

TO: EXECUTIVE
DATE: 23 JANUARY 2018

SCHOOL PLACES PLAN AND SCHOOL CAPACITY STRATEGY
Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To approve the updated School Places Plan 2018 – 2023 (SPP) and the updated School Capacity Strategy 2018 – 2023 (SCS), that set out where and when additional school places are required to be provided across Bracknell Forest.
- 1.2 To update the Executive on the potential requirements for new school places arising out of the proposed housing up to 2034 from the emerging Local Plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Pupil numbers are forecast to rise between 2017 to 2023 by up to:

- Primary 1,441 or 14%
- Secondary 1,523 or 22%

2.2 Future housing remains the greatest factor in the growth in pupil numbers.

2.3 The currently proposed school expansion projects and new schools will provide sufficient new places to meet this forecast demand.

2.4 A plan to deliver the shortfall in places to September 2019 is in place, subject to Executive approval of the 2018/19 capital programme proposals in February 2018.

2.5 Assuming the level of housing growth identifies in the Draft Local Plan (also on this agenda) goes ahead following the currently assumed housing yields and timelines, pupil numbers are forecast to rise between 2017 to 2034 by up to:

- Primary 3,865 or 38%
- Secondary 2,875 or 41%

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 **That the School Places Plan 2018-23 attached as Appendix A be approved.**

3.2 **That the School Capacity Strategy 2018-23 set out in the report be approved.**

3.3 **That the Executive notes the potential impact on school place requirements arising from the proposed level of housing growth set out in the Draft Local Plan covering the period up to 2034.**

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 4.1 The Council has the statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.
- 4.2 The SPP and SCS are the essential tools employed by the Council to meet this duty. These were last approved by the Executive in January 2017, and have been updated again to reflect the current revised potential requirements for new school places to 2023.
- 4.3 Demand for pupil places arising from the proposed housing growth levels set out in the emerging Local Plan up to 2034 will further increase the need for new school places.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 It is business critical to undertake pupil forecasting to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. The SPP provides the vehicle to communicate these forecasts and the SCS the strategy of where and when to deliver the new school places required. New school places are delivered through the education capital programme by construction of new schools and school expansion projects, or can be directly funded through the DfE Free Schools Programme.
- 5.2 Options for delivery of the School Capacity Strategy are set out in the body of the report.

6. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 6.1 Bracknell Forest has experienced a period of sustained growth in pupil numbers across the Borough. Pupil numbers have risen over the last eight years between 2009 to 2017 by:
 - Primary 1,762 or 21%
 - Secondary 585 or 9%
- 6.2 Sufficient pupil places have been provided over this period through a sustained programme of capital investment through the education capital programme, which has been aligned with anticipated growth set out in the Site Allocations Local Plan. Over £125m has been invested in creating additional capacity into the school estate over this period, including £27m spent so far on constructing Kings Academy Binfield, drawn from a combination of Council funding, developer contributions and external (mostly DfE) grants.

School Places Plan (SPP)

- 6.3 The SPP 2018-23 is attached as Appendix A and provides the forecasts of future primary and secondary pupil numbers. This is done by gathering information including birth rates and planned housing, and comparing this with existing school capacities and numbers on roll. If demand exceeds capacity then a projected deficit is forecast.

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- 6.4 Trends in the figures are set out in the Borough-wide commentary, and a summary of future changes in the three planning areas (North Bracknell, South Bracknell and Crowthorne & Sandhurst) are summarised below, with further detail contained in the Planning Area commentaries in the SPP.

Accuracy and Joint Work

- 6.5 In recent years the forecasts have been robust in forecasting accurate numbers of school places required, in particular, the following school year and in giving a good guide for the years immediately following this.
- 6.6 The Council works closely with colleagues in neighbouring authorities, in particular those in Wokingham BC and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Information on housing developments is shared, and implications for school places and designated areas discussed. For example there has been a displacement back to Bracknell Forest of Bracknell Forest children previously attending school in Wokingham, where places are no longer available due to local housing growth in Wokingham.

Factors affecting the Planning and Delivery of School Places

- 6.7 Future housing remains the greatest factor in the growth in pupil numbers. The Executive should note that the individual developers' house building programmes are outside the Council's control which is why SPP forecasts and the SCS need to be regularly updated.
- 6.8 Factors affecting housing which are subject to change include:
- Latest housing building programmes which have either been supplied by developers, or estimated by CYPL and planning officers based on previous BFC developments.
 - The mix of dwelling types for proposed new housing (e.g. 1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed etc.) which will yield different numbers of children.
- 6.9 Past experience suggests that house building programmes are likely to be subject to slippage, especially where S106 Agreements have yet to be concluded. Market forces will also affect developers' ability to sell houses.
- 6.10 A full description of factors impacting the forecasts and changes since the previous plan are contained in this year's Plan. The Register of Factors influencing the forecasts is attached as Appendix 2 to the SPP.

School Capacity Strategy Options

- 6.11 There are three strategic options for planning for school places which are set out below:
- Strategy Option 1 is planning by individual school, which means responding to every forecast school deficit by expansion of that school in accordance with the forecast demand. This is not always possible due to site restrictions, and is the most expensive option requiring investment at multiple schools across the Borough. This approach has not been applied.
 - Strategy Option 2 is planning by organisational area, which involves creating sufficient new places to meet the demand across the organisational area allowing for the fact that some schools will have deficits and some surpluses of places. This is more flexible than Option 1, above and allows the Council to select which schools to expand. Selection of schools to expand is based on criteria including cost and

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Ofsted performance (DfE requires that only GOOD or OUTSTANDING schools be expanded). This option generally costs less than Option 1, and is the approach that has been generally applied.

- Strategy Option 3 is planning on a Borough-wide basis, which means where there are insufficient places in the local area, pupils travel. This is the least expensive option for capital investment, however revenue home to school transport costs are incurred where primary pupils have to travel in excess of 2 miles and secondary pupils in excess of 3 miles to school. It also creates more pressure on to road network and can also be unpopular with parents due to travel distances, public transport availability, and parental perceptions of the relative performance of different schools.

Creation of New School Places

6.12 Capital schemes to deliver new school places are only implemented as and when need is actually demonstrated.

6.13 New school places can be created in a number of ways, as set out in the following paragraphs in ascending order of cost and complexity:

- Surge classrooms can be created by either converting existing space in the school or adding a single new building to accommodate a single additional classroom for 30 places. These are a temporary solution providing places for one year group only as up to 30 pupils progress through the school.
- 1FE (Form of Entry) expansions can be achieved by extending existing buildings or providing new buildings within the school site to create sufficient permanent places to provide an additional class in each year group. Expansion generally starts in the intake year and construction can be delivered in phases over the following 5-7 years as the expansion works its way up through the year groups.
- Schools may also be expanded by building new school buildings on nearby sites creating a single school operating across two sites. For example capacity at Warfield CE Primary School was expanded from September 2016 from 1FE (210) places on their existing All Saints Rise site, to up to 3FE (630) places following new construction on the Woodhurst site.
- New academy/free schools can be constructed if suitable school providers and sites can be found. Over the forecast period to 2021 it is possible that new free schools will need to be established in Bracknell Forest. Depending where and when this happens this would help address the rising demand for school places across the Borough. If a large number of Free School places were brought on stream at once however, then this could create surplus school places at existing schools if parental preference favoured the new Free School. Much would depend on the phasing of the opening of any such provision.

Surge classrooms

6.14 There are a number of individual primary surge classrooms in all three organisational areas across the Borough to infill any small gaps in capacity or to make up for any unforeseen higher forecasts. These can be bought online at relatively short notice for the cost of just furniture and ICT. Locations of these include Winkfield St Marys, Meadow Vale and Owlsmoor.

Three Organisational Planning Areas

6.15 The Borough is currently divided into three organisational areas for the planning of school places which are set out in Annex 5 of the SPP, as follows:

- North Bracknell
- South Bracknell
- Crowthorne & Sandhurst

Primary Forecasts and Strategy 2018-23

6.16 The overall forecast rise in primary numbers is 1,441 or 14% over the forecast period, which can be broken down by organisational area as follows:

6.17 North Bracknell primary capacity is currently in surplus, but this is forecast to reduce to deficit by September 2019 with the deficit increasing to -7.3FE in the intake year by September 2023. The SCS strategy to meet this is from delivery of the projects in the table below, which are already in progress as part of new housing developments. Members will note however that the proposed new Amen Corner North primary school has been slipped by 1 year to keep pace with the latest forecasts in the SPP:

FE	School	From	Status
+1FE	Warfield Woodhurst	Sep-19	Construction completed
+1FE	Kings Academy Binfield	Sep-19	In construction
+1FE	Amen Corner North	Sep-21	Construction start in 2019
+1FE	Kings Academy Binfield	Sep-21	In construction
+1FE	Amen Corner South	Sep-21	Subject to S106 agreement
+1FE	Warfield East	Sep-22	Subject to S106 agreement
+1FE	Amen Corner South	Sep-23	Subject to S106 agreement
+1FE	Warfield East	Sep-23	Subject to S106 agreement

6.18 The current South Bracknell primary surplus of places is forecast to reduce to +0.9FE by 2023. The proposed expansion of Crowthorne CE Primary at TRL has also been slipped by 2 years to Sep-22 to keep pace with the latest forecasts in the SPP.

6.19 The current Crowthorne & Sandhurst surplus is forecast to reduce to +0.3FE by 2023.

Secondary Pupil Numbers

6.20 The overall forecast rise in secondary numbers of 1,523 or 22% over the forecast period, which can be broken down by organisational area as follows:

6.21 North Bracknell secondary capacity is currently in surplus, but is forecast to reduce to deficit by September 2018 with the deficit increasing to -3.6FE by September 2023. The strategy to meet this is from delivery of the Kings Academy Binfield (KAB) project which is currently under construction to deliver new secondary places commencing in the intake year from September 2018.

6.22 South Bracknell secondary capacity is also currently in surplus of +3.0FE, and although forecasts suggest this is moving in to deficit within the forecast period, this is not borne out by school admissions data. With the opening of KAB in North Bracknell in September 2018 there will be sufficient secondary school places across the Borough for the duration of the forecast period, therefore no additional school capacity works are planned in South Bracknell.

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- 6.23 Crowthorne & Sandhurst secondary capacity is currently showing a small surplus, but this is forecast to reduce to deficit by September 2018, with the deficit increasing to up to -2.3FE by September 2023. School Admissions data however confirms that much of this pressure is from outside the schools' designated areas. With the opening of KAB in North Bracknell in September 2018 there will be sufficient secondary school places across the Borough for the duration of the forecast period, therefore no additional school capacity works are planned in Crowthorne & Sandhurst either.
- 6.24 The Executive should note that The Brakenhale School has made enquiries about moving from a catchment area admission policy to one of geographical distance. If this is implemented then in the future the Council will need to change the Designated Areas of the other schools to ensure that all pupils, wherever they live in the Borough, will have a school place. Ultimately if all secondary academies move away from catchment area admissions arrangements then the only viable solution for the Council will be to adopt a single secondary Designated Area for the whole Borough. This measure would be a logical outcome and a prudent precaution to prevent having to repeatedly change secondary Designated Areas in the future. This is closely currently being monitored but subject to statutory consultation, a recommendation to implement this is likely to be forthcoming in the short to medium term.

School Capacity Strategy: Summary

- 6.25 The Capacity Strategy 2017 – 2023 is summarised below:

Short Term (To September 2018)

North Bracknell	Primary	No capacity works required
	Secondary	BLV secondary opens to 120 places in the intake year from Sep-18
South Bracknell	Primary	Great Hollands expansion to 3FE final Phase 3 completed for Sep-18
		The Pines expansion final Phase 2 completed for Sep-18
		Jennett's Park expansion to 2FE final allocation of furniture & equipment for Sep-18
	Secondary	No capacity works required
Crowthorne & Sandhurst	Primary	No capacity works required
	Secondary	No capacity works required

Medium Term (from September 2019 to August 2023)

North Bracknell	Primary	KAB primary opens to 1FE in the intake year from Sep-19
		Ascot Heath infant School reduces it's PAN from 70 to 60 from Sep-19
		Warfield - Woodhurst expands to 2FE from Sep-19
		Amen Corner North opens to 1FE from Sep-21
		Sandy Lane surge classroom is renewed from Sep-21
		KAB primary expands to 2FE from Sep-21
		Amen Corner South opens to 1FE from Sep-21
		Holly Spring surge classroom is renewed from Sep-22
		Warfield East opens to 1FE from Sep-22
Secondary	KAB expands during the forecast period to keep pace with Basic Need requirements	
	Garth Hill College reduces it's PAN from 312 to 300 from Sep-19	
South Bracknell	Primary	TRL Opens to 1FE from Sep-22, expanding to 2FE in Sep-23
	Secondary	Any deficits of places arising during the forecast period will be met from the Borough wide surplus of places created at KAB so no capacity works required
Crowthorne & Sandhurst	Primary	No capacity works required
	Secondary	Any deficits of places arising during the forecast period will be met from the Borough wide surplus of places created at KAB so no capacity works required

The reduction of PANs for Ascot Heath and Garth Hill College are currently out for consultation.

Special Educational Needs

- 6.26 Department for Education statistics based on School Census data state that 2.9% of Bracknell Forest pupils had statements of SEND, which is in line with the average for England and the South East region. The current figure for Bracknell Forest pupils having an EHCP is 2.1% based on last year's census data. The new census data will be submitted later in 2018 and this figure will almost certainly rise.
- 6.27 The Strategy for provision of SEN school places to meet this demand can be summarised as follows:
- 6.28 Kennel Lane Special School is largely full to its 188 capacity, and is forecast to continue to be so. There are 169 pupils on roll in 2016 but there are a number of non-BF learners at the school.

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- The Rise@Garth Hill College opened in 2015 on a phased basis, and is expected to fill up over the following years to its full capacity of 56 places for secondary ASD.
- Up to 40 additional SEN places are being created at Kings Academy Binfield from September 2019 (up to 15 primary and up to 25 secondary).
- There is a resource for children with Speech and Language difficulties based at Meadowvale Primary School and the development of additional Resource Units within existing mainstream schools is being explored. The High Needs Block review recognised a need to develop more primary resource for children social communication difficulties.
- Out of Borough placements will continue to be used to meet the specific needs of individual children where these cannot be met within the Borough. This has, and will continue to have, financial implications.
- The possibility of a new SEN free school in Bracknell Forest during the forecast period will be assessed a start of the strategy moving forward.

Early Years

6.29 In 2017 there were a total of 249 early years providers across the Borough broken down as follows:

Private & voluntary	41
Independent	2
Childminders	188
Maintained Schools	18

Total: 249

6.30 The eligibility and take-up of Early Years places is summarised below:

Age	Eligible*	Uptake	%
2 year olds	238	205	86%
3 year olds	1,562	1,403	90%
4 year olds in Early Years	1,438	12	1%
4 year olds in School Reception		1,426	99%

* Estimated from Health Service RIO database

6.31 It is likely that a proportion of those eligible who did not take up a place may have not required one e.g. if they had family to look after their children, but the numbers of these children is not known.

Costs and funding

6.32 DfE capital grants have accounted for a significant amount of the funding on the Education Capital Programme for the last five years, with £31.8m of grants allocated to

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the Council under a number of different funding streams to March 2017. The most significant grant receipt relates to Basic Need Grant (BNG) which is an un-ring fenced grant, intended to fund the provision of new school places.

- 6.33 For the 2 year funding period 2016/18, Bracknell Forest will receive £18.8m of BNG funding; however in March 2016 the Government announced the level of BNG funding for 2018/19 would be zero. A provisional allocation of £0.75m of DfE Basic Need funding has been announced for 2018/19.
- 6.34 The council has also been successful in concluding agreements with developers to provide the land and construct new primary schools at Jennett's Park, Warfield (Woodhurst), Amen Corner North and Crowthorne TRL in lieu of S106 contributions. This minimises cost and risk to the council compared to a self-build approach, and similar agreements will be sought at Amen Corner South and Warfield East. Where house building programmes slip, the Council has the ability to slip the construction of the new schools accordingly up to the point at which a construction contract is let by the developer. Members will note that the programmes for the proposed new school buildings at Amen Corner North and TRL have this year both been slipped to September 2020 and September 2022 accordingly. This flexibility within the developer construct approach allows the Council to reduce the disruption to other schools and associated diseconomy costs of having too many surplus places in the system too soon.
- 6.35 Taking account of DfE grant, developer contributions and the funding package previously agreed for the KAB, sufficient resources are in place to deliver the school places that are expected to be required by September 2018. Schemes required beyond this point will be kept under review through the Education Capital Programme Board.
- 6.36 The funding strategy to meet the cost of delivering the Strategy includes the following:
- Further Basic Need Funding, although zero in 2018/19, may be forthcoming in later years, and the Council will continue to maximise our potential receipts via the Education Funding Agency's (EFA) annual School Capacity Survey. BFC has received/been allocated £31.1m of Basic Need grant during the five year period 2013/17.
 - Use of S106 contributions which have yet to be negotiated and/or obtained from developers. This approach, utilising the developer construct route has been successful for delivery of all new primary schools delivered to date.
 - Use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, and the Planning department has estimated that subject to proposed developments going ahead, up to £10.2m of CIL receipts could be secured to support the Education Capital Programme during the period 2018/25.
 - Bids will be submitted for any future grant funding opportunity for which eligibility can be demonstrated, for example the Council successfully bid for £7.6m of Targeted Basic Need (TBN) grant in 2013/15 for school capacity projects when EFA announced a bidding opportunity.
 - The EFA provides all funding for free schools including capital funding. EFA will pay for the purchase and lease of the building or land as well as any building work or refurbishment that needs to be done to create the new school. Where the Council requires new schools to be built, this funding route could be pursued if a free school provider was considered to be appropriate.

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- Funding from the Council's own capital resources will be sought as a last resort. Each £1m of investment is estimated to cost in the region of £0.050m in annual revenue debt charges.

Forward Look to 2034

- 6.37 Work to create a new Local Plan is currently underway in the Council and this will include identification of future sites for new housing development across the Borough. In January 2018 the Executive and Council will be considering which housing sites will go forward for consultation for inclusion in the proposed new Local Plan. In an effort to inform this decision by the Executive, CYPL have been working closely with Planning colleagues to set out the education implications of this, which are as follows:
- 6.38 For primary, assuming the proposed Short and Medium Term strategies above are implemented, the total additional forecast primary deficit across the Borough to 2034 is up to 1,070 places or +5.1FE, equivalent to three additional 2FE primary schools.
- 6.39 For secondary assuming the proposed Short and Medium Term strategies are implemented, the total additional forecast secondary deficit across the Borough to 2034 is up to 2,875 places or +13.7FE, equivalent to one new secondary school plus expansion of some existing secondary schools.
- 6.40 This pressure is forecast to impact across the Borough but is more prominent in the North Bracknell organisational area.
- 6.41 To qualify this, forecasting 17 years into the future cannot be assumed to be an exact science. The Executive will understand that primary pupil numbers can be forecast from numbers of babies already born, and that secondary pupil numbers can be calculated from primary numbers already on roll. Forecasts beyond this timescale become more difficult the further forward they are projected. The mechanism for doing this is to use trend analysis, adding in the estimated pupil yields from the proposed new housing. It should also be noted that housing yields, house building programmes and numbers of dwelling types have been estimated to achieve this. Demographics have been assumed to remain stable at the current level, however these may also be subject to change over the forecast period.

7. ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

7.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the report.

Borough Treasurer

7.2 The provisional financial implications are set out in the supporting information. Amounts for all options will require more work once a way forward is established and are subject to significant change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.3 Where building work is undertaken it complies with the current Part M of Building Regulations for disabled access.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.4 The main factors affecting the planning and delivery of school places are:

ISSUE		RISK	COMMENT
1	Availability of detailed information	MEDIUM	Out of date information prejudices accurate forecasting and planning. The situation is developing continually. Every effort is made to continually monitor changing trends.
2	Accurately forecasting the impact of new housing.	HIGH	Close liaison takes place between the CYPL and ECC teams to estimate the impact of new housing, but this is estimated where details are not yet available from developers. Market forces will ultimately determine house building programmes.
3	No local plan in place so a relative approach to long term planning has to be taken	MEDIUM	Close working with Planning Colleagues and the adoption of a new strategic plan up to 2034 will enable a strategic rather than a reactive approach to place planning being taken.

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4	Sufficient school places	MEDIUM	Annual forecasting through the SPP and updating the SCS are essential to planning for school places. Forecasts are now calculated on “realistic” rather than “worst case” (highest) projections, which has reduced the headroom of pupil places in the future. The Strategy includes using the surplus capacity and surge classrooms as a safety net.
5	Compatibility of admissions arrangements by academy providers	MEDIUM	In future new academy providers may choose to depart from a catchment area admissions policy which would impact on the council’s ability to plan for school places. Maintenance of an open dialogue with providers is an important requirement.
6	Cost Risk	LOW for 2018/19	Capital Programme is affordable for 2018/19. VFM is applied to capital projects through procurement.
7	Future funding risk	MEDIUM for 2018/19 and beyond	DfE allocations are unknown beyond March 2019. A funding strategy is in place.
8	Programme risk	MEDIUM	All capital projects have significant lead-in times and sufficient time for implementation is essential
9	Abortive Cost Risk	MEDIUM	If projects are deferred and not ultimately funded then the capital costs incurred to date will create a revenue pressure in future years. This is closely monitored with the Borough Treasurer.
10	Reputation Risk	MEDIUM	The Council could stand to be criticised if there were either too few or too many school places. This emphasises the importance of strategic planning.

8. CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 The Pupil Place Planning (PPP) Board – the Council decision-making body composed of key senior officers, consultants and the Executive Member for CYPL - have been consulted about the contents of the SPP.
- 8.2 Individual school expansion projects are subject to their own public consultations and all construction works on school sites, including new schools, is also subject to public consultation through the statutory planning process.
- 8.3 Where schools are subject of expansion there is extensive consultation with Headteachers and Governing bodies over the details including timescales, designs and implementation of the works.
- 8.4 The process for creating the School Places Plan and the School Capacity Strategy were brought to Overview & Scrutiny in November 2017.

Method of Consultation

- 8.5 The PPP Board were consulted regarding the forecasts at their meeting on 01 November 2017.
- 8.6 Public consultations involve posting leaflets to neighbouring properties and to school stakeholders in addition to the standard BFC online consultation. Public meetings are held in the afternoons/evenings to view plans and drawings of proposals at which Council officers and designers are available to answer questions. Planning consultations are in accordance with statutory requirements. Consultations with schools take the form of presentations and meetings with Council officers and participation in design team meetings.
- 8.7 Overview & Scrutiny took a report and were given a presentation at their meeting on 16 November 2017.

Representations Received

- 8.8 The PPP Board understood the issues, the overall trends and the implications for the supply of additional places.
- 8.9 Feedback from pre-planning public consultations does influence the detailed plans and drawings that form the final planning applications. School feedback helps shape the final designs for the new accommodation that is provided.
- 8.10 The Members on the Overview & Scrutiny panel spent some time asking questions and seeking clarification on the details of how we plan for school places, after which they expressed satisfaction in the current processes and procedures in place.

Contacts for Further Information

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