

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

**DATE: 26 JANUARY 2016**

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**SCHOOL PLACES PLAN 2015 - 2020**  
**Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1 To note the School Places Plan 2015 – 2020, including the 2015-based pupil forecasts.

**2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child in the Borough who wants one. In the last ten years the Council has been successful in continuing to provide sufficient places.
- 2.2 Forecasts of pupil numbers are produced annually on a 'worst case' basis. Schemes are brought forward for implementation as and when need is demonstrated. Future housing is the greatest factor in the growth in pupil numbers.
- 2.3 Primary numbers are forecast to increase by 18% by 2020. Secondary numbers are forecast to rise by 26% in the same period.
- 2.4 The capital strategy continues to take a long term look at needs and includes appropriate school expansions, surge classrooms and the development of new school sites.
- 2.5 A significant budget pressure is likely as new places are provided. The extent of this, and the impact on school budgets, will become clear as data gets updated.

**3 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Executive:**

- 3.1 Note the School Places Plan 2015 – 2020 which forecasts a further 3,479 pupils will be seeking a school place by 2020, a 21% increase.**

**4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The provision of school places remains an essential part of the Council's organisation and planning process and enables the Council to meet its statutory duties in relation to school places. A school place continues to be available for every child in the Borough who wants one.
- 4.2 On the last occasion that Department for Education grants for targeted basic needs were allocated, the Council's 2012-based forecasts were successful in securing £7.8M of grant through the bidding process to build additional places in the future.
- 4.3 The Council forecasts on a 'worst case' basis, bringing schemes forward for implementation when short term forecasts demonstrate the need.

**5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 It is business critical to undertake pupil forecasting to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligation of sufficiency of school places. The plan provides a mechanism to communicate these forecasts.

## 6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### School forecasts and places

- 6.1 The School Places Plan (attached as Appendix 1) is produced as a result of an annual review of future housing plans, numbers on roll and demographic data. It includes forecasts of school intake and total numbers on roll and calculates the impact on places.
- 6.2 The planning and capital programme processes that deliver places constitute both a major challenge and a major achievement for the Council. In excess of 5,000 school places have been created in Bracknell Forest schools over the last 10 years, including expansions and surge classrooms at existing schools in all three organisational areas, construction of a new primary school at Jennett's Park and the re-provided expanded secondary school at Garth Hill College. The cost of these places has been in the region of £90M. Given the national pressures on school places this is a major success for the Council, with school places continuing to be available for every child in the Borough who wants one.
- 6.3 The forecasts contained in this plan support school estate planning to meet demand for pupil places. The Education Capital Programme has always succeeded in creating sufficient physical capacity in our schools to meet local demand, and the key factors in this have been:
- the ability to plan well in advance
  - planning for the worst case (highest) pupil numbers but only building what is actually needed
  - working with schools to minimise the disruption and optimise the enhancement of the physical environment through the construction works.
- 6.4 The Plan builds on the lessons learnt in the last year, and practice has been further improved this year. Increased scrutiny has been given to input data, the model and the assumptions taken in response to various factors in the model. These improvements can enhance the Council's confidence in the forecasts. It should be noted that increased scrutiny to these factors means that the forecasts are slightly lower than last year.
- 6.5 Planning area forecasts in this Plan are produced for medium term planning purposes. Forecasts are based on trends in past numbers on roll, admissions and birth rates, and take into account planned housing and other factors. Pupils are projected in the designated area of schools and forecasts are not constrained by accommodation at the school. The Admissions Authority for each school will determine, based on their admission arrangements, which pupils can be offered places at the school.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 Trends in the figures and the measures being taken to increase the number of places available, are set out in the Borough-wide commentary. Changes in the three planning areas (Bracknell North, Bracknell South, Crowthorne & Sandhurst) are summarised below, with further detail contained in the Planning Area commentaries in the Plan.

### Summary of forecasts by phase

- 6.8 In summary, the trend of increasing pupil numbers and pressure on the intake year in primary schools that has been seen in recent years continues.

- 6.8.1 Total - there are currently 16,337 pupils in primary and secondary schools in the Borough and the Council forecasts this number to grow to 19,816 by 2020. This represents an additional 3,479 pupils or a 21% increase overall.
- 6.8.2 Primary - there are currently 9,729 primary pupils in the Borough - this year's forecasts indicate this number could rise to 11,498 by 2020 (1,769 additional pupils, a 18% increase).
- 6.8.3 Secondary – there are currently 6,608 secondary pupils in 5 maintained schools and an academy. This year's forecasts indicate this number could rise to 8,318 by 2020. This represents an additional 1710 pupils or a 26% increase overall.

#### Summary of forecasts by planning area

- 6.9 The forecast numbers and main issues arising in the three planning areas are:
  - 6.9.1 Bracknell North – at primary phase an increase in pupil numbers of 20.5% resulting in a shortfall of 589 places. To address this need new places are planned at Warfield School, Amen Corner (North and South), Binfield Learning Village and the possibility of surge classrooms. At secondary phase an increase in pupil numbers of 35.2% is forecast, resulting in a shortfall of 782 places by 2020. To address this need new secondary places are planned at the Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain.
  - 6.9.2 Bracknell South - By 2020 an increase in pupil numbers of 20.2% resulting in a shortfall of 292 places. To address this need, expansions and bulge classes at several schools are planned, together with a further new school on the Transport Research Laboratory development site. At secondary phase, forecasts indicate an increase in pupil numbers of 43% resulting in a falling surplus of places in every year to 2020.
  - 6.9.3 Crowthorne and Sandhurst - by 2020 an increase in primary pupil numbers of 10% is forecast resulting in a deficit of 29 places. The expansion of Owlsmoor School will address this shortfall. Secondary forecasts indicate an increase of 3% in secondary pupils in this planning area by 2020, resulting in a falling surplus. Plans are in place to extend Edgbarrow School in the medium term.

#### Accuracy and joint work

- 6.10 In recent years the forecasts have been robust in forecasting accurate numbers of school places required for, in particular, the following school year and in giving a good guide for the years immediately following this. The target is for forecasts for the following year to be within 1%, and forecasts for three years ahead to be within 3%, of the actual numbers on roll.
- 6.11 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 is expected to be displacement back to Bracknell Forest of children previously attending school in Wokingham, but where places are no longer available due to local housing growth.

#### Consultations on admission arrangements and designated areas

- 6.12 From 1 September to 20 November 2015 the Council consulted on two aspects concerning school admissions: changes to the admission arrangements and catchment areas for 2017/18 entry to schools, and likely changes to catchment areas in the long term, both required as a result of the new schools that are planned. There were two key aspects to the proposed changes: changes to secondary school

admission arrangements in 2017/18 and designated area changes at both primary and secondary schools.

- 6.13 The significant changes in 2017/18 will be the creation of designated areas for Binfield Learning Village (primary and secondary), Amen Corner North Primary School, the expanded Warfield CE Primary School and Whitegrove Primary School and subsequent changes to Meadow Vale Primary School and Sandy Lane Primary School. The current arrangement of the five secondary schools having feeder primary schools was also recommended for removal in 2017/18.
- 6.14 A full report on the consultation will be presented to the Executive in February 2016.

#### Factors affecting the planning and delivery of school places

- 6.15 The proposed schemes for additional places are based on current housing building programmes which have either been supplied by developers, or estimated by CYPL and Planners based on previous BFC developments. Pupil yields have been derived from an assumed mix of dwelling types (e.g. 1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed etc.) and the estimated construction programmes for each development. The Executive should note however that the individual developers' house building programmes are outside the Council's control and so the above timescales and capacities are subject to change. 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.
- 6.16 The base data on which the Plan is based is subject to quarterly review by CYPL and Planners, and our strategy is then updated to keep pace with the revised pupil forecasts that may result.
- 6.17 The main additional factors affecting the planning and delivery of school places are summarised in paragraph 6.8.

#### Future budget pressure

- 6.18 In the longer term, where six new schools are expected to be required, a significant budget pressure can be expected, with current forecasts indicating around £7-8m of additional costs. There are uncertainties surrounding key assumptions in this calculation, not least the outcomes from the national funding formula for schools, firm proposals on dealing with this will be presented once there is more certainty which is likely to be towards the end of 2016. As data gets updated, it is likely that the cost pressure will change. At this stage, a significant pressure is considered the likely outcome which may require some future reductions to individual school budgets.

## **7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The Borough Solicitor has noted the contents of this report.

### Borough Treasurer

- 7.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from agreeing the School Places Plan 2015-2020.
- 7.3 Any additional accommodation needs identified in the Plan will have to be considered as part of the Council's budget setting process, with the full Council responsible for agreeing to the release of capital funding.
- 7.4 Resourcing schools for their day to day running costs is through the Dedicated Schools Grant, the amount of which is set by the Department for Education.

Therefore, any cost impact arising from changes in pupil numbers will need to be met from within the overall level of grant receipts and is outside the Council's financial responsibility.

#### Borough HR Manager

- 7.5 There will be HR issues arising from this report as increasing school capacity will have implications for the recruitment and employment of teaching and support staff.

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.6 The Equalities Impact Assessment relating to the provision of additional places is attached as Appendix 3.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.7 Risks in the production and delivery of the forecasts are attached as Appendix 4.  
7.8 The main factors affecting the planning and delivery of school places are:

|   | ISSUE  | RISK  | COMMENT  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Availability of information  | Out of date information prejudices accurate forecasting and planning  | The situation is developing continually. Every effort is made to continually monitor changing trends.  |
| 2 | Knowing detailed house build completion intentions of developers                                     | Inability to plan strategically.<br><br>Insufficient time to bring forward timeframes for school build and providers.               | Developers will start construction when the market is right. Every effort is made to continually monitor changing trends.  |
| 3 | Knowing when houses are likely to be occupied and the numbers of children moving in                  | Incomplete knowledge of timing of intake of pupils to schools.  | Implication on school opening, planning and funding. Every effort is made to work with developers to continually monitor changing trends.                                  |
| 4 | Where families occupying houses are moving from, and where they want their children to attend school | Incomplete knowledge of timing of intake of pupils to schools.<br><br>Unstable situation in terms of numbers in surrounding schools | Implication on school opening, planning and funding. Every effort is made to work with developers to continually monitor changing trends.                                  |
| 5 | Appointment of academy providers   | New academy providers will have their own view of growth which may be different to the Council's view                               | The Council specifies it's requirements and expectations when undertaking the process to source a providers. Maintenance of an open dialogue with sponsors once appointed. |
| 6 | Availability of revenue funding  | The number of new schools opening at the same time creates a significant revenue funding pressure on the Schools Budget.            | A range of funding options are being investigated but due to the size of forecast pressure, no one solution is available.  |

## **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 plan.

### Method of Consultation

- 8.2 PPP Board meeting on 17 July 2015.

### Representations Received

- 8.3 The Board understood the issues, the overall trends and the implications for the supply of additional places.

### Background papers

None

### Contacts for further information

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