

Council

26 July 2018

Education Sufficiency Strategy 2018 – 2023

Recommendation:

That Council approves the Education Sufficiency Strategy for the academic years 2018-2023.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council has a statutory responsibility to secure sufficient school, early years and childcare places to meet the needs of all Warwickshire children.
- 1.2 Warwickshire's Education Strategy 2018 – 2023, has been revised outlining the priorities for the next five years. The Education Sufficiency Strategy has been revised to align with these priorities.
- 1.3 The Education Sufficiency Strategy, attached as appendix A, will cover the academic years 2018 to 2023 and make provision to ensure ongoing sufficiency for both in year pressures and those expected for the start of the academic years covered.
- 1.4 All proposals for capital works and improvements are subject to scrutiny via a three stage process. The first being capital working group, second capital board and the last being presentation for approval by Cabinet.
- 1.5 Any specific school expansions or school organisation changes will be subject to further reports.

2.0 Proposed sufficiency strategy

- 2.1 The sufficiency strategy sets out the principles underpinning school place planning; the ways in which places will be delivered, the information which will be used and the way we work with providers, schools, academy trusts, and partner agencies to deliver high quality, accessible school and early years places for all learners.
- 2.2 School and planning area level pupil number forecasts are an essential tool for monitoring, assessing and planning for school places. The strategy

outlines the steps that will be taken to ensure the inputs and outputs of the forecasting model are as robust and accurate as possible.

2.3 When planning for school places, the level of surplus capacity available will also be considered. The target for Warwickshire is, where possible, for the supply of places to exceed demand by approximately 4% in any planning area.

2.4 In the delivery of new schools, Warwickshire County Council will continue to work in partnership with academy trusts already operating in the county to support their free school applications. This support will take the form of providing demographic information to strengthen the trust's application, liaising with the Education and Skills Funding Agency regarding the need for the free school in question and also assisting those external providers in finding sites for their proposed schools.

2.5 The strategy outlines the following key strategic priorities that Warwickshire are keen to address where the scope of expansion works and the funds available allow and that underpin the decisions made when a capital solution is required to expand any school to meet the expected need for places:

- **Local places for local children**

We are committed to providing school places for children in their local community whenever possible.

- **Removal of half forms of entry**

In order to provide schools with stability when organising classes we will look to remove half forms of entry.

- **Increase 1 form of entry (FE) to 2 forms of entry (FE)**

Where it is possible and appropriate we will look to expand schools to 2FE to provide better financial stability.

- **Amalgamate infant and junior schools**

We will support and expect infant and junior schools to amalgamate where appropriate, particularly when both schools are located on a shared site or when one head teacher leaves.

- **Address safeguarding issues relating to buildings and grounds**

We are committed to addressing any safeguarding within schools relating to the school building or grounds and will address any issues identified in a timely manner to ensure the safety of children in Warwickshire schools

- **Address buildings defects and Equality Act noncompliance**

Where funds allow we will address any identified defects. All school buildings in Warwickshire should be accessible to all and up to an equal standard.

- **Incorporate SEND facilities within mainstream schools**

To make best use of education facilities, and increase inclusion for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, we are developing schemes to include SEND facilities within mainstream schools and expand capacity.

3.0 Information and engagement

- 3.1 Information and engagement events on the sufficiency strategy and subsequent delivery of school places across Warwickshire were held for early years settings, head teachers and school governors. 3 events were held and were well attended by approximately 30-40 persons per meeting with attendance from private, voluntary and independent settings within the early years sector and representatives from primary and secondary schools from across the county.
- 3.2 In addition a briefing session for members was held in January, which focused on school place planning and the sufficiency strategy and was well attended.
- 3.3 Following the information and engagement events a series of follow up meetings have also been held, and will continue to be held on an ongoing basis, with individual schools, early years settings, and consortium of schools within specific areas to discuss on a local level and ensure all stakeholders are kept informed.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 It is expected new school places will be funded via grant funding from the Department for Education and/or funding contributions from developers where a need is related to housing development.
- 4.2 All future additions to the capital programme will be subject to further cabinet reports identifying specific funding streams.
- 4.3 When a school expands or a new school opens there is a potential time-lag between the schools admitting the additional pupils and the Education and Skills Funding Agency allocating revenue funding to the school. In order to support schools in this situation Warwickshire Education and Learning will provide growth funding for the additional class.

- 4.4 The total budget for the growth fund in any given financial year is based on the difference between the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for the schools block, and the sum of the allocations to schools' budgets.
- 4.5 The growth fund for 2018/19 is estimated at £1.1million. Funding available to support those schools that are currently in the process of expansion or are expected to admit additional children for 2018/19 is therefore capped at this level.

5.0 Next steps

- 5.1 Following ratification by full council the strategy will be published on Warwickshire County Council webpages.

Background papers

Annual Education Sufficiency Update 2018
Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Education Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2023

Appendix B - EQIA

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Cabinet Portfolio Holders: Councillors Colin Hayfield and Jeff Morgan
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Chair and Group Spokespersons: Councillors Yousef Dahmash, Chris Williams, Corinne Davies and Jerry Roodhouse