

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Review of School Place Planning and Admissions



LA Responsibilities



The council is legally responsible for the planning and provision of school places across its local area. This responsibility includes:

- ✓ Ensuring there are sufficient school places (Education Act 1996).
- ✓ As far as possible, complying with the preferences expressed by parents (School Standards and Framework Act 1998).
- ✓ Increasing opportunities for parental choice (Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- ✓ Provide fair access to educational opportunity (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

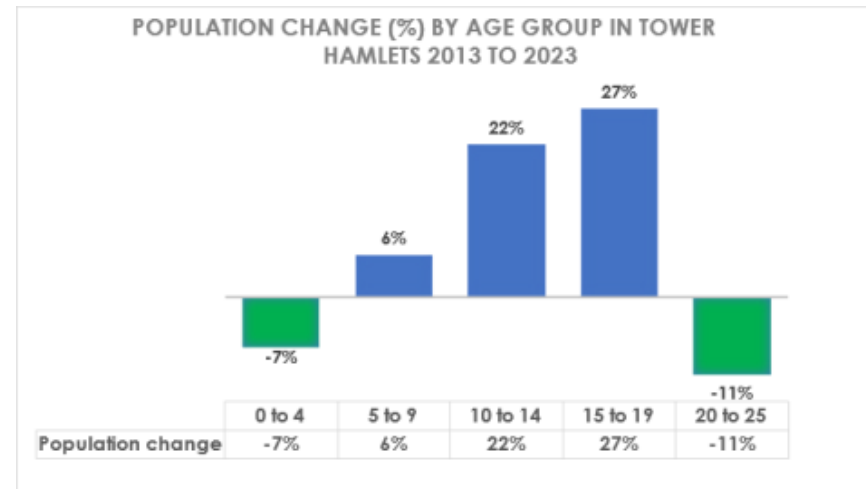
In meeting its responsibility, the council is required to address both deficit and surplus school places and how best to organise schools for the efficient and effective delivery of a high quality education.



Pupil Population

Demand for school places is driven by pupil population growth.

In the ten-year period between 2013 and 2023 Tower Hamlets saw 24% growth in its secondary school age population (10-19). However, the same period saw a decline in the borough's pre-school population and low growth in its primary school population (0 – 9).



The main factors influencing this are; birth rates, migration levels and housing development.



Birth Rates



- There has been a decline in the number of births in Tower Hamlets, which fell by 10% (481) in the ten-year period from 2013. London birth rates fell at a similar rate over the same 10-year period.

LBTH Births Actual Births 2013 to 2022

Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
LBTH	4,608	4,622	4,560	4,592	4,604	4,381	4,307	4,291	4,381	4,127
London	128,332	127,399	129,615	128,803	126,308	120,673	117,897	111,688	110,961	106,696

- The latest borough projections estimate that the Tower Hamlets birth rate will stabilise over the next five-year period, before steadily increasing from 2028 onwards.

Projected Births 2023 – 2032

Area	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
LBTH	4,043	4,065	4,075	4,080	4,094	4,120	4,158	4,209	4,256	4,303
London	107,646	107,822	107,810	107,723	107,839	108,208	108,876	109,851	110,889	112,032



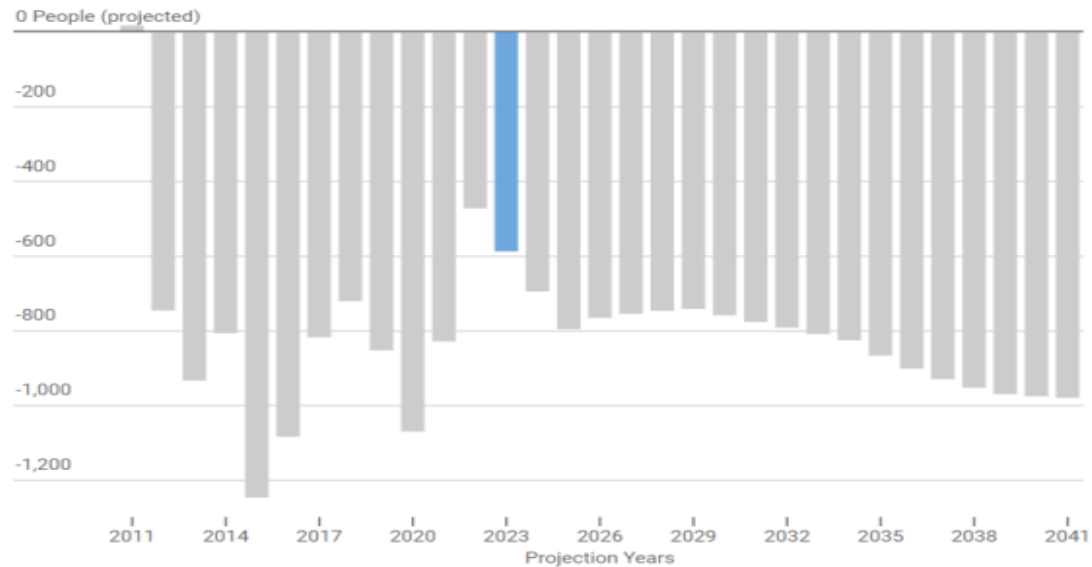
Pupil Migration



- Previous and projected pupil net migration rates for Tower Hamlet's pre-school and primary age range show the negative (outward) net migration rate for these age groups. Over the previous ten years more pre-school and primary aged children have moved out of the borough than have moved in. This trend is projected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets

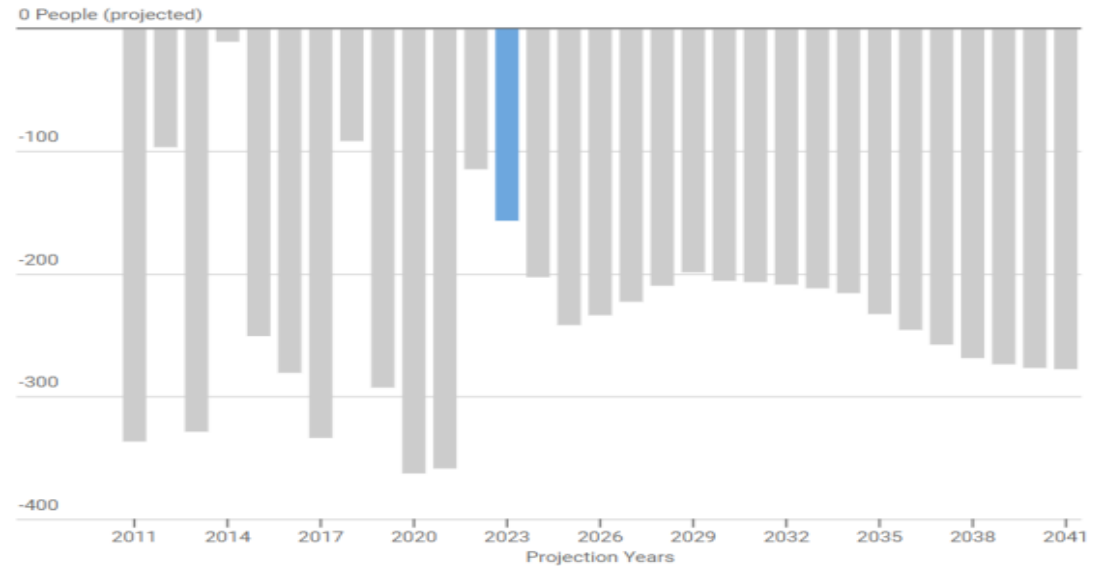
Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 0 - 4



Source: GLA Demography 2020-based Population Projections
Graphic by GLA City Intelligence

Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets

Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 5 - 10



Source: GLA Demography 2020-based Population Projections
Graphic by GLA City Intelligence

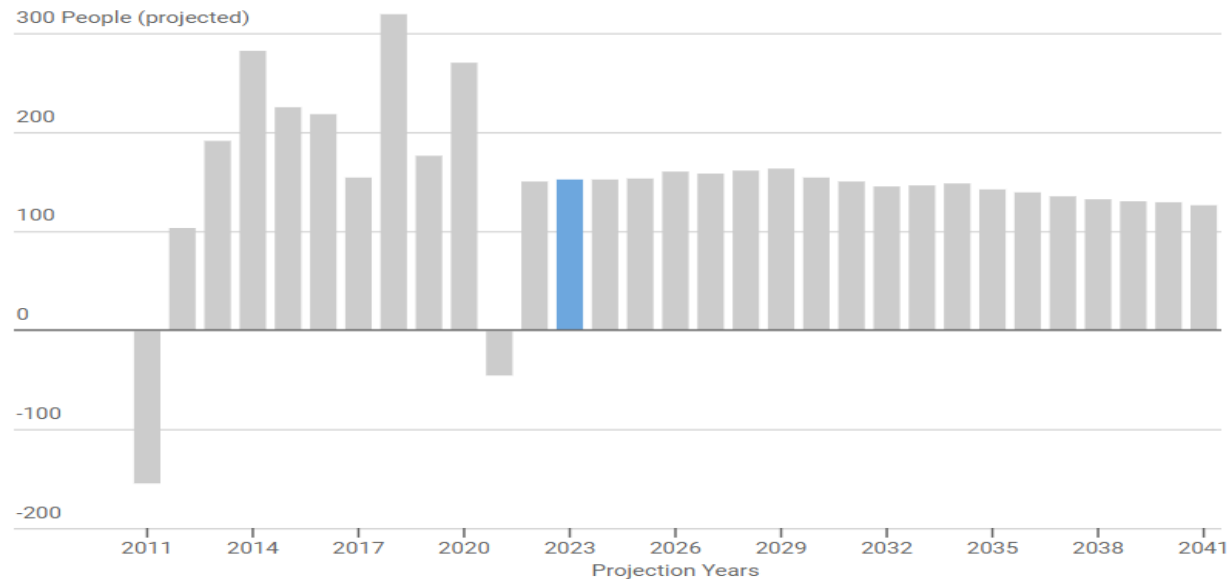


Pupil Migration



- In the secondary age range, the net migration situation is reversed, with a positive net migration between 2013 and 2022. This meant more secondary aged children moved into the borough than moved out. It is projected that this positive net migration will continue for the secondary age range.

Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets
Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 11 - 15



Source: GLA Demography 2020-based Population Projections
Graphic by GLA City Intelligence



Pupil Yield



‘Pupil Yield’ from new housing development is the average number of pre-school and primary aged pupils that new housing in the borough is able to generate.

- Tower Hamlets saw a significant reduction in its pupil yield from new housing developments, from 0.14 per dwelling in 2013 to 0.12 per dwelling in 2022. This has meant that, for every 1500 new homes in the borough, the number of school aged children reduced from 210 to 180. The equivalent of one form of school entry.
- Going forward the borough’s plans to provide more social and affordable housing, may see its pupil yield factor increase back to 2013 levels.



Impact 1 : Current Demand for School Places



- **Nursery Schools & Classes**

There has been an overall decline in the number of children requiring nursery places at Tower Hamlets maintained nursery schools/classes over the last five years.

No of children offered places at nursery schools/classes (Sept Entry)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	2306	2303	2238	2232	2076

- **Primary Schools**

We have also seen downturn in demand for primary school places at the point of entry in the reception year. This is now the lowest reception year roll in the borough for over fifteen years.

Reception Year Admissions	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	3,347	3,340	3,230	3,347	3,316	3,139	3,055

Overall pupil numbers in primary schools have been falling since 2016. In 2024, the total number of primary school children in Tower Hamlets is below 22,500

LBTH Primary School Rolls	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	23,472	23,509	23,270	23,344	23,441	22,995	22,399



Impact 1 (cont.)



- **Secondary Schools**

There has been a steady increase in demand Year 7 entry in line with the growth in the secondary age population.

Year 7 Rolls	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	2,952	2,908	3,007	2,974	2,919	2,904	3,021

Overall secondary school pupil numbers have seen a 2% growth since 2017/18. However, this growth is now understood to have peaked in 2023/24. As the lower numbers of primary pupils progress through into secondary we expect to see a steady decline in secondary numbers.

LBTH Secondary School Rolls	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	14,193	14,487	14,565	14,733	14,903	15,038	14,950



Impact 1 (cont.)



- **Post16**

Post 16 rolls at secondary schools in the borough have increased and a number of Tower Hamlets schools have opened new 6th Form provision or expanded / developed their existing 6th Forms. The borough has 14 secondary schools with 6th Forms.

LBTH Post 16 School Rolls	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	2,715	3,130	3,348	3,737	3,942	4,110	4,186

The borough's current 6th Form capacity is at 4,790 (2024/25). This will increase further with the new 6th Form provision at Mulberry Academy London Dock, the 6th Form to be added at Canary Wharf College 3 School and the expansion of the 6th Form at Central Foundation Girls.

The council has identified a need to take measures to improve the current levels of Post 16 attainment and university progression. It is therefore moving forwards with proposals for a new Institute of Academic Excellence with the aim of accelerating young people's entry into Oxbridge and Russell Group universities and improving Post 16 education in the borough.

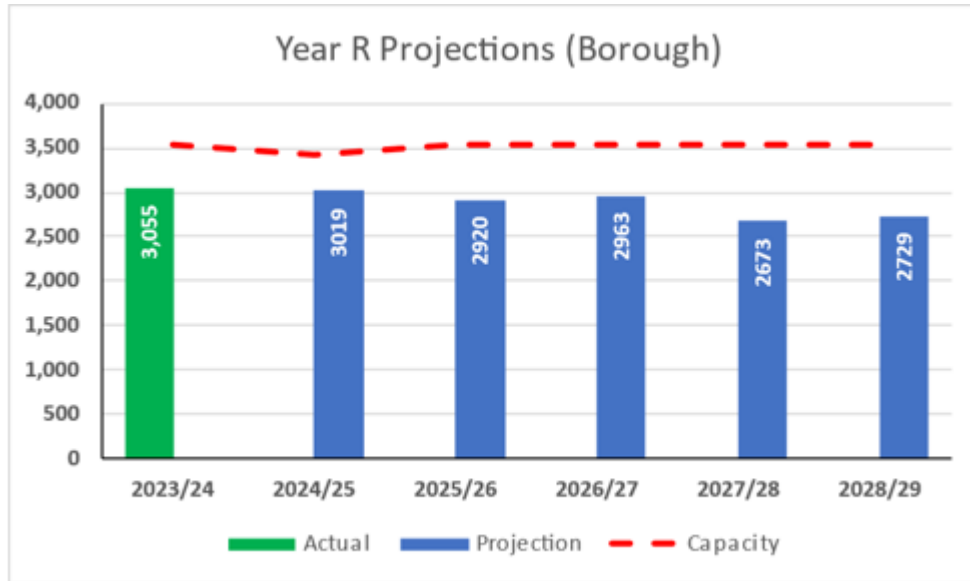


Impact 2: Surplus Capacity



When assessing the need for school places, there is an expectation that the LA includes a level of planned surplus capacity (5 to 10%).

- **Reception**



Reception Projections (Borough)						
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Actual	3,055					
Projection	3,040	3,019	2,920	2,963	2,673	2,729
Capacity	3,541	3,420	3,540	3,540	3,540	3,540
Variance	Pupils	486	401	620	577	867
	FE	16.2	13.4	20.7	19.2	28.9
	%	14%	12%	18%	16%	24%

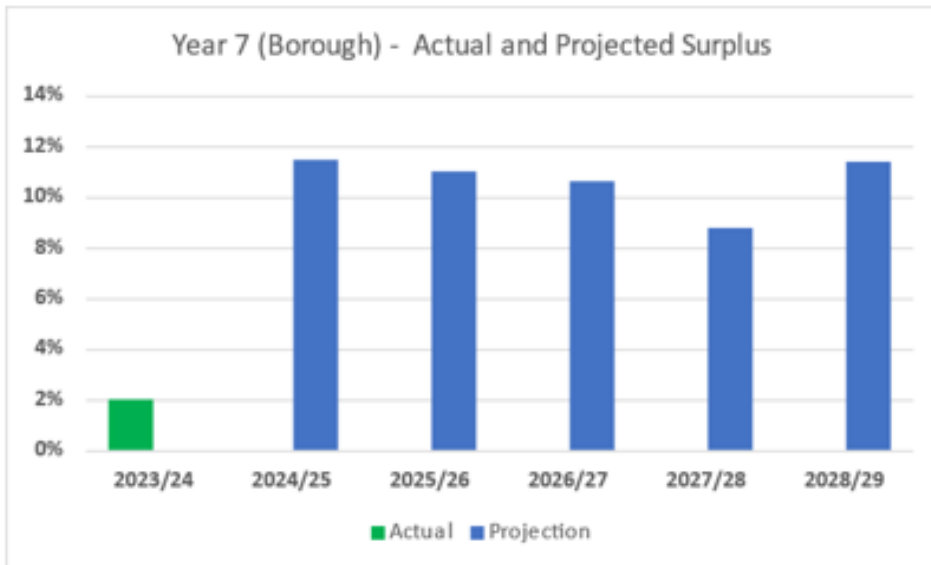
All six primary planning areas are now anticipated to see a decline in pupil numbers over the next five years and three with a projected resulting surplus capacity in excess of 20%.



Impact 2 (cont.)

- Year 7

The demand for secondary places peaked in 2023/24. We will now see a decline over the subsequent years, resulting in surplus capacity slightly above 10% going forwards.



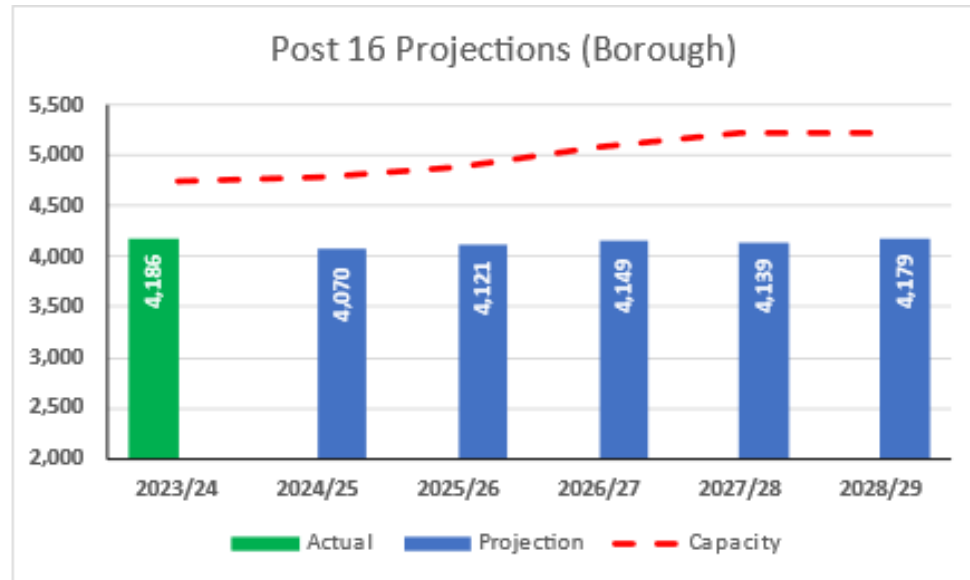
Year 7 Pupil Projections							
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	
Actual	3,021						
Projection	3,059	2890	2798	2809	2867	2784	
Capacity	3,083	3,263	3,143	3,143	3,143	3,143	
Variance	Pupils	62	373	345	334	276	359
	FE	2.1	12.4	11.5	11.1	9.2	12.0
	%	2%	11%	11%	11%	9%	11%



Impact 2 (cont.)

- **Post 16**

There is already sufficient 6th Form provision going forward. Therefore, plans or proposals to add further post-16 provision will only be taken forward, if it can be demonstrated that they will address a genuine need to improve the overall quality and diversity of educational provision in the borough.



Post 16 Pupil Projections: Borough Secondary Schools							
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	
Actual	4,186						
Projection	4,087	4,070	4,121	4,149	4,139	4,179	
Capacity	4,750	4,790	4,880	5,080	5,230	5,230	
Variance	Pupils	564	720	759	931	1,091	1,051
	FE	18.8	24.0	25.3	31.0	36.4	35.0
	%	12%	15%	16%	18%	21%	20%



LA & Stakeholder Collaboration



Previous work from 2018 to 2021 included the **Primary Review**. This established an advisory group of key stakeholders to oversee the review process and advise the LA on its proposals.

Aim: identify long-term solutions to reduce surplus places; ensure that schools remain financially sustainable and maintain high quality education.

Impact: A reduction of school PANs, establishing federations, implementing school amalgamations and school closures.

In 2023 The **School Organisation Framework**, Steering Group and two Area Working Groups were established to ensure effective engagement and collaboration across all key stakeholders.

Aim: develop a schools' led system to local problem solving to ensure quality, financial sustainability and improved management of the estate and resources through partnerships, across all education sectors. To include school PAN reductions, changes of school status, new models of school organisation, amalgamations / closures where this is the best (and last) course of action.

Support to school and wider communities, especially parents through any organisational change.



Guiding Principles of School Organisational Change



We have agreed with school leaders and stakeholders that all decisions will be guided by the following 6 principles:

1. We must provide world-class education, fit for the future, for every child
2. We must retain skilled staff
3. We are all in this together, we must ensure a model of school sustainability that includes resilient and agile financial management and governance
4. We must use the opportunity to optimise sites and premises ensuring the needs of every child can be met within our borough
5. We must maximise resources between schools to reduce transitions, improve value for money and increase opportunities for children and staff
6. We must preserve a balance of provision across the borough that matches local need, so we cannot act alone.



Supporting Financial Sustainability



Additional Local Authority support for schools includes:

- Annual Sufficiency review to identify potentially vulnerable schools.
- Licensed Deficit Application (LDA) Project to support the development, evaluation and monitoring of licensed deficit applications, to ensure their repayment within the statutory 3 years.
- Support to Governors and Headteachers with improved financial management and new models of organisation.

