

## REPORT TO AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

19 September 2019

<b>Subject:</b>	School Place Planning
<b>Director:</b>	<p>Director of Children's Services Lesley Hagger</p> <p>Director – Education, Skills and Employment Chris Ward</p>
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	
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### **DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **That Audit and Risk Assurance Committee:**

1. Considers the Council's actions with regard to school place planning and how it proposes to continue to deliver new secondary places;
2. Makes any comments and recommendations as necessary.

## 1 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on how the council continues to undertake its statutory responsibilities with regard to meeting the increased demand for school places particularly in the secondary sector.
- 1.2 To outline the impact of a £nil basic need allocation for 2020/21 and delay in the announcement of the 2021/22 allocation.

## 2 **IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION**

- 2.1 The recommendation in this report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future, Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.

## 3 **BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- There has been a 26% increase in Sandwell births from 3727 (2001/2) to 5058 (2012/13);
- The birth rate has since reduced and is now fluctuating between 4600 and 4800;
- 5200 new primary places have been provided since 2011 including 390 “bulge” places;
- The LA continues to respond to a significant increase in inward migration and retention, handling a 33% increase of “new to UK” applications in 2 years.
- LA expansion policy is to prioritise schools that are rated “good or outstanding”, have less complications to expand and are in areas of projected high demand.
- Shireland Technology Primary, a new free school opened in September 2019 and will provide an additional 420 places in Smethwick.

## 4 THE CURRENT POSITION

### 4.1 Secondary

- 414 new year 7 places have been delivered for September 2019, to accommodate the first significant increase in projected pupil numbers;
- Projects have included a second new secondary school delivered by the council through the presumption route: West Bromwich Collegiate Academy on Kelvin Way, West Bromwich will provide 150 Year 7 places each year. For September 2019, the Academy has admitted 175 students to assist with meeting the demand in the area;
- Expansions of George Salter and Shireland Collegiate Academies, providing an additional 105 new year 7 places;
- A number of secondary schools have agreed to take extra pupils in 2019 to assist the council in managing the delay of a new school to be delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, who have yet to confirm an opening date;
- Completion of phase 2 of the works at Q3 Langley have been completed increasing the capacity of the school to 870 ensuring that there is sufficient accommodation for students to move into Year 10;
- Future new provision is also planned at Bristnall Hall Academy and an exciting Free School proposal involving the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra;
- In 2022, Windsor Academy Trust is scheduled to open a Free School for 900 students.

### 4.2 Basic Need Funding

- The Council received a £nil basic need allocation for 2020/21;
- By applying the methodology used by the DfE, we had estimated another £nil allocation for 2021/22; however, we are encouraged by recent consultation with the DfE which suggests a change in the methodology which may positively impact on future basic need allocations;
- There has been a significant delay in an announcement from the DfE in relation to future years allocations – this represents a risk to the council unless funding is allocated or identified;

- Cabinet recently approved funding to progress to full design the final phase of both schemes at Q3 Langley and West Bromwich Collegiate Academy to ensure sufficient and suitable accommodation by 2021. Similarly, a scheme to expand Bristnall Hall Academy by 150 places was also approved;
- The council's ability to provide additional places by 2023 will be placed at risk if the government continues to delay announcements or underfund future provision.

## **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

- 5.1 The necessary statutory consultation process takes place for maintained schools that permanently expand; Academies are obliged to consult as part of their proposals to expand.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 There are no alternative options.

## **7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Funding for new school provision comes from the council's basic need allocation from central government.

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct legal and governance considerations as a result of these recommendations. In accordance with the Education Act 1996 the council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places available for the children of Sandwell. The council is required to follow a prescribed statutory process when making a permanent expansion to a maintained school. Academies are also required to undertake a consultation exercise as part of any expansion proposal. Such proposals are considered and decided by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 All groups are potentially affected by the policy of expansion. This report demonstrates that this is uniformly applied in response to where pupil demand is expected although size and type of expansion is restrictive as it is dependent on the availability of government capital funding.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 There are no data protection implications in this report.

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder issues relevant to the recommendation in this report.

- 11.1 In so far as risk is concerned, the council's strategic risk register currently includes a red risk around school place planning: SOPB 2 - If the LA is unable to exert sufficient strategic control over school place planning and the direction of capital investment, then it will be unable to deliver on its statutory duties. An appropriate project management structure is in place, and the School Organisation Programme Board meets on a regular basis.

## **12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

- 12.1 Plans for future school provision are only sustainable with continuing government funding directly to the LA through basic need or through the provision of new places via the government's free school programme.

## **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

- 13.1 A sufficient level of school places in local areas where there is demand is of benefit to the local community. Enhanced community provision is often included when schools expand their facilities.

## **14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

- 14.1 There is no direct impact in the recommendation on any council managed property or land.

**15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 The report outlines the council's past actions and future plans with regard to school place provision. Consequentially the recommendation is to note the report.

**16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 16.1 None

**17 APPENDICES:**

**None**

**Executive Director – Children's Services  
– Lesley Hagger**

**Director – Education, Skills and Employment  
Chris Ward**