

To the Chairs of Governors of all
Secondary Academies
Via email

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Our Ref: JG/sj

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Dear Chair

I am aware that some secondary academies are already consulting on increasing their Planned Admission Number and others are considering it. As academies, this is clearly a decision which governors are authorised to take. Although the local authority does not have a formal role, unless there are concerns that the decision making process has been flawed in some way, I think that it is important that I set out some considerations which need to be borne in mind on behalf of children and families and the school system as a whole.

The local authority's recent briefing for heads and governors outlined the expected demand for secondary school places across the county to 2020/21. Our forecasts demonstrate that there will be no demand for additional secondary places in several parts of the county, notably Stroud, the Cotswolds and the Forest. There are still surplus places in secondary schools in these areas which is sufficient to meet any additional demand. However, across Cheltenham and Gloucester, and to some extent, parts of the Borough of Tewkesbury which border the two urban areas, additional places will be needed from 2018 onwards. The local authority is currently working with individual schools in these areas to discuss the potential for expansion. We need to do this in a planned way in order to maximise capital funding from section 106 contributions and the government's basic need funding. If additional places are put into the system too early, the contribution which can be required from developers will be reduced.

If additional places are introduced into the system in areas where there is no increase in demand, this will result in surplus places. This is an inefficient use of the Dedicated Schools Grant and can present some schools with the challenge of managing reducing budgets because of the fall in pupil numbers.

It is also very important to note that the council's funding for Home to School Transport is limited. It is not possible for parents to access free school transport if they choose to send their children to schools which are not their nearest school.

Some schools, such as the grammar schools, take children from a wide geographical area. In these cases it may be more difficult to understand the impact which an increase on your PAN would have on the system as a whole. However, I would urge you to consider the impact on other schools, not all of which will be local.

In taking decisions about your individual school I would urge you to consider the impact on the school system as a whole and on outcomes for all young people in Gloucestershire.

If you would like to have forecast data relating to your individual school or area, please contact Peter Holmes peter.holmes@gloucestershire.gov.uk. He will ensure that you have all the data that you need.

Yours sincerely



Jo Grills
Director
Education, Learning & Libraries



Cllr. Paul McLain
Children & Young People
and Strategic Commissioning

Cc Heads of Secondary Academies
Cc Chairs and Heads of Maintained Secondary Schools