

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 22 NOVEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF: MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS,
SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

**LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND STRATEGIC
DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES**



SUBJECT: SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Cabinet is asked to consider the Surrey School Organisation Plan 2016/17 - 2025/26 for publication.

The School Organisation Plan sets out the policies and principles underpinning school organisation in Surrey. It highlights the likely demand for school places projected over a 10 year period, and set out any potential changes in school organisation that may be required in order to meet the statutory duty to provide sufficient places.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The School Organisation Plan 2016/17 - 2025/26 is approved for recommendation to Council to determine its publication.
2. It is recognised that, at current funding levels, meeting the increased pupil numbers outlined within this Plan is unaffordable. (Note that this recommendation was amended at the Cabinet meeting, please refer to Appendix 1 of the Report of the Cabinet for the revised recommendation 2)

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The School Organisation Plan is a key document used by schools and education stakeholders in considering long term plans. It is necessary to review the Plan to ensure that the best and most up to date information is published for use in this planning process.

DETAILS:

1. The County Council has a statutory responsibility to provide a sufficient number of school places to meet the needs of its residents. The Council must monitor future demand and decide on the appropriate change to school organisation where necessary in order to meet this statutory responsibility.

2. The Surrey School Organisation Plan for 2016/17- 2025/26 sets out the policies and principles that underpin school organisation in Surrey. It also highlights the likely demand for school places over the next 10 years and sets out likely school organisation changes that may be required in order to provide a sufficient number of places.
3. Surrey has a track record of high quality forecasting, globally accurate to within 1%, that is nationally recognised, meaning that the planning of places has been efficient and responsive to significant demographic changes.

The current position in Surrey

4. The current context in Surrey remains one of a rising primary school population across Surrey, but a decrease in the birth rate from 2013 will see this population become steadier in future years. The sharp increase in primary cohorts is now also starting to impact on the secondary sector, as these children begin to transition into secondary schools.
5. The County Council has established a capital programme to expand school places across the county in line with demand. The five year programme, 2016 - 2021, will provide an additional 13,000 school places. The focus of this programme will see a shift from primary places to secondary places during the period.
6. The Council is currently commissioning a Surrey Infrastructure Framework as the basis of a longer term strategy with district and borough councils, and this should provide more clarity to support infrastructure contributions from developers. Clearly any longer term strategy will be subject to significant change.

School Organisation Plan in summary

7. After a foreword from the Director of Children's Services, the first four chapters of the plan discuss the regulations and principles which underpin the planning of future provision in Surrey. The first chapter introduces the purpose of the plan in relation to the council's core function of providing sufficient school places, and places the plan within the context of other strategies for young people in the county.
8. The second chapter briefly sets out the Government regulations, policies and guidance which underpin school organisation, describing the legislative framework through which changes in school organisation are achieved.
9. Chapter three provides detail on the process of school commissioning in Surrey, emphasising that the County Council has no wish to disrupt what is working well but that where new or changed provision is required it is sensible to plan to a consistent set of guidelines. The chapter goes on to outline the principles adhered to in Surrey when making changes to school organisation and the process by which school age population forecasts are produced.
10. An overview of the current situation in the county in terms of demographics and school population is given in the fourth chapter. This chapter also establishes the current pattern of educational provision in the county, including details on the county's state funded schools and identifying county wide trends in births and housing.

11. The Plan also includes a further section outlining the current provision within the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) sector and any existing plans or proposals for a change in the current pattern of provision within this area.
12. The plan goes on to provide individual chapters discussing educational provision in each of Surrey's boroughs and districts. Recent birth data and trends are set out, with primary and secondary provision then being separately discussed. Projections for primary and secondary places are shown in graphs, and the implications of these are detailed. Schools where additional places have been provided since 2013 are identified, although requirements for additional provision are usually only discussed in broad terms since in most instances formal proposals have not been made. That being said, where formal proposals have already been ratified, specific school details are provided.

Borough and district summaries

13. **Elmbridge** - births in Elmbridge peaked in 2010/11 and have since fluctuated at a similar level. 2014 saw the first significant drop in births across the borough, however the level of housing and inward migration means that it is likely that demand for school places will remain steady, with pockets of exceptionally high demand being maintained. The chapter shows that a significant number of temporary bulge classes and permanent expansions have been commissioned in the area to meet the sustained primary demand and a free school providing primary and secondary places has been opened. The sharp increase experienced in primary cohorts has now begun to impact on the secondary sector, where an additional form of entry has already been provided and 3 additional forms will be provided by 2019. The DFE have approved a new Free School in the area that will provide a further six forms of entry required in the long term.
14. **Epsom & Ewell** - births in Epsom & Ewell peaked in 2011/12, and reached that level again in 2014/15. In the primary sector, additional forms of entry have been provided largely to cater for demand generated by additional housing in the north of the borough. In addition reorganisation of primary provision in Ewell will come in to effect from 2017. After a period of decline, secondary demand in the borough is recovering and additional secondary places being needed from 2019.
15. **Guildford** - births in Guildford peaked in 2011/12, followed by a small decrease which has now reached a plateau. The number of school places across Guildford as a whole is tight, and, following the peak of births seen in 2012, a number of school expansions have taken place. The vacant places that exist tend to be concentrated in schools in some of the rural areas, with a shortage of primary places in the Guildford Town area. In the secondary sector, housing and the increase in primary cohorts have required additional forms of entry to be provided in the town centre from 2017. Pressure on places, in both phases, will be increased by new housing, either through planning applications or through determination of the Guildford Local Plan which is yet to be adopted by the borough council. A new University Technical College, offering has been approved and will open in 2018 and will offer technical qualifications in computer science and engineering to 14-19 year olds in Surrey.
16. **Mole Valley** - births in Mole Valley peaked earlier than other boroughs and districts in 2009/10 and have since decreased marginally year on year.

Forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient places in the district overall, but this masks considerable variation: to the south there is spare capacity which is forecast to continue. However, in the north, there has been a greater pressure on places and additional places have been provided in the Ashted and Leatherhead areas. Similarly, whilst there is an overall surplus of secondary places at a district level, a shortage of places is forecast in the Dorking town area, with an additional two forms of entry being required by 2018.

17. **Reigate & Banstead** - births in Reigate & Banstead peaked in 2010/11 and have since fluctuated. However, demand has remained steady, particularly in the central Reigate and Redhill area, and additional places have been provided each year, with a new school being opened in 2012. Another new school was opened in 2014 to the south of the borough in Horley as the result of housing development and pressure on places in this area is largely dependent upon the rate of house building. A further two form entry primary school has been approved by the DfE as part of the Free School programme to open in the Reigate/Redhill. The sharp increase in primary cohorts is now being felt in the secondary sector, and temporary bulge classes are being provided in both 2015 and 2016. The DfE has recently approved the opening of a new secondary free school in the Reigate and Redhill area to provide an additional six forms of entry to meet demand.
18. **Runnymede** - births in Runnymede peaked in 2011/12 at 1000, in following years birth numbers have been sustained at around 950. In the primary sector, demand is forecast to fluctuate before reaching a plateau by 2020. A number of additional places have been commissioned in the area, and there remains flexibility to provide an additional form of entry in the Chertsey or Addlestone area moving forward. In the secondary sector, there is a shortage of places as the increased primary cohorts move into secondary schools. As the result, the DfE have approved a new free school in the area, which is due to open in 2017. Additional places in the Catholic secondary sector will also be required, to accommodate increased cohorts moving forward from Catholic primary schools.
19. **Spelthorne** - births in Spelthorne peaked in 2012/13, but fell marginally in 2014. This pattern of fluctuation has been evident since the early 2000s, and is reflected in the demand for primary school places in the borough. There have been a number of temporary bulge classes provided since 2013 to meet demand. It is likely that future demand will not be uniform across the borough, and there will be a need for an additional two forms of entry at Reception. Secondary provision in the area will be adequate until 2018, but may potentially require an additional two forms of entry by 2022.
20. **Surrey Heath** - Surrey Heath was the first borough to experience a peak in the birth rate in 2007/08. Births have stayed between 969 and 959 in following academic year. In the primary sector, additional places have been provided at two schools in the borough: Connaught Junior and Bisley C of E Primary School. Any future school organisation change will be as the result of housing development, such as the redevelopment of the barracks at Deepcut where planning includes the provision of a new primary school. In the secondary sector, there are currently surplus places that have challenged the efficient running of schools in the area, but the level of surplus is reducing and additional provision may be required to accommodate the peak demand coming forward from the primary sector in 2019.

21. **Tandridge** - births in Tandridge peaked in 2011/12 and have since decreased marginally year on year. In the primary sector, an overall surplus of places masks some local variance and additional places have been provided in some areas. Secondary school provision is located towards the north of the district and, due to the close proximity to the county border, has significant subscription from out of county applicants. A small shortage of places is expected by 2018 and it is likely that up to two forms of entry may be required.
22. **Waverley** - births in Waverley have fluctuated, peaking in 2011/12 before decreasing year on year. The rural nature of the majority of the borough does mean that pupil populations fluctuate significantly more than in urban areas, and a number of temporary bulge classes have been provided to accommodate demand. Forecasts show that this pattern of peaks and troughs is set to continue until reaching a steadier state from 2019. In the secondary sector, a surplus capacity at borough level masks the exceptional demand that is generated in the more urban area of Farnham, where two additional forms of entry were required for 2016 with the potential requirement for another form of entry by 2018.
23. **Woking** - the birth rate in Woking rose steadily to a peak in 2011/12, before seeing a decrease of over 200 births in 2013 that has been sustained in following years. However, demand is likely to remain steady in the borough due to the level of housing and inward migration. At primary level, a number of additional places have been provided, and temporary bulge provision was required to accommodate the peak primary cohort in 2016. In the secondary sector, a new secondary free school was opened in the borough in September 2015 to provide an additional four forms of entry. An additional four forms of entry are also being provided at existing secondary schools in order to meet demand, including that arising from an increase in Catholic primary school places.

CONSULTATION:

24. The School Organisation Plan is not subject to statutory consultation. Once authorised for publication, the plan will be widely distributed to education stakeholder groups and organisations, including schools, Local Planning Authorities and Dioceses. It is considered to be a helpful tool to aid future planning at a school level. The plan will also be published on the Surrey County Council website for public viewing.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

25. The statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all applicants within Surrey is held by the county council. An understanding of the school estate and how school organisation changes relate to demographic changes is vital to performing this duty.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

26. The School Organisation Plan underpins the school basic need planned capital programme and determines the level of additional school places required across the County. The plan is the business driver for the required capital investment which forms part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Section 151 Officer Commentary

27. The County Council is facing a very serious financial situation, whereby it is forecasting a significant revenue budget overspending in this year, and does not have a balanced nor sustainable budget plan for future years. Although most of the plans in this report have been included within the current Medium Term Financial Plan, agreeing to this recommendation will reduce the Council's options to create a balanced and sustainable budget in the future.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

28. This is a key document in ensuring that Surrey County Council is able to comply with its duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available in the area. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area. There is a legal duty on the Council therefore to secure the availability of efficient education in its area and sufficient schools to enable this.

Equalities and Diversity

29. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the School Organisation Plan. However, the provision of a sufficient number of school places which are open to all applicants will support the council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

30. This is a key document to ensuring that the appropriate numbers of school places are provided to meet the demand of our residents. All places provided have the highest priority given to children in the care of the local authority.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

31. The council has a duty to promote and improve educational outcomes for all children, particularly those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. The School Organisation Plan is an important piece of evidence used to plan the appropriate number of school places, so by aiding the council in fulfilling this duty.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

32. If approved by Cabinet, and subsequently by Council, the School Organisation Plan will be published on the Surrey County Council website and distributed widely to all stakeholders including Surrey schools, district and borough councils and local Diocesan boards.
 33. The School Organisation Plan is reviewed periodically to allow for the incorporation of new and updated information, usually following an annual timescale.
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Contact Officer:

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Sources/background papers:

Annex 1 - School Organisation Plan 2016/17 - 2025/26

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