

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

Date 31 October 2017

Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017 - 2022

Purpose of Report

- (1) To consider the draft Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 and its associated proposals set out in the updated Implementation Plan.

Background

- (2) The Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 replaces the 2015-2020 Strategy and will become 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. 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 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 context and background for the Council's strategic planning of school places and the issues that might impact on places and demand across the Local Authority area.
- (4) The SPS provides an overview of the latest demographic information for Wiltshire and includes a more detailed analysis of each secondary school planning area, including historic trends and future projections. This information will help to identify 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 later in the document at Section D.
- (6) The SPS Implementation Plan is at Section E of the main document at Appendix A and provides a summary overview of identified priority need across Wiltshire and will inform future capital programme priorities and the commissioning of additional mainstream places and new school provision.

- (7) A copy of the draft Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 was made available on the Council's website in September to enable Local Councillors, Area Board representatives and interested parties to find out more information about the strategy. The closing date for the consultation was 20th October 2017.
- (8) The Strategy contains proposals for and focusses on the increase in supply of mainstream places across both the primary and secondary phase of Education 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.
- (9) 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, inward migration and new housing. This Strategy highlights the anticipated demand for further additional places across both phases over the next few years. This Strategy will be kept under review and updated biannually.
- (10) Alongside the provision of new primary schools in housing development areas and expansions to 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 full consultation with schools and academy trusts and will be proposed as part of the annual round of consultation on admission arrangements as agreed with individual governing bodies, trusts and head teachers. Own admission authority schools may also determine a change to their admission numbers as part of their own review of admissions policy.
- (11) 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 carried out in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence, and a number of projects are underway to provide school places for the children who will be arriving in Summer 2019. More detailed information about the expansion of existing schools and the provision of new schools to meet this demand is in the Implementation Plan at Appendix A, Section E.
- (12) Commissioning of new places includes new provision to meet basic need in existing communities and new school provision required as a result of additional pupils generated from new housing developments as identified in the Core Strategy.
- (13) 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.

- (14) The challenge that currently faces secondary schools is very different. There have been surpluses across Wiltshire until recently, however secondary numbers are starting to climb as the growth in primary pupils feed through. 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.
- (15) 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 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.

Safeguarding Considerations

- (16) The design and delivery of new school places and new schools will be in line with latest nationally agreed area guidelines and appropriate to the needs of all children and young people.

Public Health Implications

- (17) There are no public health issues arising directly from this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

- (18) All new school buildings and accommodation will be designed and delivered to comply with the Councils 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 and the reduction of carbon emissions, both from the construction project itself and in relation to the supply chain.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- (19) The design and delivery of school buildings and additional school places meets DFE Area Guidelines in order to ensure equality of opportunities and fairness for all communities.

Risk Assessment

- (20) This Strategy provides a detailed analysis of the current demographic trends impacting on the supply of school places across Wiltshire. This information is based on known 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 of 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

- (21) The following are risks for the Council if the Strategy is not adopted and the work cannot be progressed:-
1. The Council will be failing in its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for the children and young people of Wiltshire.
 2. If there are not sufficient school places provided in the right locations to meet the demand arising in existing 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.
 3. The Strategy identifies the short, medium and longer term priorities for the provision of school places, which in turn will directly inform the Council's capital investment priorities and need to allocate resources to ensure the effective delivery of new provision in a timely way.
 4. 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 by 2026.

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

- (22) The following risks will need to be considered if the Strategy is approved:
1. The Strategy will be used to inform the future capital investment priorities for the Council in relation to school places. Further resources will need to be identified to enable the delivery of additional school places. DfE Basic Need allocations and S106/CIL contributions will be available to resource programme requirements.
 2. School place expansion projects arising from the Army Re-basing Programme, are funded predominantly from a dedicated S106 agreement.

Financial Implications

- (23) There are no immediate financial implications arising from the consideration of this updated Strategy, however if the Strategy is adopted by the Council and the proposals 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 identified to deliver the work required.

- (24) 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; Council reserves.

Legal Implications

- (25) There are no legal implications arising from this report

Options Considered

- (26) 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 as 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.
- (27) 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

The School Places Strategy 2017- 2022, has been updated using the latest school capacity information and latest pupil projections arising from birth data, demographic trends and future house building proposals to provide the best possible position statement on the demand for school places across Wiltshire. If adopted 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

The Select Committee is asked to consider the latest Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2017- 2022 and its associated proposals set out in the Implementation Plan, provide comments as appropriate and recommend its adoption to the Cabinet.

Terence Herbert
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Background Papers

School Places Strategy and Implementation Plan 2015-2020
Schools Capital Investment Report January 2017

Appendices

- Draft Wiltshire Council School Places Strategy 2017- 2022
- Executive Summary
- Glossary