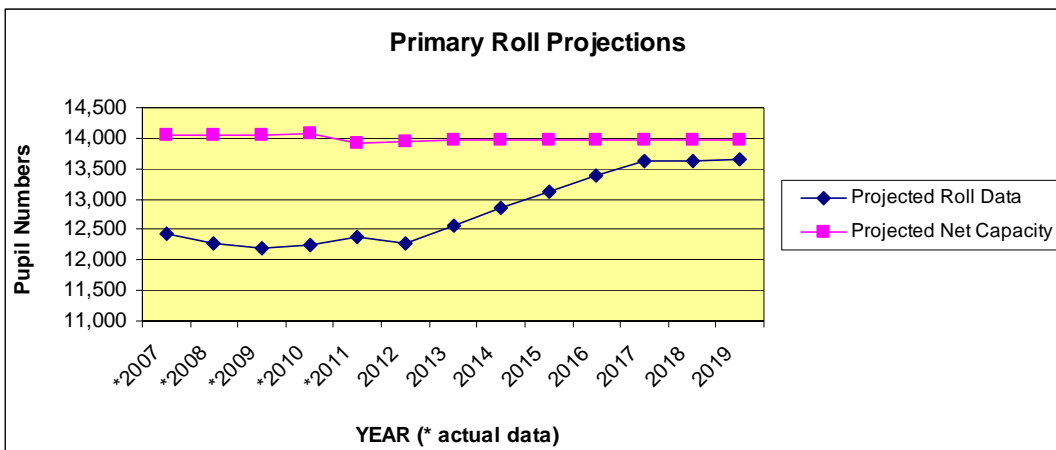


Table 3 below shows the current roll and projections for all schools in the Tollington, Hillrise, Junction and St George's wards.

Table 3

Year	Projected Roll Data	Capacity based on current PAN	Surplus Capacity based on PAN	
*2007	2,713	3045	332	10.9%
*2008	2,667	3045	378	12.4%
*2009	2,605	3045	440	14.4%
*2010	2,624	3045	421	13.8%
*2011	2,676	3045	369	12.1%
2012	2,772	3045	273	9.0%
2013	2,837	3045	208	6.8%
2014	2,883	3045	162	5.3%
2015	2,942	3045	103	3.4%
2016	3,012	3045	33	1.1%
2017	3,080	3045	-35	-1.1%
2018	3,065	3045	-20	-0.7%
2019	3,057	3045	-12	-0.4%

*actual roll data from January PLASC survey

It should be noted that school roll projections are not an exact science. Predicting primary school places for 2019 means we are trying to plan school places for children who will not be born for another three or four years. If it transpires that we do need extra places in addition to those that we are predicting, there are significantly better value-for-money options available to the authority than establishing a new school on the Ashmount site.

There is a real risk where there are surplus places that schools become undermined and vulnerable to a cycle of under-subscription, falling budgets and falling standards. Islington is committed to ensuring all schools succeed and pupils receive a first class education irrespective of the school they attend. Ensuring we reduce the number of surplus school places in the borough is an important element of this work.

The creation of further surplus capacity in primary schools could cause financial pressures on schools' budgets and would not be good value for money.

2. Educational need in the area for primary school places as evidenced by the letter from three Haringey Councillors to the Secretary of State.

As you will know, the three local Haringey councillors were not acting on behalf of their Authority when they wrote to the Secretary of State. Their letter seems to be politically motivated and not based on evidence.

Islington Council needs to ensure there are sufficient places in suitable accommodation for the education of its own residents' children. The Authority will meet this requirement when the Crouch Hill scheme is completed. It is for the Authority to decide the future usage of the current Ashmount school site when it becomes a vacant site surplus to Islington's education requirements. It is for Haringey Council to make its own arrangements for the

provision of suitable education accommodation. However Haringey have informed Islington that the pressure they have for places is in an entirely different part of their borough. Furthermore we understand that Haringey have already created significant additional reception places in the part of their borough closest to Islington.

3. No assessment of secondary or tertiary educational need has been undertaken.

The Authority regularly reviews pupil requirements and demand for places for all stages of their education. Three of the Authority's local secondary schools currently have significant vacancies (of 92 places, 86 places and 57 places respectively) and whilst steps are being taken to fill these vacancies they are expected to remain for some time to come. Islington was one of the few Local Authorities that emerged from the Government review of the Building Schools for the Future Programme with its programme largely intact, albeit with funding reduced. Around £140m has and is being invested into Islington secondary schools to ensure that they continue to meet education requirements with facilities that offer a wide range of opportunities for young people and are accessible to the local community they serve.

No colleges have expressed an interest in the site, which I think is too small to be of interest.

4. ASAG is aware of numbers of potential education users who have expressed interest in the site, some of who have contacted L B Islington, no mention of this in the report.

Where an individual or organisation has made contact regarding the current Ashmount site information has been provided. No follow up has arisen from the previous enquiries.

5. Purcell Miller Tritton architectural report

The possibility of retaining the existing school buildings and refurbishing them was considered as part of the option appraisal undertaken in respect of the proposed development at Crouch Hill. The conclusion reached was that the existing school buildings were not suitable to meet curricula requirements and the education needs of the current and future Ashmount pupils would be better served by the construction of a new school building at a different site. Had the refurbishment of the current building been practical and value for money we would not be moving Ashmount School.

6. Overwhelming view among local residents who have expressed a view that the site should remain in education use

Residents were consulted throughout the process regarding the development of the Crouch Hill scheme and as the report to Executive indicates they will be consulted on the draft Planning Guidance assuming we agree the report now submitted. Recommendation 2.3 indicates that "further reports will be submitted to Executive seeking approval to Planning Guidelines relating to the school site and development thereof." Recommendation 2.5 also indicates that "consultation will be carried out prior to an application being made under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act

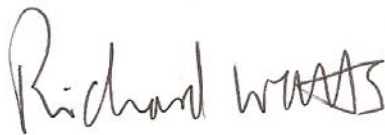
2006 and Schedule 35A to Education Act 1996.” There will therefore be ample opportunity for residents to register their views about the planning guidance for the site and the Executive will have regard to these.

7. Responses to the consultation on the proposed allocation of the site for Housing which closed on 12 12 .2011.

There appears to be a misunderstanding on the part of ASAG that this initial ‘consultation’ is the only consultation being undertaken by the Council. This is not the case. As you know the opportunity was taken as part of the Hillrise Ward Partnership meeting held on 3 October 2011 to outline the Council’s proposals for the school site and the future consultation programme was outlined.

I do not agree with you that the report to Executive requires revision although I will release this letter in order to publicly address the concerns that you raise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Watts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Cllr Richard Watts
Executive Member for Children and Families