

# Council

23 July 2024

## Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2029

### Recommendation

That Council approves the Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2029.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient education provision and viable local supply exists to meet local need and demand. Within this context our role varies across the differing education sectors – Early Years, primary and secondary school provision, Post 16 and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 1.2. In order to deliver on this responsibility, we work in partnership with, and rely on, the support of school leaders, headteachers, governors, academy trusts, education providers and the private, voluntary and independent sector.
- 1.3. The Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2029 (Appendix 1) is a core strategy which sets out how the council will plan, develop and commission education provision and encompasses early years, school places, Post 16 and SEND.
- 1.4. The Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy seeks to deliver Priority 3 - 'Sufficiency and Admissions', of the Education Strategy 2024-2029, ensuring that school places are provided in the right place at the right time.
- 1.5. Engagement has involved a range of stakeholders through a number of bespoke sessions including five Member workshops, covering each of the District/Boroughs, two specific school workshops, and one internal workshop involving representation from property, planning and various education departments. Feedback has helped to shape the core priority areas.
- 1.6. To support the delivery of this strategy, it is proposed to focus our efforts on the following four priorities:
  - Priority one - Strategic planning/Right places at right time
  - Priority two - Effective commissioning
  - Priority three - Partnership and collaboration

- Priority four - Managing and supporting change.

1.7. The delivery of the Strategy will be overseen by Access to Education and each autumn we will produce a report to Cabinet through an annual update detailing the current pupil number forecasts, sufficiency plans, and an overview of the pressures expected over the forthcoming five-year period.

## **2.0 Financial Implications**

2.1 Following the approval of the recommendations in the education capital programme report presented to Council 14 May 2024, all the Basic Need grant funding available until the next allocation in 2026/27 has been utilised. Further capital resources will be required to deliver further schemes to ensure sufficient school places exist to meet demand. A report was presented to Cabinet on 16 July 2024 outlining the medium-term capital funding requirements and seeking approval for the use of corporate resources to deliver the projects where insufficient grant funding and/or developer contributions are available. The Education Sufficiency Capital Funding Gap report also on this agenda covers financial provision for school capital in more detail.

2.2 The Service holds resources for school investment which are not currently included in the approved Capital Programme, this is largely from the following:

- confirmed High Needs Capital allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25,
- other grants/contributions held for specific purposes,
- developer contributions currently held but unallocated.

2.3 The challenge around uncertainty of future levels of Basic Need grant funding and developer contributions being sufficient to meet the cost of delivering schemes will influence our future approaches to prioritising projects, procurement routes and delivery options.

## **3.0 Environmental Implications**

3.1 The County Council will look to use modern methods of construction to achieve efficiencies and benefits particularly in terms of time, cost, and the environment.

3.2 All future school capital projects will be developed in accordance with statutory regulations which include the revised Building Regulations 2021. These new building regulations include significant changes to the regulations around ventilation, energy efficiency and overheating, electric vehicle charging and a number of smaller supporting elements of the regulations. New school builds will therefore be built to new standards that are expected to produce lower carbon dioxide omissions compared to previous standards.

- 3.3 As part of the feasibility work on capital projects, where feasible net zero and low carbon options and associated costs are explored and considered.
- 3.4 Extensions to existing buildings make environmental improvements a challenge. However, where possible new build elements will be fossil fuel free.
- 3.5 Proposed capital schemes would aim to ensure the sufficiency of, and accessibility to, provision in local settings avoiding the need to travel further afield to access education or childcare provision. The provision and access to local education provision supports the promotion of active travel and the health and well-being, economic and environmental benefits this can bring.

## **4.0 Supporting Information**

- 4.1. We undertake strategic planning and forecasting to assess the future need for education places for all phases and for pupils with SEND and share this information with providers, schools, and other partners to support the commissioning and delivery of education provision.
- 4.2. Engagement with schools, early years settings and providers regarding sufficiency and place pressures will continue through one-to-one discussions and consortia/area network meetings.
- 4.3. Any additions to the education capital programme will be progressed through initial feasibility and design and development stages in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

## **5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 5.1 If approved the Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2029 will be published and implementation and delivery will immediately follow.

## **Appendices**

1. Appendix 1 – Warwickshire Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2029

## **Background Papers**

1. Equality Impact Assessment

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

Local Member(s): None – this is a County wide report

Other members: Councillors Marian Humphreys, Jerry Roodhouse and Barbara Brown