

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date of Meeting **12 December 2017**

Subject: **Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017 - 2022**

Cabinet member: **Councillor Laura Mayes – Children’s Services**

Key Decision: **Yes**

Executive Summary

The revised and updated Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022 is a key framework document for the Council in considering any statutory proposals for changes to school organisation including the commissioning of new schools and will inform future capital investment priorities.

The Wiltshire School Places Strategy (SPS) 2017-2022 sets out the context and background for the Council’s strategic planning of school places and the issues that impact on places and demand across the Local Authority area.

The SPS provides a latest overview of demographic information for Wiltshire and includes a more detailed analysis of each secondary school planning area, including historic trends and future projections. This information informs priorities for school place planning in the short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and longer (5-10 years) term and will continue to inform capital investment priorities moving forward.

The SPS will be reviewed annually and an updated Implementation Plan will be produced every two years.

Proposal(s)

To approve the Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 and associated Implementation Plan

Reason for Proposal

The Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 is a key framework document for the Council in considering any statutory proposals for changes to school organisation including the commissioning of new schools and will inform future capital investment priorities.

Terence Herbert

Director Children’s Services

Wiltshire Council

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Subject: **Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017 - 2022**

Cabinet member: **Councillor Laura Mayes – Children’s Services**

Key Decision: **Yes**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider and approve the Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022 and associated Implementation Plan

Relevance to the Council’s Business Plan

2. The Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 is a key framework document for the Council in considering any statutory proposals for changes to school organisation including the commissioning of new schools and will inform future capital investment priorities. A stated aim of the Council’s business plan is increase the number of highly skilled employees in the county by ensuring good school results. Part of the planned action is to promote high educational standards *for all* children. A further aim of the business plan is the successful return of the British Army from Germany; ensuring sufficient places in local schools. Historically the School Organisation Committee was the statutory body that considered individual school reorganisation proposals except changes to school Admission Numbers which are now dealt with as part of admission arrangement procedures. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, School Organisation Committees were abolished, and the main decisions on the provision and organisation of places, depending on the nature of the proposal and who is the proposer, are now made by the Council, the Regional School’s Commissioner or the Secretary of State

Main Considerations for the Council

3. The Wiltshire School Places Strategy (SPS) 2017- 2022 sets out the latest context and background for the Council’s strategic planning of school places and the issues that impact on places and demand across the Local Authority area.

4. The SPS provides the latest overview of demographic information for Wiltshire and includes a more detailed analysis of each secondary school planning area, including historic trends and future projections. School planning areas are slightly different from Area Board areas and align to geographical locations of primary and secondary schools. These planning areas are agreed by the Department for Education. This information informs priorities for school place planning in the

short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and longer (5-10 years) term and will inform capital investment priorities moving forward.

5. A summary position statement is provided for each of the planning areas in the main body of the SPS, a more detailed analysis of each area can be found in Section D of the Strategy.

6. The SPS Implementation Plan at Section E provides a summary overview of the latest identified need across Wiltshire and will inform future capital programme priorities and the commissioning of additional places and new school provision.

7. A copy of the updated Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022 has been placed on the Council's website for stakeholders including schools, local councillors, multi academy trusts and housing developers to consider and comment on the Strategy. The consultation process ended on 20 October 2017.

8. Comments were invited from all stakeholders and two responses were received. One to correct information relating to the Core Strategy timescale and one to ensure a recently approved expansion project at Lyneham Primary was included. The Strategy and Implementation Plan have now been amended to reflect the correct position. The draft Strategy and Implementation Plan will also be considered by Children's Select Committee and an update will be provided at the meeting.

Background

9. The Strategy contains proposals for and focusses on the continuing increase in supply of places across both the primary and now secondary phase of mainstream school provision. Moving forward and as resources allow there may be the need to rationalise or reduce places where there are significant surpluses, although this is not seen as a priority at the current time.

10. Since 2011 the Council has provided 3984 additional primary places and 590 additional secondary places to meet the increase in population arising from population growth, migration and new housing. This Strategy highlights the anticipated demand for further additional places across both phases in the short, medium and longer term. This Strategy will be kept under review and updated biannually.

11. Alongside the provision of new primary schools in new housing development areas and the expansion of existing schools required to meet the demand for places in existing communities there will be a need to keep under review the admission numbers in schools and where appropriate seek to increase admissions at schools where a temporary admission number breach may suffice. Any formal changes to admission numbers will be in consultation with schools and academy trusts and will be proposed as part of the annual round of consultation on admission arrangements. Own admission authority schools may also determine a change to their admission numbers as part of their own review of admissions policy.

12. A further and significant factor impacting on the demand for school places in the short term is the planned relocation from Germany in 2019 of over 4200 military personnel and their families, to the Salisbury Plain Garrison area. A detailed assessment has been undertaken in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence, and a programme of school place expansion work is underway to provide the necessary places when they arrive in Summer 2019.

13. Commissioning of new places includes new provision to meet basic need in existing communities and new provision to accommodate additional pupils generated from new housing developments identified in the Core Strategy.

14. Where there is a significant enlargement, relocation or new school provision or where an extension to the age range of a school is proposed, statutory proposals will be required, although the process has now been streamlined through legislation. The Council or individual schools and academies will undertake the statutory process of consultation with individuals and organisations that may be affected by the proposal, alongside the timescale for determining the admission arrangements.

15. For several years, secondary schools have been collectively managing surplus places as numbers were low. Numbers are now starting to climb as pupils from the primary phase start to feed through. The impact on secondary school places very much depends on the extent of new housing proposed in a schools designated area. Some secondary schools will only feel a moderate impact in the short to medium term as numbers take up surplus places, whereas in areas where a significant amount of housing is proposed the impact will be much greater and there will be a need for expansion and possibly new school provision.

16. An analysis of need has been undertaken by the SEN Commissioning Team to determine the expected need and growth of specialist provision through Resource Bases and Special School provision. That work is being managed separately from main stream provision and aligned to the Review of SEN Provision and the level of funding in the High Needs Block. To date there has been very limited funding made available by government for SEN basic need as LAs are encouraged to seek Free School bid options for new provision.

Overview and Scrutiny Involvement

The Children's Select Committee received and considered the School Places Strategy at their meeting on 31st October. The Committee endorsed the 2017 – 2022 strategy and resolved to review the strategy's position in 12 – 18 months.

Safeguarding Implications

17. The design and delivery of new school places and new schools will be in line with nationally agreed mainstream school area guidelines and appropriate to the needs of all children and young people.

Public Health Implications

18. There are no public health issues arising directly from this report.

Corporate Procurement Implications

19. There are no procurement implications directly arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

20. The design and delivery of school buildings and additional school places meets DFE Area Guidelines to ensure equality of opportunities and fairness for all communities.

Within the Strategy document, paragraph's B5, B10 and B11 refer to equalities, diversity and accessibility of school buildings.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

21. All new school buildings and accommodation will be designed and delivered to comply with the Council's adopted policy of achieving BREEAM 'good'. Any new design and construction will take into consideration the need to incorporate sustainable design and efficient energy consumption including renewable energy technologies where appropriate and the reduction of carbon emissions, both from the construction project itself and in relation to the supply chain

Risk Assessment

22. This Strategy provides a detailed analysis of the latest demographic trends impacting on the supply of school places across Wiltshire. This information is based on birth data, current school population trends, an assessment of inward/outward migration, parental choice in applying for school places and the impact of new housing. Another significant factor is the planned relocation of a significant number of military personnel and their families to the Salisbury Plain Garrison area. All these factors can change over time and therefore need to be kept under constant review to ensure the most up to date position is known.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

23. The following are risks for the Council if the Strategy is not adopted and the work cannot be progressed :-

- a) The Council will be failing in its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for the children and young people of Wiltshire.
- b) If there are not sufficient school places provided in the right locations to meet the demand arising in local communities and in areas of new housing, then this will have a direct impact on a parents' right to express a preference for and be allocated a local school place for their child.
- c) This Strategy has identified the short, medium and longer term priorities for the provision of school places, which in turn will inform the Council's capital investment priorities and need to allocate resources to ensure the effective delivery of new provision in a timely way.
- d) If new school places cannot be provided in key areas, then this will have a direct impact on the Council's ability to deliver its Core Strategy of providing an additional 42,000 houses across Wiltshire.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

24. The following risks will need to be considered if the Strategy is approved:

- a) The Strategy will be used to inform the future capital investment priorities for the Council in relation to school places. Resources will need to be identified to enable the delivery of additional school places. DfE Basic Need allocations and negotiated S106/CIL contributions will be required to resource programme requirements. If S106 contributions are not secured then there will be significant pressure on the Basic Need funding available and not all properties will be funded
- b) School expansion projects supporting Army Re-basing have been funded predominantly from a dedicated S106 agreement with the balance from Basic Need.

Financial Implications

25. There are no immediate financial implications arising from the consideration of this draft Strategy, however if the Strategy is adopted by the Council and the projects identified Implementation Plan are used to inform the Council's capital investment programme, then there will be a need to ensure sufficient capital resources are available to meet the short and medium term priorities.

26. The funding streams that can support the provision of new school places include Department for Education (DfE) annual basic need allocations; negotiation of Section 106 and/or CIL contributions from housing developers; Free School proposals; targeted capital bids if available and Council reserves.

Legal Implications

27. Sections 13 to 15B of the Education Act 1996 place a statutory obligation for all Local Authorities to strategically plan for their Education Service.

This School Places Strategy will help to fulfil part of that obligation by providing a tool to assist in the planning for school places throughout the Wiltshire Council Area. The Council must continue to have regard to its statutory public sector equalities duties when implementing any changes based on this strategy if adopted.

Options Considered

28. Whenever a need for additional school places is identified, feasibility studies are undertaken at appropriate schools in a locality to establish the constraints, opportunities and estimated costs for expansion. Alternatively the study will confirm that expansion is not possible and that new provision may be required. If new provision is required, this is most often a result of additional housing in a locality and there will be a need to secure additional land and financial

contributions from housing developers to enable a new school or satellite provision to be established.

29. When more than one option has been identified that could deliver the necessary additional places, then in reaching a preferred solution consideration needs to be given to the impact on the local community, the standard and popularity of existing schools, the status of the school and the potential cost of the project required. A range of stakeholders are consulted as part of this process.

Conclusions

31. Stakeholders have had the opportunity to consider the draft Strategy and respond to the consultation, minor amendments have been made to the Strategy and Implementation Plan to acknowledge inputs as appropriate. The Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022, has been updated using the latest school capacity information, birth data and latest pupil projections arising from demographic trends and future house building proposals to provide the best possible position statement on the demand for school places across Wiltshire. If approved the School Places Strategy 2017-2022 will continue to inform future capital investment priorities for the Council in order that the Council can meet its statutory obligations to provide sufficient school places in a timely way, across Wiltshire.

Proposal

32. To approve the Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022 and associated Implementation Plan

Reason for Proposal

33. It is important to plan strategically to ensure that sufficient school places are provided to meet demand across Wiltshire. The Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 is a key framework document for the Council in considering any statutory proposals for changes to school organisation including the commissioning of new schools and will inform future capital investment priorities.

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Date: 12 December 2017

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2015 -2020 and Implementation Plan
- School Capital Investment Report – January 2017
- Report to Children’s Service Select Committee on the Draft Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017-2022, 31 October 2017

Appendices

- Wiltshire School Places Strategy and Implementation Plan 2017- 2022
- Executive Summary
- Glossary