



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

School Places

Admissions and Strategic Place Planning

September 2023

School Place Planning Overview

Decision Making

Trafford Council Executive

Strategic Planning

School Places/
Education Capital Board

School Admissions
School Capital Projects
School Improvement
School Finance

Place Shaping Board

Education
Strategic Planning
Development Management
Legal, Finance, Estates

Strategic Priorities

Achieve the right balance of sufficient places without overprovision to maintain stability within the existing school system

Expand existing schools to protect financial viability

Remove mixed age classes where they exist

Amalgamate separate infant and junior schools where possible

Achieve best value through efficient allocation of resource

Funding Streams

DfE
Basic Need Grant

Developer
Contributions

Trafford Corporate
Capital

School Place Planning Approach

- DfE requires each LA to submit annual School Capacity (SCAP) survey
 - Supply - net capacity of each existing school
 - Demand - pupil forecasts
- Generates sufficiency data at school place planning area level which informs Basic Need funding allocation.
- Methodology monitored and ratified by DfE, utilises GP registrations for pre-school age children, school census, admissions, new housing developments, average migration rates and survival rates.
- Between 2010 and 2024, Trafford received £86m of basic need funding which has been used to commission the expansion of 35 schools and provide an additional 4,266 places. Identified as exemplar LA for effective and efficient use of funding.
- DfE calculation assumes each LA will provide a place for all pupils who want one in their area. This differs from local sufficiency assessment to ensure LA meets statutory duty to provide a place for all pupils resident in Trafford.
- Local sufficiency modelling aims to retain minimum 5% surplus to accommodate in-year applicants and parental preference.

RAG Rating 2023/24

Education Phase	Main Admission Round Sept 2024		In Year Applicants School Year 2023/24	
Primary	Green	Sufficient places in all areas	Green	Permanent expansions and bulge classes opened to meet forecast demand
Secondary	Red	Pressures in Sale and Altrincham areas	Amber	Pressures in Sale and Altrincham areas

Primary School Sufficiency

- DfE school places scorecard indicates forecast accuracy within 0.0% for 1 year ahead and 0.4% for 2 years ahead.
- National offer day 2021, 2022 and 2023, Trafford had sufficient places in all areas for main round of entry to reception with surplus in every area.
- Applicants offered first preference in Trafford 94.3% in 2023 and 94.0% in 2022, in both years this is 1.8 percentage points higher than in England.
- LA is admission authority for 32 out of 64 primary schools and it coordinates in-year admissions for all schools by agreement.
- Always experienced unique pattern inbound migration into upper primary year groups ready to access selective education system.
- Unprecedented surge from in-year applicants in all primary year groups experienced May to October 2021, creating significant pressure.
- In-year applicants in school year 2022/23 dropped to 77% of the in-year applicants in surge year 2021/22 but still higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- Forecast additional demand can now be met through permanent expansions and bulge classes opened in September 2023 where required in Sale and Altrincham.

Secondary School Sufficiency

- Unprecedented increase in demand in primary went on to have significant impact on secondary for 2022 and 2023 due to large unexpected increase in cohort late in the year.
- National offer day 2023, just enough capacity to offer to all who applied. 191 children (mainly Altrincham and Sale) could not be allocated a place at a preferred school so were allocated to nearest school with vacancy. At end of allocation every school full and some allocated over PAN.
- DfE school places scorecard 2023 indicates forecast accuracy within 0.7% for 1 year ahead and 1.8% for 2 years ahead.
- Applicants offered one of top three preferences in Trafford 90.9% in 2023, 3.1 percentage points lower than in England, selective education system also impacts this.
- LA is admission authority for 1 of 19 secondary schools and does not coordinate in-years.
- Based on census proxy - before pandemic, average 239 in-year new starters per year, in school year 2021/22 there were 336 in-year new starters (+41%) and 321 in 2022/23 to date as at May 2023.

Mitigation

- Permanent expansion options - met all non-selective secondary schools in Sale and Altrincham:
 - Ashton-on-Mersey – unable to expand within existing site, explored re-providing 6th form on nearby site to unlock space but not feasible from planning/cost perspective.
 - Altrincham College – feasibility study commissioned, project underway to create 300 additional places (60 per year). Delayed to Sept 2025 due to planning complexity.
 - North Cestrian – very tight site, architects commissioned to produce feasibility study to consider options for additional 150 places (30 per year), cost prohibitive.
 - Wellington School – very tight site, feasibility study to be commissioned.
- Existing schools taking over number (785 places secured across all years groups 2022)
- Specific advice to Sale and Altrincham residents transferring to secondary to apply for all their local non-selective schools. This was largely successful for the 2022 and 2023 admission rounds.
- 70% of selective school places were offered to Trafford residents in 2022 and 2023, up 1pp on 2021. In Sale and Altrincham this increased from 68% in 2021 to 70% in 2022 and then again to 73% in 2023.

Mitigation

- Pupils allocated places further away, travel pass funded if eligible, linked into TfGM school transport review. Improved school transport secured to Partington via Altrincham and Sale from Sept 2023.
- Regular meetings with DfE Place Planning Teams to monitor sufficiency and inbound migration.
- Ongoing monitoring of cross border sufficiency through GM Place Planning group but not possible to secure places in other LAs.
- Explored creation of temporary bulge class in existing schools through additional of temporary accommodation but not easy operationally for secondary due to curriculum planning for teaching time and specialist spaces.
- Explored existing school to deliver from satellite site if non-education accommodation could be identified. Examples of this being done from unused office space in another LA but significant challenges reported. Potential accommodation considered by Place Shaping Board.
- Explored opening new school in Sale or Altrincham area but do not have the required evidenced shortfall in demand.

Opening a New School

Central mainstream free schools programme

- Government invites applications from groups to establish high quality new schools.
- Latest wave 2022, government plan to open total 15 new mainstream schools in education investment areas which is those with the lowest education standards **so Trafford not eligible.**
- Trusts submit bids to the department to open a school.
- DfE can provide the capital for land and construction for these free schools. To secure best value for money, where possible DfE look to supplement this funding with other contributions such as provision of a site from LA or contributions from developers.

Presumption free schools

- Where LA identifies need for new school they must seek proposals to establish free school through this process.
- Minimum secondary size 6 FE / 180 PAN (in exceptional cases 5FE / 150 PAN can be considered). **Trafford do not have this level of shortfall.**
- LA is responsible for providing the site and meeting associated capital build costs upwards of £25m, principally using DfE Basic Need funding and/or contributions from developers.

Trafford Basic Need Allocations

- Can be used to increase capacity in mainstream and special schools.
- £8.510m 2023/24
- £0m 2024/25
- These allocations fully allocated to Altrincham College expansion and adding temporary capacity as required.
- Further £19.177m allocated 2025/26 to deliver places from September 2026.
- Exploring options for permanent expansions for recommendation to Trafford Executive in autumn 2023.