

ADDING HIGH QUALITY CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY TO SUTTON FOR THEIR PRIMARY CAPITAL AND BSF PROGRAMMES



Changes in the birth rate in Sutton require a re-consideration of the number of school places in the Borough

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EC Harris is providing an interim Head of Service for the London Borough of Sutton. The role of Head of Capital and Planning is responsible for school organisation, asset management planning, capital investment and BSF for the Council. Particular areas of focus during the initial year of this placement has been the development of a Primary Capital Strategy, leading on a review of primary places to meet an increasing birth rate and beginning the Borough’s preparation for BSF.

Creating solutions

By providing an experienced and knowledgeable individual, supported by the broader experience and expertise within EC Harris, the Borough have had access to high quality resources and are able to tap in to the experience gained on a number of strategic capital investment programmes EC Harris manage across the Country. The ability to demonstrate ‘readiness’ for the upcoming BSF programme will be a key test.

Primary Capital Programme: The development of a 'Strategy for Change' for the Borough's primary schools has been a key task. The challenge involved the prioritisation of capital investment to address issues related to attainment, deprivation and the condition of school buildings. EC Harris brought together a steering group to involve key stakeholders in the development of a prioritisation methodology, a consultation strategy and to approve the final list of schools for investment.

Place planning and school organisation: Changes in the birth rate in Sutton require a re-consideration of the number of school places in the Borough. EC Harris have provided a resource who is able to analyse the birth rate projections and consider the impact on schools. The development of options to deal with the expected increase in primary numbers has significant implications.

Building Schools for the Future: The Borough are a late-wave BSF authority, however, planning for the development of a 'Strategy for Change' for the secondary school estate is a key activity. Again a steering group has been set up to involve key stakeholders (including schools, councilors and officers) in the development of an education vision and to consider the implications for the school estate.

Adding value

EC Harris has been able to fit with the Council's existing structures and procedures, but has also put in place new ways of working to ensure the status quo is challenged and the Council's approach will stand up to external scrutiny, particularly with respect to pupil place planning, the Primary Capital Strategy and the preparation for BSF.

The benefits EC Harris has delivered to the client include:

- Provision of a high quality candidate to fill the role, with significant experience of primary capital investment programmes
- Links to the wider education community within EC Harris to benefit the client
- The ability to bring experience from other clients (Plymouth City Council, Surrey County Council, Suffolk County Council and BSF bidders) to bring benefits to the client
- Experience of the national BSF programme and procurement strategies to support the client in their early BSF thinking
- The ability to troubleshoot and quickly identify areas for improvement to concentrate on during the year placement.

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