

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Committee** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Report Title** The Regional Spatial Strategy and school-place planning in Warwickshire

**Summary** The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes significant numbers of new housing provision in the County for the period up to 2026. This will have implications in the long and medium term for school-place planning.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]** No

**Background papers** School Organisation Plan 2005/10

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**

Details to be specified

Other Committees  .....

Local Member(s)  .....

Other Elected Members  For information:  
Cllr Heather Timms  
Cllr Richard Grant – “noted”  
Cllr John Whitehouse

Cabinet Member  For information:  
Cllr John Burton

- Other Cabinet Members consulted  For information:  
Cllr Izzi Seccombe – *“welcome this report and its findings”*
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  Richard Freeth – *“fine”*
- Finance  .....
- Other Strategic Directors  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer

**FINAL DECISION** **NO**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  A series of area plans for school organisation to be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  A Members’ seminar to be held early in 2008 to explore policy options

## Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007

### The Regional Spatial Strategy and school-place planning in Warwickshire

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

##### **Recommendations:**

That the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) Scrutinise the report and the proposed next steps for addressing the impact the regional special strategy will have on school-place planning.
- (2) Considers how and when further scrutiny should be carried out in relation to this.

#### **1. Introduction**

The West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) is responsible for the next phase of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which examines a range of issues including future housing and employment land provision and other related matters such as transport and waste. Together with birth rates and pupil migration in and out of the County, levels of new housing represents one of the major variables influencing the number, size and location of school provision. The Regional Spatial Strategy covers new housing provision for the period up to 2026 and so should give a context for long-term school place planning. However, at present there may be insufficient detail on which to base firm plans and the spatial strategy will need to be monitored carefully as it develops.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 On 22<sup>nd</sup> October the WMRA agreed to recommend to Central Government that 356,600 new homes be built within the region over the next 20 years. The strategy also addresses issues of investment in transport and other infrastructure and emphasizes the need to:

- use major urban areas and brownfield sites
  - protect employment sites from housing development
  - reducing the risk of flooding
  - protect the Green Belt unless there are exceptional circumstances
  - provide affordable housing and dwellings for the elderly.
- 2.2 The RSS identifies three areas of Warwickshire proposed as ‘settlements of significant development’, ie areas identified for the development of significant numbers of new homes, Rugby, Nuneaton, and Warwick & Leamington. Also relevant for some schools in Warwickshire may be the similar designation for Redditch. Stratford District is identified for a more modest allocation. In the plan, North Warwickshire is amongst the areas proposed for the lowest numbers of new dwellings.

### 3. The proposal

- 3.1 The proposed number of new dwellings for each District Council area is as set out in Table 1.

*Table 1  
Potential distribution of new dwellings 2001/26 (gross figures)*

North Warwickshire	3,900
Nuneaton	15,600
Rugby	23,100
Stratford-upon-Avon	9,300
Warwick	15,600

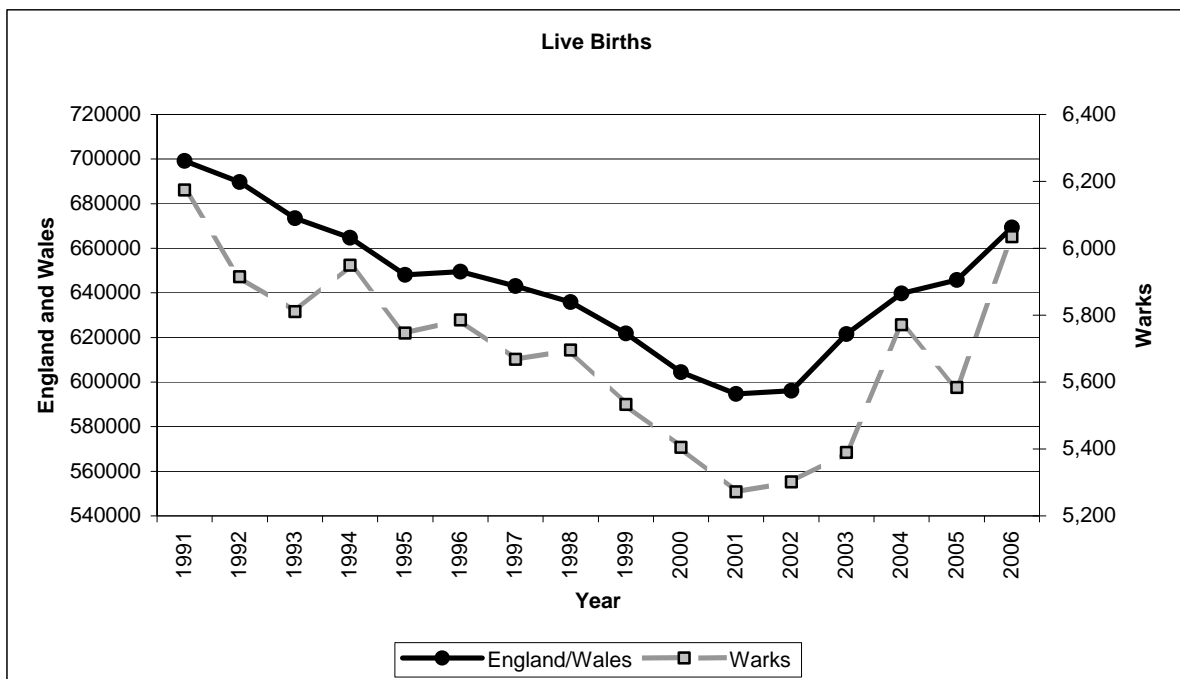
- 3.2 As these figures include the period 2001 to the present, and the current area plans notified to the Authority up to 2011, it will be necessary to clarify the net effect with District Councils as soon as possible. However, it is understood that for Nuneaton, Rugby and Warwick, the figures would represent a rate of development that would be up to 50% above the rate of current area plans. For Stratford District and North Warwickshire it would reflect a development close to existing rates.
- 3.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes potentially significant increases in housing in parts of the County but details are limited at present to the proposed targets for each District and indications are that further, crucial information will take time to emerge. The current proposal will be subject to consultation over the next 12 months or so, followed by statutory appeals and amendments. The crucial future details are as follows:
- Where will the new housing be built? District planners have given no firm indication of even the possible location of developments. Although the use of brownfield sites is given a high priority in the proposals, the total number of new houses required in some Districts will mean extensive building on open areas where there may be limited or no access to existing schools.

- What type of development is planned is crucial. There is sure to be a large element of affordable housing which have often produced in a higher than average number of pupils per house. Developments comprising one-bedroom apartments would be expected to result in lower than the average number of pupils. The County Council has carried out a pilot study of the 'pupil product' of new housing developments and a neighbouring authority is keen to develop further modelling in this matter in partnership with the County Council.
- When the developments will take place? Most of the District Councils have a moratorium on further allocations of land for development up to 2011. At some the point the moratorium will be lifted and then timing will depend upon the usual dynamics of the housing market.
- Who? To what extent will new developments be occupied by current residents of the County and how many migrants will move in?

## 4. Demographic context

4.1 In terms of the impact of the proposed level of new housing, it may be helpful to look at existing demographic trends. Data from the Office of National Statistics show that nationally the year-on-year decline in the birth rate has not only halted but that live births have been increasing since 2001 and in the five years up to 2006 had recovered the decline of the previous 10 years. Importantly, changes to the Warwickshire birth rate closely mirrors that of the national picture. This trend is shown in Diagram 1 below.

*Diagram 1  
Live births in Warwickshire and nationally 1991 to 2006*



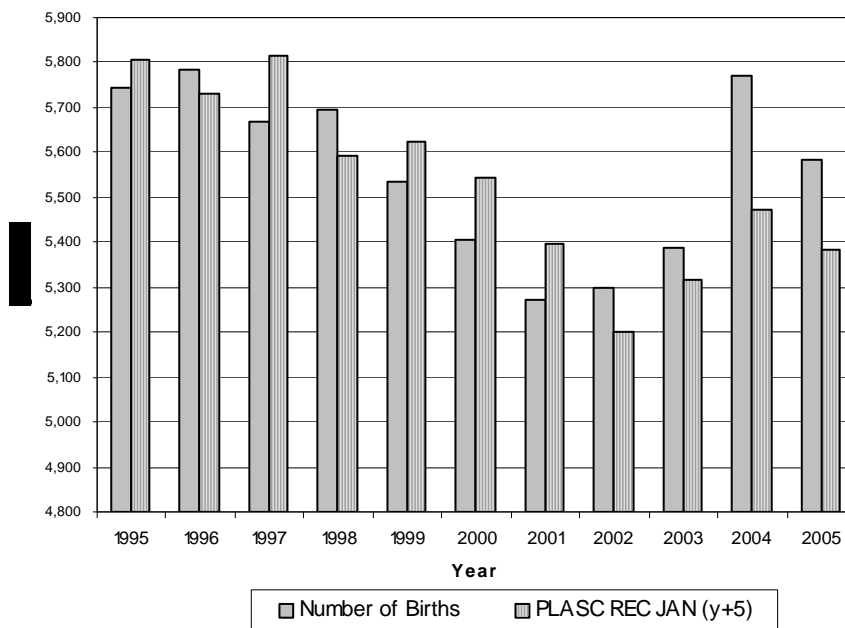
Year	England/Wales	Warwickshire
1991	699,217	6,174
1992	689,656	5,915
1993	673,467	5,811
1994	664,726	5,949
1995	648,138	5,746
1996	649,485	5,786
1997	643,095	5,668
1998	635,901	5,696
1999	621,872	5,533
2000	604,441	5,405
2001	594,634	5,272
2002	596,122	5,301
2003	621,469	5,389
2004	639,721	5,771
2005	645,835	5,584
2006	669,376	6,034

4.2 Diagram 2 below shows how the changing birth rate has affected reception cohorts entering Warwickshire primary schools and how it is forecast to do in the future. In this table the birth rate in Warwickshire is set against pupils entering or forecast to enter reception classes five years on.

*Diagram 2  
School cohort*

**WARKS Live Births and Reception Cohort (year + 5)**

Note: 2008, 2009, 2010  
\* PLASC\* are forecasts at Spring 2007



Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of births	5,746	5,786	5,668	5,969	5,533	5,405	5,272	5,301	5,389	5,771	5,584
PLASC REC JAN (y + 5)	5,808	5,729	5,817	5,592	5,623	5,543	5,398	5,200	5,318	5,471	5,384

4.3 Table 2 below shows that demographic statistics forecast a fall in the secondary school population in the County of 1,724 pupils, from 34,257 pupils in January 2007 to 32,533 in January 2012, a fall of 5%. However, the fall in forecast numbers is greater in Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire and only marginal in East Warwickshire, with a slightly rising secondary school population in South Warwickshire. Surplus secondary school places are forecast to rise from 4.8% to 9.6% over the same period. These figures make no allowance for new housing over the same period.

*Table 2  
Actual and forecast secondary school population by area.*

	Actual Pupil Numbers	Surplus %	Forecast Pupil Numbers					Surplus %	
AREA	2006/2007	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2011/2012	Capacity (Sep 2007)
CENTRAL	8,428	10.9	8,274	8,185	8,123	8,068	8,050	14.9	9,462
EAST*	6,321	-1.9	6,295	6,204	6,207	6,190	6,159	0.7	6,205*
NORTH	3,587	2.8	3,513	3,471	3,462	3,402	3,362	8.9	3,692
NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH	8,573	6.3	8,357	8,206	8,079	7,857	7,672	16.1	9,147
SOUTH	7,348	1.7	7,374	7,443	7,415	7,411	7,394	0.7	7,488
TOTAL	34,257	4.8	33,813	33,509	33,286	32,928	32,533	9.6	35,994

\*Bishop Wulstan - Capacity has been removed but Forecasts and Pupil Numbers remain to show total numbers in East Region

4.4 Table 3 below shows that demographic statistics forecast a fall in the primary school population in the County of 1,920 pupils between January 2007 and January 2012, a fall of 4.9%. These figures make no allowance for new housing over the same period.

*Table 3  
Actual and forecast primary school population by area*

	Actual Pupil Numbers	Surplus %	Forecast Pupil Numbers					Surplus %	
AREA	2006/2007	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2011/2012	Capacity (Sep 2007)
CENTRAL	9,767	13.0	9,697	9,648	9,631	9,528	9,478	15.6	11,231
EAST	7,141	9.9	7,062	6,968	6,937	6,853	6,804	14.2	7,927
NORTH	3,999	12.4	3,910	3,861	3,780	3,686	3,654	20.0	4,567
NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH	10,889	11.6	10,671	10,548	10,416	10,313	10,297	16.4	12,315
SOUTH	7,365	7.5	7,299	7,231	7,188	7,104	7,008	12.0	7,961
TOTAL	39,161	11.0	38,689	38,256	37,952	37,484	37,241	15.4	44,001

4.5 The increase in surplus school places does not fall evenly and the Directorate has identified a significant increase in the number of schools with more than 25% surplus places over the next few years. The potential growth in the number of schools in this category is illustrated in Table 4 below.

*Table 4  
Numbers of schools with 25% surplus places*

Actual	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
JAN 2006	JAN 2007	SEP 2007	SEP 2008	SEP 2009	SEP 2010	SEP 2011
28	35	43	50	54	61	60

At present both the number of surplus places and the number of schools with 25% surplus places are in line or below the average of both authorities nationally and those of our statistical neighbours



## **5. Implications of the Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 5.1 In general terms, it may be expected that the rise in the birth rate, particularly if it continues, and the significant increase in new housing up to 2026 and current inward migration to the County will impact on school places.
- 5.2 In some areas, for example central Nuneaton or Bedworth, there may be some reduction in the high levels of surplus places in schools. However, if, as is likely given the sheer number of houses proposed, there were large developments on existing open areas on the periphery of existing housing, it is likely that some new schools may be required.
- 5.3 There may be strategic implications for the Building Schools for the Future programme for secondary schools where schools in an area will be either replaced or remodelled. The first tranche of Warwickshire schools is scheduled for the Nuneaton and Bedworth area in 2013 and strategic plans will need to be made, outside the timescales for the RSS.
- 5.4 There will be financial implications, not least because there are proposals to change the way in which developer contributions are collected and distributed to the County Council in order to finance infrastructure costs including, of course, additional school places.
- 5.5 The Authority is developing a series of area plans for school organisation which it will present to Cabinet in due course together with strategies for both managing the sufficient supply of school places over the next five years and the reduction of surplus places where necessary, including those schools with or forecast to have more than 25% surplus. It is further intended that a seminar for Members be held early in 2008 to explore policy options.

## **6. Summary**

The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes significant numbers of new housing provision in the County for the period up to 2026. This will have implications in the long and medium term for school place planning. However, at present there may be insufficient detail to base firm plans and the spatial strategy will need to be monitored carefully as it develops. There are, however, a number of other factors, such as the recent growth in the birth rate, that will affect school-place planning to both plan for additional places and remove surplus places where necessary.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1 That Officers work closely with planners to monitor the progress of the Regional Spatial Strategy and keep Members informed.
- 7.2 That a series of area plans be developed for each part of the County.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 That the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- 8.2 Scrutinise the report and the proposed next steps for addressing the impact the regional special strategy will have on school-place planning.
- 8.3 Considers how and when further scrutiny should be carried out in relation to this.

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30<sup>th</sup> October 2007