



## Directorate for Children's Services

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Councillor Ekta Kaur Ross  
on behalf of the Campaign Group A School for Burnham  
Via email to: [ekross@burnhamparish.gov.uk](mailto:ekross@burnhamparish.gov.uk)

19<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Etk

### Survey Response - Burnham

Many thanks for your email and for sharing with us the responses from the survey that has been undertaken. Whilst we very much understand the comments that have been submitted, as stated previously, the closure of the Burnham Park Academy was the decision of the Secretary of State due to falling numbers on roll and the failure of the sponsor to improve the educational provision at the school. Concerns were raised by the Local Authority (LA) during the consultation to close Burnham Park academy on sufficiency and transport grounds. Accordingly in its response to the consultation the Council requested that the Secretary of State re-broker the site to identify a new sponsor for the school or work with key stakeholders to identify a suitable and sustainable secondary school option for Burnham residents. Despite the LA's concerns the Secretary of State (SoS) took the decision to close the school as they considered that there was sufficient availability of places within a reasonable distance of Burnham based on current trends in parental preference.

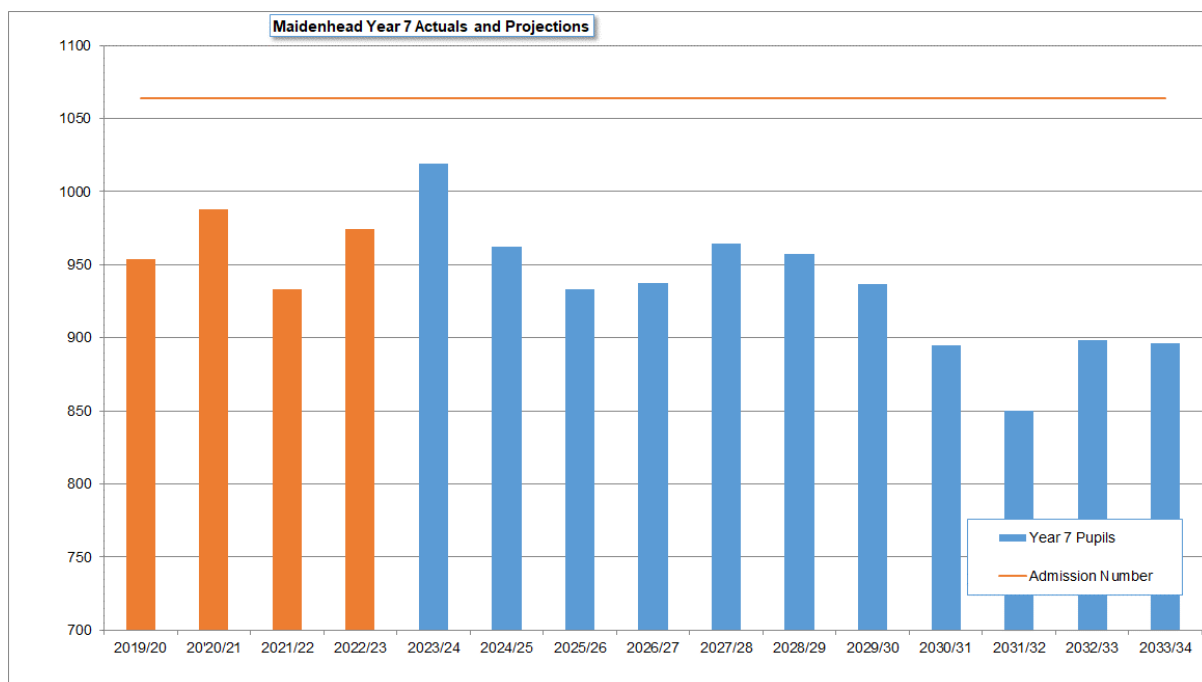
The analysis that you have provided only establishes that there is potential demand in the area to sustain a new school, however it does not take into account that there is currently sufficient capacity in the area to accommodate that demand (which is the basis on which the SoS closed the school). In order for the DfE to consider any application to reopen a school in Burnham, we would need to justify that there is projected additional demand in the area. The DfE guidance states such demand would need to be a minimum of four forms of entry of 30 pupils to provide a sustainable broad and balanced curriculum i.e. 120 pupils per year group. Unfortunately, the projections for the area do not demonstrate that there is such additional demand.

The ONS birth data below for the Burnham Primary Planning Area shows that there is little change in the pre-school aged population which will affect future secondary cohorts. Moreover, based on current trends, the two closest Buckinghamshire secondary schools to Burnham (i.e. Pioneer Academy (formerly Khalsa Academy) and Bourne End Academy c. 4-5 miles away) both currently have capacity to admit additional children. We would therefore encourage parents to rank their preferences in distance order to ensure children qualify for free home to school transport (where it meets Government criteria).

	Year										
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Births	165	144	173	154	171	179	158	153	145	152	170

In addition, projections for Maidenhead (see below) indicate there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate the current level of pupil movement from Burnham to Maidenhead secondary schools for the foreseeable future. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) believe they have reached the peak in demand for secondary school provision (Sept 2023), as the larger primary intakes

reach secondary school age. For a while, as smaller primary intakes start to feed through, they would expect demand for secondaries to start to ease off.



Furthermore, the latest projections provided by Slough Borough Council (SBC) show from 2024 a growing surplus of places each year, and by 2029 they forecast up to 9 surplus forms of entry (10%). Specifically in the west of Slough, the most recent birth data shows a significant decline over the next 10 years equivalent to a reduction of 6 forms of entry (or one secondary school). In view of the projected increase in surplus places, Slough have started some initial discussions with their secondary heads around viability by 2029. A new school in Burnham would only exacerbate this issue and SBC have confirmed that they would object if such a proposal came forward and that they would expect a similar response from their schools.

As stated above there is no evidence of an increase in future demand. If a new school were to open in Burnham and begin to attract back the pupils living in the former catchment area of Burnham Park Academy (which includes Slough) then this is likely to negatively impact on the intake of neighbouring schools. Further, there is no guarantee that a new school would attract all these children back as the trend for parents to attend a comprehensive secondary school in Maidenhead was well established even before the school's popularity and standards started to fall. The Council has made its position very clear in respect of re-opening a school on the former Burnham Park site. At this point in time there is no justification in terms of demand for places that would enable the Local Authority to seek the approval of the SoS to reopen a school in Burnham.

I regret therefore that the Council is unable to be involved in your working group to re-open the school.

Yours Sincerely,

Gareth Drawmer  
Head of Achievement & Learning  
Children's Services