

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **7 October 2019**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Education Commissioning Plan 2019-2023**

Purpose of report: **To approve the publication of the latest update to the Education Commissioning Plan covering the period 2019-2023.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the publication of the Education Commissioning Plan 2019-2023 and**
 - 2) agree to the plan being re-branded the 'School Organisation Plan' prior to its publication.**
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1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet present and future demand across the county.

1.2 The Council is responsible for promoting a good supply of strong schools through planning, organising and commissioning places in a way that raises attainment, increases diversity, encourages collaboration and promotes community cohesion. The Council seeks to achieve this in partnership with key stakeholders including schools and academies, parents and carers, the dioceses, borough and district councils, the Department for Education (DfE), the Regional Schools Commissioner and local communities.

1.3 In support of our statutory obligation, the Council publishes an Education Commissioning Plan (the plan), the purpose of which is to understand the projected demand for places in the future and to set out where we think we will need to commission additional places or reorganise existing provision to maintain a sustainable network of schools with the right number of places in the right locations to serve local need.

1.4 The current plan, covering the period 2017-2021, was approved for publication by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability on 22 January 2018. The plan can be viewed by following the link under 'background documents' below.

1.5 A new plan for the period 2019-2023 has been produced using the most recent set of pupil forecasts which take account of the latest information on births, GP registrations, parental preferences, housing developments and migration patterns. The updated draft plan can be viewed in **Appendix 1**.

2. East Sussex context

2.1 Births in East Sussex rose significantly from 2001/02 and peaked at around 5,500 in 2010/11. This was reflected in higher primary school intakes in the county. To meet the increased demand for places nearly 3,400 net additional primary school places were created across East Sussex in the period 2010/11 to 2018/19.

2.2 Since 2010/11 births in the county have fallen; in 2016/17 there were fewer than 5,000 births. The fall in births is reflected in a fall in primary reception intake numbers across the county. However, some parts of the county, most notably Hailsham and Bexhill, are likely to see demand for primary school places rising in the medium term as the result of significant new house-building in those areas.

2.3 Recent high numbers in primary schools are now being reflected in rising Year 7 secondary school intakes. Year 7 numbers are predicted to peak around 2022/23 or 2023/24. As a result of rising numbers there will be a need to provide additional secondary school places in some areas of the county, most notably Willingdon, Newhaven/Peacehaven and Hailsham.

3. Proposed re-branding of the plan

3.1 In the past the plan has included information on early years and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision as well as mainstream schools. Information on early years and SEND is now included in separate strategy documents and, consequently, the plan focusses exclusively on primary and secondary school places. As one of a number of policies and strategies relating to education provision in East Sussex we believe it would be more helpful to the reader if the plan was re-branded the 'School Organisation Plan'.

4. Conclusions and reasons for recommendation

4.1 In conclusion, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet present and future demand across the county. The updated plan for the period 2019-2023 clearly sets out the projected demand for places in the future and where we think we will need to commission additional places or reorganise existing provision to maintain a sustainable network of schools with the right number of places in the right locations to serve local need.

4.2 Accordingly, the Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the publication of the Education Commissioning Plan 2019-2023 and
- 2) agree to the plan being re-branded the 'School Organisation Plan' prior to its publication.

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LOCAL MEMBERS
All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/management/download/>

APPENDICES
Appendix 1 – Education Commissioning Plan 2019-2023