

Committee:	Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness
Date:	21 December 2015
Title of the report:	Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	To consider the contents of the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 and approve its publication.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1. Consider the contents of the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 and to approve its publication;**
 - 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the plan prior to its publication if required; and**
 - 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to update the School Organisation Policy in Appendix A of the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 and the borough and district tables annually if appropriate.**
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1. Background

1.1 The Council receives basic need capital grant funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to help with the cost of providing additional school places.

1.2 The schools basic need funding is provided on a 'cost per pupil place' basis. The funding is insufficient to cover the entire costs of new build and expansion projects and the Council must supplement the funding provided from other sources including its own capital programme and contributions from new housing development. This, together with increasing construction costs being experienced both locally and nationally, is making delivery of the schools basic need programme extremely challenging.

1.3 In February 2014 the Council approved a capital programme of £36.5 million for schools basic need in the period 2015/16 to 2017/18. In February 2015, this was increased by a further £11.95 million.

1.4 The information contained in the Education Commissioning Plan (ECP), attached as Appendix 1, will be used to bid for further capital funding for education places in the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, including securing contributions from housing development through S106 contributions and subsequently the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). An ongoing commitment to the provision of education places in 2018/19 and beyond is essential if we are to meet our ongoing statutory responsibility; firstly, linked to the ongoing demand for primary school places and secondly as the pressure on places moves into secondary schools. Pressure on secondary school places is expected to begin from 2018/19 onwards. In addition, we are starting to see pressure on special school places develop which will also require capital investment in the future.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The ECP sets out how the Council, as strategic commissioner of education, will ensure there are sufficient education places for all children from 2 to 19 years of age. The Council is responsible for promoting a good supply of high performing settings, schools and colleges through the planning, organising and commissioning of places in a way that raises attainment, increases

diversity, encourages collaboration between settings, schools and colleges and promotes community cohesion.

2.2 Nationally and locally there has been significant growth in the early years and primary school age population. The Council has to plan for the increased pressure this puts on education places within a rapidly changing educational context. Delivery of the new entitlement for eligible two-year olds to early years provision has required dialogue with a wide range of providers, whilst the national educational landscape has changed dramatically with local authority maintained schools now sitting alongside academies, free schools, and schools in foundation trust arrangements. This more autonomous and diverse landscape brings new challenges to the Council as it endeavours to discharge its statutory obligation to provide fair access to high quality places for all children and young people.

2.3 The plan sets out where we think we will need to commission additional places or reorganise provision. It is a contextual document, providing the framework within which proposals for change may be brought forward, taking into account national and local factors which can impact on the strategic planning of places including government policy and legislation, housing growth, demographic change, capital funding decisions and the needs of individual communities. Any reviews of education provision undertaken by the Council and recommendations for school reorganisation (e.g. opening, closing, enlargement or reduction in size, or amalgamation) will, in part, be based on information contained in this report. It should be noted that the document is not, at this stage, able to quantify the impact of Government plans to extend the number of hours of free childcare available to working parents of three and four year olds from 15 to 30 hours per week or Wealden District Council's Local Plan Review which proposes a further 12,750 dwellings across the District in the period 2013 to 2037.

2.4 The plan focuses on early years, primary, secondary and post-16 places. A Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) forecasting model is currently being developed and it is hoped that SEND place planning will form part of future versions of the plan.

2.5 This year we have made a number of changes to the tables in the borough and district chapters which, we hope, make it clearer in which years we expect there to be pressure on places and to what degree. Rather than referring to forms of entry, we are showing surpluses and shortfalls as actual numbers and as percentages of the PAN/Capacity.

3. Main areas of Pressure

3.1 The main areas of identified pressure are predominantly along the coastal strip and in Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate/Stone Cross. However, in some areas the birth rate appears to have peaked and is now beginning to slow down. This is reflected in some of our commentaries, particularly in Eastbourne and Hastings. Secondary numbers on roll are currently at a low point, but will rise later in the decade and will peak in the mid-2020s. The plan sets out how we propose to address the shortfalls both in the short term and the medium to long term subject to resources being confirmed.

3.2 In the last two years the following additional places have been created in East Sussex to meet local demand:

- 472 full-time equivalent early years places
- 2328 primary places
- 2055 secondary and post-16 places

3.3 In the period to 2017/18 we aim to deliver a further 1875 primary places across the county, through a mix of temporary and permanent solutions, funded from the Schools Basic Need allocation in the capital programme.

4. Risks

4.1 In some areas the Council has required schools to go over PAN in a number of age groups to meet the demand for places caused by inward migration. This forms part of our overall place planning strategy and is used in areas where demand exceeds the number of places but not sufficiently to justify the creation of temporary bulge classes.

4.2 If insufficient capital funding is forthcoming in the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, the Council may struggle to meet its statutory obligation to ensure the sufficient supply of education places, potentially putting the Council's reputation at risk.

5. Timeline for Publication

5.1 Subject to the Lead Member's approval, we propose to publish the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 in early January 2016.

5.2 As the plan covers a four year period, it is proposed that in future the plan is published every two years, rather than annually. However, we recommend that the Lead Member delegates power to the Director of Children's Services to update the School Organisation Policy in Appendix A and the borough and district tables annually if appropriate.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

6.1 In conclusion, we will continue to face real challenges in planning for new education places, both in terms of the changing education landscape and our ability to deliver places with limited capital resources, due in part to the recent increase in construction costs locally.

6.2 The Lead Member is recommended to:

1. Consider the contents of the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 and approve its publication
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the plan prior to its publication if required
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to update the School Organisation Policy in Appendix A of the Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019 and the borough and district tables annually if appropriate.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Gary Langford, Place Planning Manager

Telephone: 01273 481758

Email: gary.langford@eastsussex.gov.uk

Local Members

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019

Background Documents

None