

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

Date: **22 October 2020**

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

Title of report: **School Organisation Plan 2020-2024**

Purpose of report: **To approve the publication of the School Organisation Plan covering the period 2020-2024.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the publication of the School Organisation Plan 2020-2024.

1. Background

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

1.2 The local authority does this by planning, organising and commissioning places in a way that seeks to raise attainment, increase diversity, encourage collaboration and promote community cohesion. The local authority works 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 local authority publishes a School Organisation Plan (the plan), the purpose of which is to understand the projected demand for places in the future and to set out where the local authority thinks it will need to commission additional school 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 2019-2023, was approved for publication by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability (EISEND) on 7 October 2019. The 2019-2023 plan can be found at:
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/management/download/>

1.5 A new draft plan for the period 2020-2024 has been produced using the most recent set of pupil forecasts which take account of the latest information on births, GP (General Practitioner) registrations, parental preferences, housing developments and migration patterns. The updated draft plan can be viewed at **Appendix 1**. Please note artwork will be added to the document when it is formatted prior to publication.

2. East Sussex context

2.1 Births countywide fell to 4926 in 2017/18, having peaked at 5503 in 2010/11. Based on the number of under one-year olds registered with GPs as at 31 August 2019, the number of births in 2018/19 was estimated at 4820.

2.2 The fall in countywide births is reflected in generally falling Reception year (age 4+) intake numbers since 2015/16. Intake numbers are forecast to remain low until at least 2023/24. The local authority's pupil forecasting model is showing numbers increasing again beyond this point. However, intake forecasts beyond 2023/24 are based on demographic projections of future births rather than actual live birth or GP registration data and need to be treated with caution. Looking at previous cycles of births and reception intakes, it is very possible that the local authority may not see a recovery in Reception year numbers until the second half of the decade. In areas of the county such as Hailsham and Bexhill, where high volumes of new housing are planned, Reception year numbers may well rise sooner than in other parts of East Sussex.

2.3 Recent high pupil 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, with total numbers on roll in secondary schools likely to peak around 2024/25 or 2025/26. As a result of these rising numbers there is a need to provide additional secondary school places in some areas of the county, most notably in Eastbourne, Newhaven/Peacehaven and Hailsham. The strategy for each of these areas is set out in the plan.

2.4 The local authority is also seeing rising demand for special education needs (SEN) provision. The local authority's strategy to address this is described in the East Sussex Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2019-2021. In summary, it includes the establishment of new special schools/alternative provision in Eastbourne, Hailsham, Hastings and Bexhill, together with new primary and secondary specialist facilities at mainstream schools in Lewes, Hailsham, Hastings and Robertsbridge.

3. Conclusions and reasons for recommendation

3.1 In conclusion, the local authority has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet present and future demand across the county. The draft plan for the period 2020-2024 sets out the projected demand for places in the future and where the local authority thinks it will need to commission additional places or reorganise existing provision.

3.2 Accordingly, the Lead Member is recommended to approve the publication of the School Organisation Plan 2020-2024.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Gary Langford, Place Planning Manager
Tel. No. 01273 481758
Email: gary.langford@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

NONE