

Data Management and Analysis Group

Options

Improving the evidence-base for planning school places in London



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NOTE:

This briefing outlines technical options for developing the evidence base for planning school places in London. It does not represent, and should not be read as representing, GLA policy.

1. Summary

The DfES London Challenge Secondary School Places Planning Group draft report supports the introduction of a pan-London school roll forecasting arrangement. This would provide secondary school projections at a London-wide, London sub-regional, local authority and school level. The draft report is, in principle, timely.

The GLA provides roll projections on a subscription basis to 21 London authorities, using a common methodology, with roll projections up to ten years ahead, and population projections up to 12 years ahead. Projections are available using any or all of September, January and April/May school roll data provided by local authorities. With specialist teams in demography, housing and education in London, the GLA is uniquely well placed to carry that work forward.

Local authorities, the GLA and DfES would benefit from an approach to school place planning where each local authority could set its own information in the context of similar information for neighbouring authorities, and could then adjust its school plans accordingly.

This, potentially, would provide planning authorities and the DfES with a firmer planning base. The arrangement would be unique in England, and would entail start up costs. Since the DfES would benefit from an improvement in the evidence base for school places planning, it could usefully meet the computing hardware and software start up costs. There would also be ongoing costs, perhaps best met by London's planning authorities.

Converting the GLA's existing roll projection service for individual authorities into a (revised) pan-London service would entail making each authority's roll projections available to other authorities. There are grounds for believing that London local authorities would support this, as long as the costs involved were shared equitably.

The draft London Challenge report envisages stronger links for those who work on roll forecasting with wider aspects of school places planning. This recommendation accords well with the increased range of analyses of pupil-level data provided by the GLA to local authorities. The resource required to take this forward would need to be identified.

While relevant work at the GLA might be developed further, the statutory responsibility for planning rests with local authorities. A clear understanding is

needed that there is a difference between providing roll projections and information relevant to school place planning on the one hand, and actually meeting the statutory responsibility for planning school places on the other. Equally, there would need to be a clear understanding in a pan-London project of where that boundary falls.

1.1 Basic data options

The data available to a pan-London scheme will determine what output can be provided. Pan-London output could be available annually, based on the January pupil count. The basic options are to use

- LEA level data published each autumn by the DfES
- School level data provided by local authorities and/or the DfES
- Pupil level data provided by the DfES

The first option requires the fewest additional resources. The last is the best of the three options in terms of providing an evidence base for school places planning. Within each option is the further option of using either data for London's 33 local authorities or for those authorities and London's neighbouring shire counties and nearby unitary authorities.

- To maintain the present range of service, a pan-London system would need to provide projections for the primary phase and for areas within local authorities, as well as for the secondary phase.
- London sub-regional projections could be for the existing five sub-regions and for local authorities grouped in other ways. If roll projections were produced for neighbouring authorities, then a further option would be to take account of the situation in the counties bordering on London, and in the unitary authorities near London.
- The availability of population projections for neighbouring counties and unitary authorities cannot be assumed in advance.
- Roll projections at borough level and London sub-regional level could be produced using existing local authority-level data. This is the lowest cost option. It would represent a lower level of service than that presently offered by the GLA to its customers. Projections would not be available for areas within a borough, and would probably differ from projections based on school-level data. Projections would be available once a year, and in the autumn following the January pupil count, which is later than the GLA currently achieves with its current service.
- Roll projections using school level data could be made for areas within LEAs. However, pan-London projections require data for all schools. All local authorities are involved in a roll count in January each year, but not necessarily at other times. Projections would almost certainly be available once a year, based on the January roll count.

- At present, those local authorities which subscribe to the GLA roll projection service provide roll data for each maintained primary and secondary school. The simplest solution would be for those authorities which do not subscribe to the service to provide that data in the future. Additionally, historic roll data would be required for these boroughs. To ease the transition, the GLA might provide school-level roll data summaries for earlier years, using pupil level data it currently holds. The approval of DfES Analytical Services would be required for pupil-level data to be analysed in this way. There are significant resource implications in providing pan-London forecasts based on school level data.
- The DfES could, in principle if not in practice, provide school level data where local authorities are unable to do this. Additionally, the DfES is effectively the only source of school level data for the neighbouring Shire counties and nearby unitary authorities. It is possible, as noted to provide school level roll summaries based on pupil level data. One option is to extend the pupil level data provided by the DfES to the GLA to include the neighbouring counties. School roll summaries can, as noted, be produced from pupil level data. It may be simpler for the DfES if the GLA were to carry out that work. This option would provide the single best evidence base for projecting school rolls and providing information relevant to wider school places planning. The computing capacity required would entail hardware and software costs of approximately £60,000.
- The GLA already holds, under terms and conditions set by DfES Analytical Services, a pupil level dataset for pupils in maintained schools who either live in London, regardless of where they attend school, or who attend a school in London, regardless of where they live. This is referred to here as the London Pupil Dataset (LPD).
- DfES Analytical Services is the gatekeeper as far as access to the National Pupil Dataset is concerned. This will continue to be the case; local authorities wishing to have access to data from the National Pupil Dataset will need to approach DfES Analytical Services directly. Approval from DfES Analytical Services is also required before analyses of pupil level data are put in the public domain. This will also continue to be the case.
- In at least two respects London local authorities already work with strong central units within the GLA providing pan-London analyses of data. The work of the GLA DMAG demography team falls into this category, as does the work of the GLA DMAG census team. Both have user groups, which meet regularly, and which are attended by colleagues from local authorities.
- If pan-London or pan-London plus counties pupil level data were to be used to inform wider aspects of school places planning in London, a GLA LPD User Group could be established, open to staff in the GLA group and to local authority staff. A further option might be to open such a user group to those involved in wider aspects of school places planning, as well as

those involved in work with roll projections. This group could monitor and advise on a GLA work schedule previously agreed with DfES Analytical Services.

- Supporting wider aspects of school places planning by providing analyses of pupil level data would require a detailed knowledge of both school places planning and statistical analysis.
- School places planning in London is now strongly linked with plans for school improvement. How analyses of pan-London pupil level data might support work on school improvement might also be considered further.
- Subject to approval from DfES Analytical Services, transfers between individual schools can be monitored to inform wider school places planning. Similarly, home-to-school journeys, cross-border pupil mobility and longer-range mobility, and 11+ transfers can be monitored in the context of pupil level characteristics such as attainment, ethnicity and entitlement to free school meals to support wider school places planning.
- A comparison of a ward level count of resident pupils in maintained schools with ward level population data from the 2001 national census, indicated a limited number of London wards where the number of young people in the census count was lower than the count of resident pupils. Pupil level data can also be used to provide ward level summaries to GLA demographers to enable them to carry out similar checks.
- Pupil level data can provide a check on the number of children living in new housing developments, where these have discrete postcodes.
- The time of year at which pan-London roll projections become available may become an issue if DfES reporting requirements, associated, for example with capital bids, stipulate an earlier reporting cycle. This would need to be clarified with the Department. Because of this, and related points, it would be advisable for the DfES to be consulted on the development of a pan-London roll projections.
- The joint GLA-local authority roll projection liaison group has played a constructive role in developing the GLA roll projection service. A similar liaison group could play a valuable roll in a future pan-London project.
- To provide output for a large number of authorities within a meaningful time span points towards an automated common core system (with agreed options). The GLA system is largely automated, and increasingly relies on Visual Basic coding. The technical resource needed to maintain and develop a system of that sort needs to be taken into account.

1.2 Basic methods

- A pan-London roll projection system should be able to provide both roll-trend based roll projections and population trend-based roll projections combined.
- A core service should include options to take account of circumstances which arise within individual local authorities. Options used can be indicated in output from the service, and explained in more detail in a local authority user manual.
- Options can be developed on the basis of consensus reached at liaison group meetings with local authorities.
- Accuracy checks are a standard part of GLA roll projection output, and can be included in the output from a pan-London system. The GLA system has now been enhanced, and will be discussed at the GLA roll projection liaison group meeting in September 2005.

1.3 Child Yield and school capacity

- The draft London Challenge report indicates that a pan-London service should carry out a survey to establish the numbers of children moving into different types of new housing development in different parts of London. This is sometimes referred to as child yield. The proposal is not costed. The costs would be high.
- Measures of child yield exist and are used in discussions between local authority planners and property developers. Child yield is not used by GLA staff who provide school roll projections. Consultations, with local education authorities subscribing to the GLA roll projections service, only identified two which were willing to consider part-funding a child yield Survey. Additionally, it is not self-evident that educationists, however skilled, have the set of skills required to organise and run a survey of this sort. Consideration might usefully be given to involving the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in discussions of a child yield survey, since it has both an interest and expertise in this area.
- Other measures could be added to output from a pan-London system. School capacity measures could be included, where local authorities provide that information. School capacity measures have the advantage that they already exist, that they exist in a common format and would be fairly easy to show in roll projection output. Other data, such as pan-London schools admissions data, would be in some cases be costly to incorporate. In this case, it would be prudent to wait for a review of the effectiveness of this new system. Nonetheless new, additional, sources of information should be kept under review.

1.4 Output

- A pan-London project would need to be clear about who its customers are. Their needs should drive output. At present output from the GLA service is directed mainly, though not exclusively, at specialist local authority staff. There needs to be a discussion of what output would look like if it were to meet the wider needs of, for example, non-specialist members of School Organisation Committees.

2 Background

The DfES London Challenge Secondary School Places Planning Group has produced a draft report which supports the development of school places planning in London, including the introduction of a pan-London school roll projections. This is to be welcomed. Inevitably, the draft report touches on major policy issues. GLA DMAG staff do not represent the Authority at a policy level, and this briefing concerns itself with specifically operational issues. Put more positively, this briefing is for colleagues in the GLA, local authorities and the DfES who see the value of enhancing the evidence base for school place planning across London, and who need to know what the practical options are for taking this forward.

The briefing focuses on two key themes in the draft report. One theme sees projections for London being provided at a pan-London, London sub-regional, local authority and individual school-level for the secondary sector. The draft report is written by and for those who use information in school place planning. The second key theme entails establishing further links between arrangements for forecasting demand for secondary school places, and wider aspects of school place planning.

While the user focus of the draft report is appropriate, there is also a need for an awareness of the practical and statistical options available in the design and development of school roll forecasts. The two key aims in the draft report might be realised in several ways, each involving different costs, data, statistics and computing requirements. The user focus of the draft report itself raises questions about who the users, stakeholders and customers in a pan-London system would be, and what the content of the output from a pan-London service might be.

The existing GLA roll projection service begins as an exercise in statistical analysis by specialist staff at the GLA, who provide a product which is then interpreted by statistics specialists in local authorities. School rolls are projected for 10 years ahead, and population projections for 12 years ahead. The service has developed to provide both very detailed information needed by local authority planning specialists and summary graphs, which give an 'at a glance' view of trends in school rolls for senior council officers and local councillors. School Organisation Committees now involve a wider public in decisions on school place planning (see Bob Garnett and Jack Demaine *Education Policy and the Development of the School Organisation Committee*

International Studies in Sociology of Education, vol 10, number 2, 2000, pages 177-190), and their views will need to be taken into account locally.

What does the output from a pan-London roll forecasting system need to look like if it is to meet the needs of statisticians, planning specialists, policy officers, elected representatives, school governors and members of community groups, and not just now, but each year in the future? While the draft London Challenge report does not discuss this, does not offer a technical specification for a roll projections model, and does not identify the costs involved in developing a pan-London project, it is, nonetheless, timely.

Existing plans for the Thames Gateway clearly cut across local authority boundaries, and point to a need for sub-regional roll forecasts. The successful bid to host the Olympics in 2012 will itself have a major impact on the regeneration of broad areas of east London. Additionally, the GLA's specialist demography team is using information from the 2005 GLA Housing Capacity Survey to provide new population projections for London, which will inform future school roll projections.

The emphasis in the draft report on the wider aspects of school planning accords with developments in the range of information the GLA can, potentially, provide to local authorities. The GLA continues to receive London-wide pupil level data from the DfES. This could, resources permitting and with the approval of DfES Analytical Services, be used to inform discussion of a number of school place planning issues relevant to London.

A number of local authorities subscribing to the GLA roll projection service have already expressed an interest in receiving projections for groups of local authorities. There are some grounds for optimism about the possibility of moving from a situation where GLA roll projection output belongs exclusively to the receiving local authority to one where output is shared amongst subscribing local authorities.

However, a clear understanding is needed that school place planning encompasses a wide range of activities other than the production of roll projections, or the provision of GLA analyses of pupil cross-border mobility. Those activities include creating plans and capital bids for buildings which meet current, rather than historic curricular requirements, removing buildings which are physically at the end of their expected period of use or which have high maintenance costs, closing or replacing failing schools, and monitoring and planning for the impact of new housing developments and change in the use of existing housing. Local authority planning officers will consult with diocesan authorities and schools, as well as with the local School Organisation Committee responsible for school organisation and change. Those officers are also likely to be involved in the identification of land for development if a new school is needed, will need to consult with local authority school admissions staff, and may well be involved in presenting the local authority's view in school admission appeals.

This list is not exhaustive: school place planning involves a range of specialisms in its own right. A pan-London school roll projection system cannot be a substitute for school place planning in local authorities, and there is a need for clarity on where the boundary falls between, on the one hand, producing school roll projections and providing information relevant to wider school places planning and, on the other, engaging in the full range of statutory school place planning activity.

2.1 Key points in section 2

- 1** The DfES London Challenge Secondary School Places Planning Group draft report supports the introduction of a school roll forecasting arrangement which provides secondary school projections at a pan-London, London sub-regional, local authority and school level. This is, in principle, timely.
- 2** Converting the GLA's existing roll projection service for individual authorities into a, revised, pan-London service would entail making each authority's roll projections available to other authorities. There are grounds for believing that London local authorities would support that, as long as the project was financed equitably.
- 3** The draft report also envisages stronger links between roll forecasting and wider aspects of school places planning, and this is in tune with the increased provision of information by the GLA to local authorities.
- 4** While relevant work at the GLA might be developed further, the statutory responsibility for planning will continue to rest with local authorities.
- 5** A clearer understanding is needed of where the boundary falls between providing information relevant to school place planning and actually meeting the statutory responsibility for planning school places.

3 The scope of pan-London school roll projections

In London, primary and secondary roll projections are currently provided by the GLA to 21 local authorities, with Barnet being the most recent to subscribe to this service. Projections are at LEA level for secondary schools and at smaller a smaller planning area level for primary schools. It is unlikely that boroughs currently subscribing to the GLA service will accept the loss of projections for primary school planning areas. Projections for the primary phase need to be included in pan-London arrangements.

Providing statistically reliable roll projections is more challenging for small authorities than for large authorities, and London's local authorities are small compared to the surrounding shire counties. Statistically, roll projections for individual schools will be far less reliable than projections for groups of schools. Providing school-level projections, including projections for newly opened schools, warrants further discussion. If it is decided that they should

be produced, then these should carry a warning concerning their reliability, with a measure of the potential variability of actual and projected rolls. Issues such as this are discussed in meetings of the GLA-local authority school roll liaison group, where decisions about the development of the service are reached through consensus. The Group has played an informed and constructive role, and should continue in the future.

For the GLA, roll projections at local authority, London sub-regional and pan-London level *may* be sufficient to meet need. These will also be statistically more robust than projections for individual schools, and can be provided from existing information at, comparatively speaking, little additional cost. These are unlikely to meet local authority needs, and may differ from projections based on school-level data.

Figure 1 shows London's sub-regions, and roll projections can be provided for each. However, local authorities may wish to group themselves differently, taking account of the situation in neighbouring authorities, or in those authorities with which there is an interchange of pupils. The GLA roll projection computing system is currently being tested, with a view to providing projections for groups of neighbouring *London* local authorities, as well as for the sub-regional groups shown in figure 1.

Outer London boroughs have both London authorities and shire counties as their neighbouring authorities. Additionally Slough, which is a unitary authority, is a near neighbour of a number of west London boroughs. Table 1 shows the number of pupils, living in those northern outer London authority areas which border on shire counties, who attended maintained schools in nearby non-London authorities, while table 2 provides similar information for pupils living in southern outer London. The tables do not imply that the movement of pupils across the Greater London border is restricted to those authorities; cross-border movement across the GLA boundary also affects authorities closer to the centre of London.

Table 1. Pupils living in northern outer London authorities in January 2003, and attending schools maintained by selected non-London

	Maintaining authority of school attended				
	Surrey	Slough	Buckinghamshire	Hertfordshire	Essex
Pupil home area					
Hillingdon	130	446	234	531	1
Harrow	7	8	111	915	
Barnet	12		8	796	1
Enfield	3		2	881	37
Waltham Forest	1			9	346
Redbridge	1		2	6	1,306
Havering	4			3	1,747

Source: 2003 London Pupil Dataset

Table 2. Pupils living in southern outer London authorities in January 2003, and attending schools maintained by selected non-London authority areas

	Maintaining authority of school attended		
	Slough	Surrey	Kent
Pupil home area			
Hounslow	196	1,165	1
Richmond upon Thames	7	284	5
Kingston upon Thames	1	845	6
Sutton		1,640	2
Croydon		1,760	14
Bromley		182	673
Bexley	1	7	1,429

Source: 2003 London Pupil Dataset

Table 3 shows the number of pupils who lived in neighbouring non-London authority areas and attended a school maintained by a northern outer London outer local authority, Table 4 provides equivalent information for southern outer London. The movement of pupils from homes on one side of the Greater London boundary, to schools on the other side, is considerable. It might be expected roll projections for groups of neighbouring London local authorities would take account of county authorities bordering London and unitary authorities near London.

Table 3. Pupils living in selected local authority areas to the north of London in January 2003, and attending schools maintained by northern outer London boroughs

	Maintaining authority of school attended						
	Hillingdon	Harrow	Barnet	Enfield	Waltham Forest	Redbridge	Havering
Pupil home area							
Slough	128						
Buckinghamshire	244	1					
Hertfordshire	311	117	537	475	21	18	2
Essex			10	94	110	1,228	436

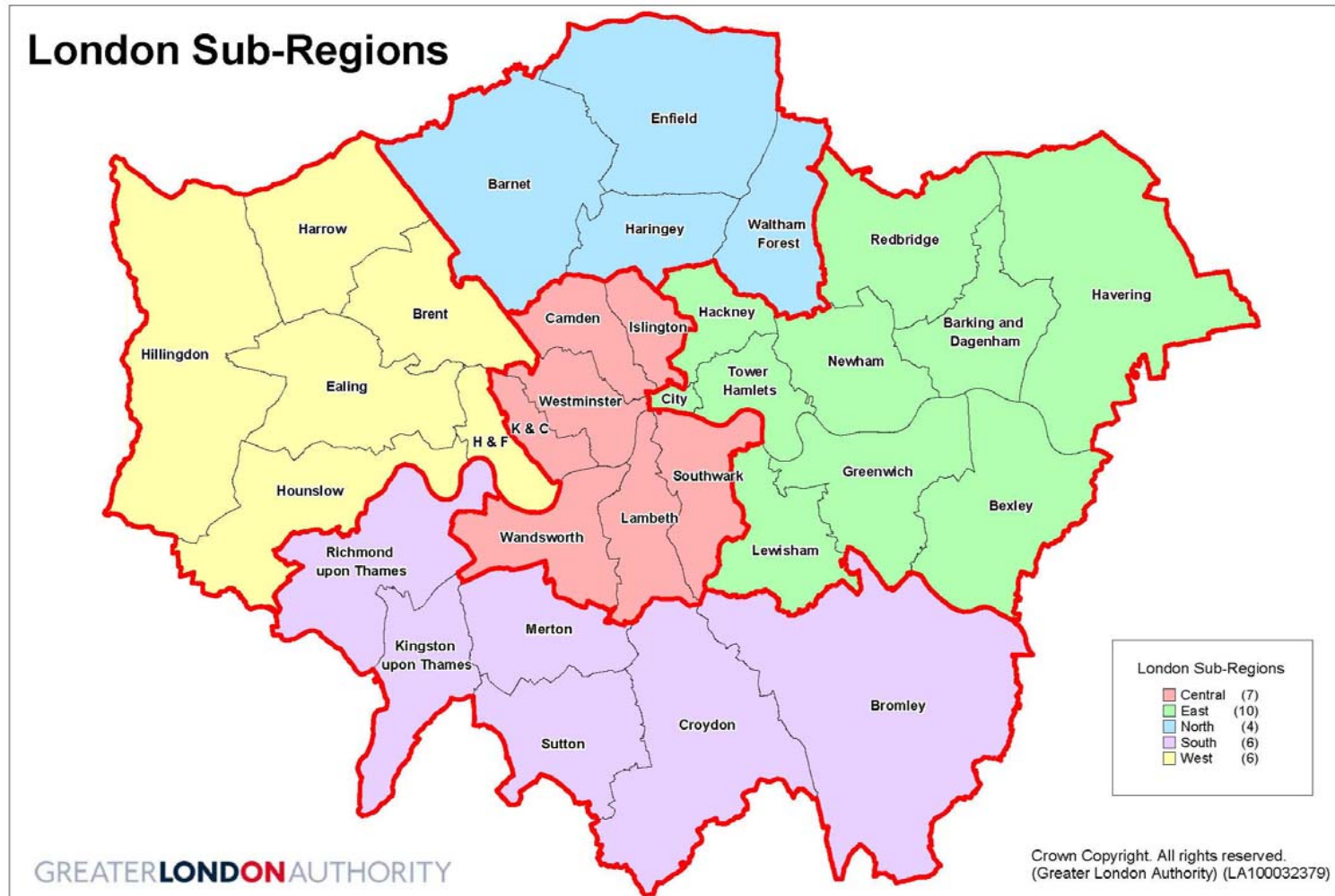
Source: 2003 London Pupil Dataset

Table 4. Pupils living in selected local authority areas to the south of London in January 2003, and attending schools maintained by southern outer London boroughs

	Maintaining authority of school attended						
	Hounslow	Richmond upon Thames	Kingston upon Thames	Sutton	Croydon	Bromley	Bexley
Pupil home area							
Slough	24	1					
Surrey	251	197	962	1,330	657	41	
Kent				3	23	410	798

Source: 2003 London Pupil Dataset

Figure 1.



3.1 Key points and options in section 3

- 1 To maintain present standards, a pan-London system would need to provide projections for the primary phase and for sub-regions within local authorities, as well as for the secondary phase.
- 2 London sub-regional projections could be for the existing five sub-regions and for local authorities grouped in other ways.
- 3 If projections are produced for neighbouring authorities, then it may be advisable to take account of the situation in the counties bordering on London, and in the unitary authorities near London.
- 4 The data required, its availability, and the costs involved, warrant consideration.
- 5 The joint GLA-local authority roll projection liaison group has played a valuable role in developing the roll projection service in the past. A similar liaison group should have an assured place in a future pan-London project.

4 Data options – historic roll data and population data

Statistically, the single best short-run predictor of the number of children on roll in any one year is the number on roll aged one year younger, one year earlier. In their simplest form, roll projections are based on extrapolations from existing trends in schools rolls. Those extrapolations require historic roll data. A pan-London roll projection system would require roll data for all London authorities. Projections involving neighbouring counties would require roll data for the counties.

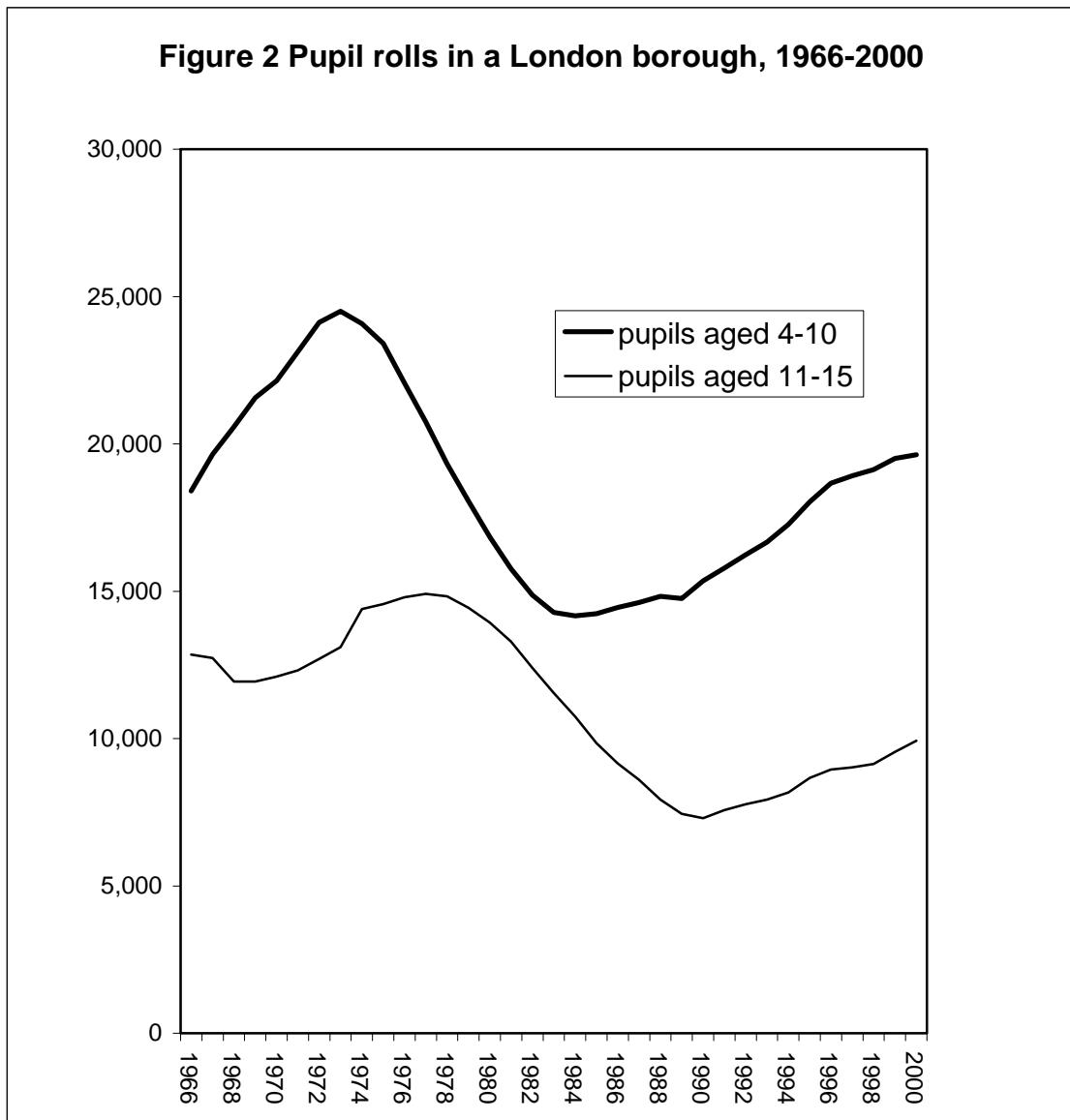
However, there can be no guarantee that past trends in school rolls will continue in the future. Figure 2 shows the actual primary and secondary school roll in one London local authority between 1966 and 2000. Between 1966 and 1972, the primary roll increased, at a steady rate of approximately 1,000 each year. The trend did not continue after 1972. Between 1972 and 1984, the primary roll fell by more than 10,000 pupils.

Substantial changes in the numbers on roll, as well as discontinuities in the trend from one year to the next, can and do take place.

Those changes would have required difficult decisions and substantial changes to the number of primary school places in this authority. Advice as to what was needed, based purely on trends in school rolls, could easily have been misleading at two points in time. In 1972, past trends in school rolls pointed to an increase in pupil numbers when the opposite happened. In 1984, past trends in school rolls pointed to a further decline in pupil numbers but, again, the opposite happened.

Underlying changes in the population need to be taken into account in the longer term. The GLA projection system *combines* information on trends in school rolls with population projections, with the former being given greater weight in the short-run and the latter being given greater weight in longer term

projections. Any longer range pan-London school roll projection system would need to continue with that practice.



However, even when the population in an area is increasing, the school roll can remain flat if schools are full and no further places are made available. In addition to providing roll projections based on a combination of trends in the school roll and population projections, the GLA service also provides local authorities with population projections. Taken with the other information from the service, these show whether a flat school roll in an area within the LEA is the result of flat demand, or whether it is the result of demand constrained by an insufficient number of school places. Population projections, for areas within a local authority, should continue to be available to local authorities in a pan-London system.

The DfES London Challenge School Places Planning Group draft report also attaches a value to the inclusion of information on the transfers of pupils to and from individual schools in arrangements for a pan-London roll projection service. More specifically, it recommends that such information should be used directly in the calculation of roll projections.

That procedure may have a statistical value for the computation of roll projections in a lightly settled shire county, where schools are few in number, far apart, and where parents' choice of secondary school is effectively limited to the one nearest their home. London is densely settled, with many schools in close proximity and a comparatively good public transport system. Children from an individual primary school may well not transfer *en masse*, year after year to the same secondary school.

Table 5 illustrates hypothetical primary to secondary transfers in one year. There are 111 children in the transfers group. In this hypothetical case, 5 pupils aged 10 who had attended School A in 2002 were on roll in School 1 in 2003. The single largest transfer group was 10, from School C to School 1. The smallest 'transfer groups' each consist of one pupil.

Table 5. Numbers of pupils aged 10 in 2002 by school attended who had transferred to individual schools in LEA X at age 11 in 2003

	Secondary schools in LEA X attended by the same children aged 11 in 2003			
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Primary schools attended by children aged 10 in 2002				
School A	5	8	6	1
School B	2			2
School C	10	3	5	6
School D	3			
School E	5	6	7	8
School F	7	8	3	1
School G	9	1	1	4

Table 6 shows the total number of pupils in the 11+ transfer group attending schools in each London authority in January 2003. The table also shows the number and percentage of pupils who had transferred from their 2002 school in groups of eight or less. In London as a whole 44 per cent of pupils had transferred from one school to another in groups of eight or less. Table 6 also shows the total number and percentage of transfer groups involving fewer than eight pupils. Eighty seven per cent of transfers groups from one school to another involved eight or less children.

Table 6. Transfers to schools in each LEA. Pupils aged 10 in 2001/2 and 11 in 2002/3, based on pupils with London Pupil Dataset records in both years.

maintaining local authority in January 2003	Total number of pupils	Number of pupils transferring in groups of 8 or less	Number of pupils transferring in groups of 8 or less as a percentage of all pupil transfers	Total number of groups transferring	Total number of groups of eight or less	Transfer groups of eight or less as a % of all transfer groups
Camden	1,483	785	52.9	383	339	88.5
Hackney	1,535	920	59.9	412	368	89.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,194	933	78.1	424	404	95.3
Haringey	2,120	922	43.5	498	423	84.9
Islington	1,596	1,059	66.4	511	467	91.4
Kensington and Chelsea	628	357	56.8	192	173	90.1
Lambeth	1,510	1,162	77.0	590	560	94.9
Lewisham	2,456	1,477	60.1	768	707	92.1
Newham	3,616	443	12.3	549	443	80.7
Southwark	2,432	1,535	63.1	759	700	92.2
Tower Hamlets	2,670	1,536	57.5	596	530	88.9
Wandsworth	1,969	881	44.7	642	516	80.4
Waltham Forest	1,409	931	66.1	540	512	94.8
Barnet	3,385	1,772	52.3	978	881	90.1
Bexley	3,499	1,556	44.5	839	695	82.8
Brent	2,612	1,101	42.2	577	510	88.4
Bromley	3,680	1,442	39.2	801	681	85.0
Croydon	3,941	1,761	44.7	916	803	87.7
Ealing	2,735	920	33.6	527	449	85.2
Enfield	3,863	1,579	40.9	815	663	81.3
Greenwich	2,606	1,350	51.8	632	549	86.9
Havering	3,179	1,009	31.7	555	465	83.8
Hillingdon	3,127	1,004	32.1	537	442	82.3
Hounslow	2,756	946	34.3	514	420	81.7
Kingston	1,511	684	45.3	371	316	85.2
Merton	1,670	440	26.3	280	226	80.7
Redbridge	3,314	966	29.1	609	524	86.0
Richmond	1,514	552	36.5	291	244	83.8
Sutton	2,664	1,121	42.1	588	511	86.9
Waltham Forest	2,788	828	29.7	491	399	81.3

Source: merged 2002 and 2003 London Pupil Datasets (LPD).

The table groups pupils in terms of the local authority which maintained the school attended in January 2003. The school attended in 2002 could have been maintained by the same or by another local authority.

Note: There is no maintained secondary school in the City of London. The table excludes transfers to Harrow schools since Harrow operates a middle school system. The table also excludes one other out London borough.

The London Pupil Dataset contains records of pupils attending maintained schools who either live in London, regardless of where they attend school, or who attend a school in London, regardless of where they live. Pupils with an LPD record in 2003, but not in 2002, are excluded from this table. Pupils who moved to London or to a London school from elsewhere between 2002 and 2003, or who attended an independent school in 2002 are therefore excluded from the table. Additionally, pupils transferring to independent schools at the end of primary schooling in summer 2002, or who moved out of London altogether at that time, are also excluded from the table. The table therefore underestimates the number transfers involving single or small groups of pupils.

The high percentage of transfers accounted for by small, and therefore volatile numbers of children, confirms that including numbers of pupils transferring between particular schools directly within the calculation of roll projections for London is not viable. Information on pupil transfers between individual named schools does, however, have a value for school place planning more generally. This is outlined in section 7.

4.1 Key points in section 4

1. A pan-London roll projection system should be able to provide *combined* roll-trend based roll projections and population trend-based roll projections.
2. A pan-London system should be able to provide population projections for areas within a local authority.
3. Transfers between individual schools should be monitored as part of wider school places planning.

5 Roll and population data available for pan-London school roll projections

At present, 21 London authorities provide the GLA with roll information for a maximum of three points in each school year. Other London boroughs supporting a pan-London system might be expected to provide similar information. However, London's neighbouring counties would not necessarily see themselves as prime beneficiaries of a roll projection system for the capital. If a single county were unable to provide roll information, then the move to include counties would fail. Alternative sources of roll data need to be considered.

The roll data options are to use

- existing local authority level summary roll data by age group, published by the DfES and already held by the GLA
- school level summary roll data provided by London local authorities and, possibly, by the Department for Education and Skills for neighbouring counties
- pupil level data from the National Pupil Dataset, to which DfES Analytical Services is the gatekeeper.

5.1 Using DfES local authority roll summary data from the annual Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) to provide pan-London and grouped LEA roll projections

The DfES Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC), soon to be renamed the Annual Schools Census, takes place on the third January of each year. LEA level summaries are published some months later. January 2004 local authority roll figures were published in September 2004.

This has three implications. Firstly, DfES roll figures are published annually, which allows for one pan-London forecast each year as opposed to the three sets of projections currently available to customers of the GLA roll projection service. Secondly, DfES roll figures are available at a later point in the year than the roll figures provided by London boroughs to the GLA. This would mean that pan-London and sub-regional projections would be available at a later point in the year than local authorities have come to expect from the existing GLA service. Thirdly, DfES figures are at local authority level, rather than at school level. The figures will not support the sub-LEA projections currently available from the GLA.

It should be noted that any change in DfES reporting practice could have major implications for pan-London projections based on this type of data. Additionally, forecasting needs might be better met by information for that part of a county where there is pupil mobility across the Greater London boundary.

For the present, the least expensive pan-London projections would use local authority level, rather than school-level data. It is not clear that these would meet present day needs in local authorities.

5.2 Using school-level data for schools in London, in the counties bordering on London, and in the unitary authorities near London

The GLA roll projection service uses school-level, rather than local authority level data, and is able to provide projections for primary schools grouped into planning areas. It would be *technically* possible for the DfES to provide equivalent information for schools in local authorities bordering on London based on PLASC data. Whether that is practicable, given the resources available to the DfES and the framework within which it works, is another matter.

It should be noted that school level data from PLASC would be available annually, rather than for each school term, and that the time at which data were released would constrain the time at which pan-London roll projections could be carried out. Providing pan-London roll projections based on school-level data would entail a significant additional cost to the GLA roll projection service.

If school level data are to be provided by local authorities, then pan-London reporting can, as noted, only move forward at the speed of the slowest local authority. However, this approach leaves the door open for projections to be provided to a single local authority without taking any account of projections for other authorities. This is how the GLA roll projection service operates at present. The approach has the advantage of allowing at least *some* information to be made available to a local authority, which finds itself faced with an urgent need for planning data. The drawback is that, in these circumstances, the roll projections would not have the pan-London or sub-regional context, and may differ from projections based on that wider data. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach need to be considered,

as do arrangements for a situation where data from one or more local authority are not available.

5.3 Using pupil-level data to provide school roll summaries

The GLA receives an extract of pupil level data from the National Pupil Dataset (NPD), which has been referred to here as the London Pupil Dataset (LPD). DfES Analytical Services, rather than the GLA, is the gatekeeper as far as access to data from the NPD is concerned. That would continue to be the case if agreement were reached that pupil level data were to be used to provide pan-London roll projections.

The LPD contains individual pupil records for young people attending maintained schools who live in London, regardless of where they attend schools, or who attend school in London regardless of where they live. The NPD is updated annually, and the GLA has now received extracts for 2002, 2003, 2004 with provisional data for 2005. It is therefore *technically* possible for the GLA to produce pan-London projections for all London boroughs from the data it already holds. To do so, while some local authorities pay for GLA roll projections and others do not, would be highly contentious.

It would also be possible to use pupil level data to provide roll summaries for schools in the counties adjacent to London, if data were available from 2002 onwards. This may reduce the demands placed on the time of staff at DfES Analytical Services, but would increase the demands on the GLA's computing capacity. It should be noted that information collected in PLASC varies from one year to another. New data items may need considerable cleansing before they can be released. In turn, this means that the time at which pupil level data has reached the GLA has varied considerably from one year to the next, and this would have an impact on the time at which roll projections could be delivered.

There are 1,089,825 individual pupil records in the 2003 London Pupil dataset, some of which will be for non-London residents attending London schools, and some of which will be for London-resident children attending maintained schools outside London. It is one of the largest single datasets held by the GLA. Table 7 shows the number of pupils attending schools maintained by London local authorities, and by authorities bordering on London, in January 2004.

A dataset with records for all pupils in those schools would be close to twice the size of the LPD in anyone year. In practice, the LPD for one year is linked for the LPD for another year, and this adds to the size of the dataset. Why this is so is discussed further in section 8. The point here is that existing GLA datasets are already large. Doubling their size would require a change in computing capacity, and in the number of personnel working on the data. The start-up *computing hardware and software* costs for a London and

Table 7. Full-time pupils on roll in London and neighbouring local authority maintained primary and secondary schools, January 2004

	Full-time pupils		Total
	Primary	Secondary	
London	575,860	412,740	988,600
Slough	10,170	8,440	18,610
Buckinghamshire	37,370	34,610	71,980
Hertfordshire	85,610	79,280	164,890
Essex	104,980	90,680	195,660
Kent	109,550	98,090	207,640
Surrey	74,840	59,440	134,280
Total excluding London	422,520	370,540	793,060
Total including London	998,380	783,280	1,781,660

Source: Web tables accompanying *Statistics of Education: Schools in England 2004* edition and available through the DfES Research and Statistics Gateway

neighbouring counties dataset would be in the region of £60,000, with annual software licence fees. Since the data would be for a population equivalent to that of a middle-sized European country, the start-up costs are modest.

The range of pupil level data available in the NPD and LPD is considerable, and the wider relevance of this data for school places planning is discussed further in section 8.

Using that data, with equivalent information for local authorities surrounding London, would be the single most effective way of improving the evidence base for school places planning in the capital.

However, the availability of population data for authorities surrounding London should not be assumed in advance.

5.4 Key points in section 5

- 1** Roll projections at borough level and London sub-regional level could be produced annually based on existing data. This is the lowest cost option. This would represent a diminution in the service currently provided to GLA customers.
- 2** Roll projections using school level data, based on information provided, if this is possible, by the DfES, would allow for roll projections for areas within LEAs. However, those projections would also be available only once a year, which represents diminution in the existing GLA roll projection service. The option would have resource implications, which would be significant if analyses of pupil level data were involved.
- 3** DfES Analytical Services is the gatekeeper as far as access to the National Pupil Dataset is concerned. This will continue to be the case.

- 4 The options outlined all presuppose that pan-London and grouped LEA roll projections would generally be available at a point later in the year than the roll projections currently provided to individual local authorities by the GLA. This may become an issue if DfES reporting requirements associated, for example with capital bids, stipulate an earlier reporting cycle, and this would need to be clarified with the Department. Because of this, and related points, it would be advisable for the DfES to be consulted on the development of pan-London roll projections. This is particularly the case where projections for individual authorities are concerned.
- 5 The costs of obtaining population projections for counties around London could be explored further.

6 A common framework for roll projections

A pan-London system would, at the least, enable each individual authority to view its roll projections in the context of projections for the local authority group of which it was a member. It is possible that individual local authorities would wish to discuss roll projections with neighbours, for example so that the implications for an expansion or contraction of school places in one authority could be set against roll trends in neighbouring authorities.

At present, local authorities subscribing to the GLA roll projection service meet as a whole with GLA staff three times a year, with one-to-one meetings arranged in between as required. These meetings could be supplemented by GLA-local authority sub-regional meetings, if local authorities were able to agree on which authorities had an interest in which sub-regional grouping.

The discussion of roll projections at such meetings would be likely to take several forms. Some colleagues in local authorities will simply wish to review trends in roll projections without overly concerning themselves about the methodology involved. Other colleagues will wish to play an active role in developing the methods used to project school rolls. Either way, colleagues will expect roll projections to be robust. In terms of the likely order of expectations, the first will be that pan-London roll projections exist and are available on a timely basis, the second will be that they are reliable, and the third will be that the methodology involved will be made clear and discussed.

The GLA roll projection service aims to meet those needs by

- developing a largely automated system which assures authorities that projections will be available on a timely basis
- providing a common core service, which is well documented, and based on a combination of historic roll data and population data
- providing options within the common core service to take account of specific circumstances which can and do arise in individual authorities.
- providing an 'accuracy check' on earlier forecasts.

Steps in the automated system, and output from that system, are outlined in the LEA user guide, and are not discussed further here other than to say that the core roll projection arrangements, including the options the system allows, are the result of consensus reached in the joint GLA-local authority liaison group, rather than the outcome of bilateral agreements between the GLA and individual authorities. Any further automation in a pan-London roll forecasting system will have implications for the skills needed, for example in programming languages, from staff providing roll projections.

It is likely that any pan-London system would require a common core methodology combined with options to take account of circumstances which arise in individual local authorities. The common core element in part reflects the finite amount of time that can be allocated to any single local authority in a service which provides output for, at present, 21 local authorities. No provider, present or future, could undertake to provide an open-ended service to a single authority to the extent that no time remained to provide the core service to other authorities.

The draft secondary school places planning report correctly points to a need for one authority to have a sense of how roll projections are calculated for another authority. This should not be taken as meaning that projections for all authorities must be calculated by exactly the same method; accuracy is more important. An example from one local authority illustrates this.

In authority X, 6th form provision has recently been expanded from a previously very low base. The post-compulsory roll has now increased sharply, and it can be expected to continue at least at that level. A roll projection system which did not allow for, atypical, changes of this sort, but was simply standardised for all authorities across London, would result in misleading projections.

Neighbouring local authorities, and the DfES, are far more likely to want to see accurate roll projections for authority X, than projections which conform mechanically to a single standard. In the GLA roll projection service, options are available, and the ones used are shown on the output sent to local authorities. A common core service, combined with options such as that used by authority X, and arrived at on the basis of consensus at meetings with local authorities, would need to be available in pan-London roll projections.

Historically, GLA roll projections have included an 'accuracy' check. The overall level of accuracy from the system has been high, as the many examples of output from the system provided to the DfES London Challenge School Places Planning Group show. The accuracy check enables customers to see how far projections match with actual rolls. The accuracy check also identifies areas where discussion and development are needed.

The 2001 national census allowed population projections to be rebased on a new population count, which in turn meant that roll projections could be re-based. Projections made before and after that point were therefore not strictly comparable. However, the passage of time means that it is now possible to

provide accuracy checks on the projections of the school roll in the current year which were made in three previous years. For example, the actual school roll in 2005 can now be compared with the projections made for 2005 in 2004, 2003 and 2002.

There is, however, need for greater clarity as to what accuracy checks on roll projections provide. No roll projection system should be understood as stating, irrespective of what a local authority does, what the exact number of children will be on roll at some point in the future. Used properly in school place planning, roll projections indicate where change in provision may be needed, for example by adding new school places. Where changes in provision are made, these will have an impact on the future school roll. Intervention, made in the light of roll projections, means that the actual situation in the future will differ from the one projected.

For example, in an area where schools are full, projections based on roll replacement ratios will tend to indicate the rolls will remain at their current level. If population projections indicate that the school age population is growing, then the local authority may consider introducing capacity, which will lead to an increase in the local school roll. In this instance, the original projections were not 'wrong' in the ordinary sense of the term. However, used with additional information on population, of the type available from the GLA service, local policy can change the situation from the one projected. The impact of local intervention, or lack of intervention, needs to be taken into account when the accuracy of roll projections is being considered.

6.1 Key points in section 6

- 1 To provide timely output, any pan-London roll projection system would need to be automated, taking data in a common format for local authorities and (possibly) schools.
- 2 To allow for circumstances which arise from time to time, the system would need to include options.
- 3 Those options would need to be developed, as now, on the basis of consensus reached with local authorities as a whole.
- 4 A pan-London system would need a service level agreement setting out what could be expected and when.
- 5 The accuracy of roll projections is important, and the track record of the GLA service in this respect is good. The GLA accuracy check on roll projections is a key element of the current service, has been enhanced, and should be retained.

7 Pan-London arrangements and information to support school places planning – Child Yield

The GLA holds a range of information, which is relevant to school place planning, but which is not strictly integral to the calculation of school roll projections.

This includes information on what is sometimes referred to as Child Yield, meaning the number of children who can be expected to move into new housing developments with two, three or four bedrooms. The 'Child Yield formula' is not a GLA product, but it is made available on request to those involved in local authority-developer discussions concerning the likely demands on local authority services which will result from a new housing development.

The GLA has also now reviewed currently available data on child yield, and compared this with earlier work (see John Hollis *Child Yield* DMAG briefing 2005/25). That review points to limited nature of the available data, and advises local authorities to collect information on the initial occupancy of new dwellings. Meetings of the GLA-local authority roll projection liaison group now include as standard a slot in which local authorities can share information of local experience of initial occupancy.

Creating a new child yield formula, which is sensitive to different types of housing and the different types of areas within London, would require a new housing survey. The costs of such a survey would be considerable, and even more considerable if the survey were updated at regular intervals. It is not self-evident that those costs should be met through a school roll projection service.

The first impact of new housing will be on numbers in the resident population, and the effect of that on demand for school places will be only one amongst many others, including for example demand for housing or health services. London shares with the south and east of England a likely increase in the number of homes needed. It may be that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which has a stake in developments such as Thames Gateway, as well as developments elsewhere, is a more appropriate agency than local education authorities or the DfES for developing a new child yield formula.

Additionally, it is not self-evident that education specialists, whether in the DfES, local government or the GLA could or should lead in designing a child yield survey. Within the GLA, specialist demographers are responsible for population projections, and specialist planning officers have responsibility for housing data. The same situation applies in the relevant national agencies. It is unlikely that education staff, whatever their level of skill as education specialists, would have the set of skills needed to talk on terms of professional equality with demography, planning or housing specialists. In the case of developing updated measures of Child yield, educationists' interests might be best be served by recognising the value of a division of labour in which specialists lead on their specialism.

8 Pan-London arrangements and information to support school places planning – pupil level data

Anonymised pupil level data are received by the GLA from the DfES under conditions which are familiar to research professionals. The data are held in confidence. Individual's records are not to be transferred to others. The type of analysis carried out should not allow others to identify an individual. Data are held for specific, stated, analytical purposes. Additionally, approval is needed from DfES Analytical Services before analyses are placed in the public domain, and individual schools are not to be identified.

It *may* be possible to negotiate an arrangement, within that framework, which would allow the GLA to provide local authorities and others with information relevant to school places planning. There is a precedent for this at the GLA. The DMAG census team has negotiated an agreement to provide London local authorities with analyses of census data, provided to it under terms and conditions set by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). That arrangement works well, and is supported by census user group meetings attended by local authority officers. Costs are mainly met by local authorities, on the basis that it is more economical to have one high quality central unit carrying out that work than it is to have 33 separate London borough units.

The possibility of establishing an LPD user group along similar lines, open to those involved in school places planning, might be considered. The range of output, which might also be considered, could include

- home to school mobility – pupil home LEA area and LEA of maintaining school, for primary, secondary and post-compulsory groups
- pupil home ward, and ward of school attended, by school phase and including cross-border mobility
- home to school mobility and type of school
- distance between home and school by age group
- numbers of children living in new developments where these have discrete postcodes. This will provide a reality check on any future Child Yield formula

This information can be mapped, making it more accessible to a wider audience.

Additionally, those involved in school places planning are required to take the need for school improvement into account in their work. Output could also include

- home area and type of school attended taking account pupil characteristics such as entitlement to free school meals and
- home area and type of school attended taking account of key stage tests at individual pupil level and at school level

This information can also be mapped to increase its accessibility.

The draft London Challenge report makes specific reference to the impact of cross-border mobility on planning school places in London. Surprisingly, the draft report's focus is on short-range mobility. The scale and impact of longer-range movement could usefully be considered, as it is in the population projections provided by GLA demographers.

Pupils who left London after January 2002 would not have had a record in the 2003 LPD. Pupils who moved to London after the 2002 pupil count would have had a record in the 2003 LPD but not in the 2002 LPD. Tables 8 shows the number of pupils aged 10 in 2002 who did not have an LPD record in 2003. Table 9 shows the number of pupils aged 11 in 2003 who had no LPD record in 2002. Pupil mobility to and from London is considerable. It also involves distinctive groups of pupils, and applies in virtually all London local authorities. Its impact on the level of support schools need might usefully be taken into account (see David Ewens *Ethnicity and attainment in schools* DMAG briefing, forthcoming). Longer-range mobility needs to be taken into account in school places planning in London.

The London Challenge draft report does, however, propose that the numbers of pupils transferring from one school to another should be included in the calculation of school roll projections. The very high percentage of pupils who transfer in very small groups from one school to another at 11+ mean that there is nothing to be gained by including this factor directly in the calculation of projected school rolls. However, the information does have a value for school places planning more generally.

School place planning and school improvement within local authorities involves work with individual schools. Understandably, analyses of the LPD requested by London's local authorities have included requests for analyses which identify schools. Local authorities and DfES London Challenge have converged in their sense of what is needed in the capital. If there is support in principle for GLA analyses of the LPD to be provided to local authorities, then the scope for identifying individual schools might usefully be discussed with DfES Analytical Services.

At a number of points, the DfES London Challenge draft report advocates the provision of pupil level data to local authorities. Whether that information is made available to local authorities is a matter for the DfES; the GLA is not the gatekeeper for that data. However, local authorities will wish to note that the computing capacity required to analyse large pupil datasets is considerable. The start-up computing costs for an annual pan-London service to local authorities using pupil level data is in the region of £60,000. That money may be better spent on a central service, of the type offered by DMAG's census team and outlined above.

The draft DfES London Challenge report has also usefully suggested that data on pupils attending independent schools should be made available in the future. This would represent a considerable innovation, and warrants further discussion amongst interested parties.

Table 8. Pupils with a Form 7 age of 10 at January 2002, with and without a matching record in 2003, by maintaining LEA of school attended in 2002

Maintaining LEA of school attended in 2002	2002 and 2003 pupil codes match or do not match		Total
	2002 record with matching 2003 record	2002 record with no 2003 match	
Camden	1,266	133	1,399
Hackney	2,036	185	2,221
Hammersmith & Fulham	1,059	121	1,180
Haringey	2,454	214	2,668
Islington	1,804	168	1,972
Kensington & Chelsea	749	111	860
Lambeth	2,258	233	2,491
Lewisham	2,656	266	2,922
Newham	3,583	218	3,801
Southwark	2,643	235	2,878
Tower Hamlets	2,330	266	2,596
Wandsworth	1,862	245	2,107
Westminster	1,123	130	1,253
Barking & Dagenham	2,298	99	2,397
Barnet	2,911	512	3,423
Bexley	2,993	117	3,110
Brent	2,550	274	2,824
Bromley	3,228	258	3,486
Croydon	3,826	360	4,186
Ealing	3,116	263	3,379
Enfield	3,404	260	3,664
Greenwich	2,648	160	2,808
Harrow	2,322	209	2,531
Havering	2,895	109	3,004
Hillingdon	2,909	217	3,126
Hounslow	2,294	128	2,422
Kingston upon Thames	1,372	155	1,527
Merton	1,527	109	1,636
Redbridge	2,976	230	3,206
Richmond upon Thames	1,295	319	1,614
Sutton	1,978	121	2,099
Waltham Forest	2,822	172	2,994
Inner London	25,823	2,525	28,348
Outer London	49,364	4,072	53,436
Greater London	75,187	6,597	81,784

Source: merged 2002 2003 LPDS

Table 9. Pupils with a Form 7 age of 11 at January 2003, with and without a matching record in 2002, by maintaining LEA of school attended in 2003

Maintaining authority of school attended in 2003	2003 records with or without a 2002 match		Total
	2002 with matching 2003 record	2003 record with no 2002 match	
Camden	1,446	37	1,483
Hackney	1,447	88	1,535
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,124	70	1,194
Haringey	1,983	137	2,120
Islington	1,525	71	1,596
Kensington and Chelsea	611	17	628
Lambeth	1,419	91	1,510
Lewisham	2,332	124	2,456
Newham	3,416	200	3,616
Southwark	2,253	179	2,432
Tower Hamlets	2,481	189	2,670
Wandsworth	1,899	70	1,969
Westminster	1,296	113	1,409
Barking and Dagenham	2,136	85	2,221
Barnet	3,176	209	3,385
Bexley	3,333	166	3,499
Brent	2,404	208	2,612
Bromley	3,482	198	3,680
Croydon	3,730	211	3,941
Ealing	2,620	115	2,735
Enfield	3,705	158	3,863
Greenwich	2,519	87	2,606
Harrow	2,056	100	2,156
Havering	2,958	221	3,179
Hillingdon	2,971	156	3,127
Hounslow	2,652	104	2,756
Kingston upon Thames	1,346	165	1,511
Merton	1,551	119	1,670
Redbridge	3,033	281	3,314
Richmond upon Thames	1,469	45	1,514
Sutton	2,359	305	2,664
Waltham Forest	2,696	92	2,788
Inner London	23,232	1,386	24,618
Outer London	50,196	3,025	53,221
Greater London	73,428	4,411	77,839

Source: merged 2002 and 203 LPD

8.1 Key points. Pan-London arrangements and information to support school places planning – pupil level data

- 1 The GLA holds pupils level data for London. Analyses, some of which have already been provided, are relevant to wider aspects of school places planning, including school improvement.
- 2 The DMAG census team has an arrangement with local authorities to provide the latter with a census analysis service, albeit using non-confidential data. The scope for developing the GLA's analysis of the LPD along similar lines, to inform wider aspects of school places planning, could usefully be discussed with local authorities, and with DfES Analytical Services.
- 3 Consideration might usefully be given to whether such a service could include analyses identifying individual schools.
- 4 The draft London Challenge report also points to the value of information on local residents who attend independent schools. This is a useful point which warrants further discussion with interested parties.

9 School capacity information

School capacity is the space available in a school for pupils, and can be measured either in terms of floor space, or in terms of the number of pupils who can be accommodated in each school's first form. Both measures have their advantages and drawbacks, depending on the circumstances in which they are used. The addition of one or both measures to output from the roll projection service would, since local authorities already hold the information, may add little value. However, it could usefully be considered.

Each local authority's responsibility for managing capacity should remain clear.

10 Who are the partners/stakeholders/customers in a pan-London system?

Within the current GLA roll projections service, individual local authorities are the customers. They pay for, and own, output from the service. Potentially, the GLA would be a stakeholder in a pan-London service. The commissioning of a draft report by DfES London Challenge suggests that the DfES is also a potential stakeholder. Further, the draft London Challenge report also makes reference to diocesan (church) bodies and to School Organisation Committees.

Current arrangements link the ownership of roll projection output with the payment of a subscription fee and the provision of data. A modified version would allow those providing data, and contributing to the costs of a pan-London Service, to receive output from it. It is unlikely that diocesan authorities and School Organisation Committees would fall into that category. The distribution of costs and benefits needs to be equitable.

DfES statistical and research reports provide another possible model. These are publicly available, at no cost, over the Internet. 'At no cost' means at no cost to the reader; reports are paid for out of public funds. It is doubtful whether the DfES would wish to provide a roll projection service for London on this basis. Such a service would represent a considerable burden to any single organisation.

The funding required, and the distribution of costs amongst stakeholders in a pan-London roll projection system, warrants consideration.

11 What might output look like?

The one-time Funding Agency for School (FAS) provided reports, in print, containing information relevant to school places planning in London boroughs (see *Funding Agency for Schools Planning Secondary School Places in London*, FAS 1997, and *Planning Secondary School Places in London 1998 2005* FAS 1999). These reports provided less detailed information on roll and population projections than is currently available from the GLA, but include limited information on named schools, school capacity, and pupil cross-border mobility. Information on pupil cross-border mobility is provided by the GLA, but separately from the roll projection service. Unlike the GLA exercise, the FAS publication also contains information on special schools, school capacity and on the destinations of pupils who have reached the end of compulsory schooling.

The FAS reports provide an overview, of the type which may be of use to senior council officers and in meetings between officers from several local authorities. The two reports have extensive commentary, include maps and graphs, and have few statistical tables. However, even as an overview, the second report is 376 pages long.

It is possible that the form, if not the content, of the second FAS report is closer than the current GLA output to what a School Organisation Committee might want to see. Providing roll projection information, in a form and language tailored to meet the needs of a wide audience, would require different output from the GLA, which in turn would require different skills.

The second FAS report was written shortly before the abolition of that agency, and in the expectation that local authorities would use it to add context to their own detailed information on trends in the school roll and on school capacity. The FAS report is therefore an addition to, rather than an alternative to, the detailed output which would be used by a specialist local authority education planner.

A pan-London approach to the provision of information useful in school places planning could potentially produce both types of output. The resource and the skills needed to achieve would have to be considered carefully, as would the actual detail of output.

To repeat a point, this is not to suggest that a pan-London service should simply replicate the FAS publications. The situation has moved on since they appeared with, for example, the arrival of pan-London school admission system this year. Nonetheless, the FAS report provides a useful model, if it is decided that output should be aimed at a generalist audience as well as a specialist audience. Ultimately, the output from a pan-London service would need to present information relevant to stakeholders' responsibilities. To do that we, again, need clarity on the stakeholders.

12 Conclusion

The draft London Challenge report envisages school planning groups being established with remits covering several London boroughs. This is a matter for policy makers, as are a number of other points in the draft report. This briefing has aimed at identifying options as far as data needed, and data available for a pan-London school roll forecasting arrangement are concerned. It has pointed to basic computing costs and needs, and to the need for a well defined arrangement between the GLA and local authorities.

With GLA, DfES and local authority support, a pan-London roll projection system is achievable, and would be of great value for all stakeholders.

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