

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet **DATE:** 17 September 2018

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### **PART I KEY DECISION**

#### **SLOUGH'S SCHOOL PLACES STRATEGY 2018-2023**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the School Places Strategy 2018-2023 for comment and endorsement by the Cabinet.

##### **2. Recommendations**

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the attached School Places Strategy 2018-2023 be approved.

##### **3a. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy and the JSNA**

- **Economy and Skills** – the delivery of school places for Slough residents will support delivery of skills and qualifications to young people in Slough and improve their life chances. However, some uses of land may have greater value to the town's economy if used for purposes other than education.
- **Health** – the delivery of well-designed schools with adequate outdoor space and community use agreements will provide an opportunity for young people to live active lifestyles and contribute to improved fitness and the reduction of childhood obesity and other health risks.
- **Regeneration and Environment** – combining the delivery of school places with land redevelopment will provide added regeneration value and may deliver environment improvements or damage e.g. through increased traffic levels. Other uses may have higher regeneration value and different environmental consequences.

##### **3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes**

- Outcome 1 – Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful – the delivery of sufficient school places in an appropriate mix for local children

and young people will offer the opportunity for educational attainment and positive life chances.

- Outcome 3 - Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit – school places and good schools are a key factor in adding to the attractiveness of a place for people looking to relocate.

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### a) Financial

Publication of the School Places Strategy does not have any direct financial implications. However, the increase in demand for school places does have an implication.

Revenue costs for the rise in pupil numbers will be met through the Designated School Grant (DSG) which is based on numbers on roll and the Growth Fund (also from DSG) which supports schools while they are growing. There can be transport cost implications for the council if pupils need to travel further than certain specified distances to find a suitable school place.

The growth in pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is funded from the High Needs Block (HNB). The funding limits of the HNB are set annually by the Department for Education and this has led to continuing pressures on the HNB caused at least in part by the rising number of pupils.

In terms of capital implications, the current estimate is that £51m is required to build the school places required to 2023, this includes the Council's contribution to the land purchases for Grove Academy. The full capital programme is set out in Appendix 1 of the Strategy. £21m of income has been confirmed either as section 106 developer contributions or Basic Need grant. Over the period of this strategy further section 106 contributions and 2 new annual allocations of Basic Need are expected in 2021 and 2022 however unless new grant funding is announced then it is expected that the balance of the programme will need to be funded by the Council from borrowing. 2018-19 is the first year when expenditure will exceed income and borrowing will be required to fund an element of the education capital programme.

##### b) Risk Management

Key risks are set out in the table below.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal - Challenge from parents of pupils on the basis the Council has not provided sufficient school places in accordance with its statutory duty.	Agree, publish and deliver a comprehensive strategy for expanding provision.	Delivery of a comprehensive strategy will set the context for the long term.
Property – school land is subject to conditions on its use	Strategy considers place planning across the whole of the Borough and neighbouring areas. This	

and the council could only dispose of it for alternative uses by obtaining consent from the Secretary of State.	includes consideration of housing development and opportunities for securing new schools as part of such developments or via the free school route where land is identified.	
Planning challenges.	Sound holistic planning case to demonstrate that sites are best suited.	
Equalities Issues.	Ensure needs of all parts of community are considered and balanced in the strategy.	
Equalities Issues – Rise in demand for SEND provision exceeds the availability of places leading to possible challenge and costly placements outside of the borough.	Agree and deliver a comprehensive expansion programme including a combination of expansion and new SEND specialist units.  Expansion programme agreed via Heads' Groups.	Potential for inclusion of SEND resource bases within new Free Schools.
Demographics – Future demographics may change and be higher or lower than forecast.	Higher than forecast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare contingency projects that can be brought forward if required.</li> </ul> Lower than forecast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open classes slower than planned.</li> <li>• Coordinate a reduction programme.</li> </ul>	
Financial – Over £50m is required to fund the school expansion programme to 2023.	Basic Need funding for new places has been confirmed to 2020-21.  Grove Academy is being externally funded.  Annual capital bids submitted to DfE.	Securing section 106 contributions where relevant.  Exploring other external capital funding streams such as the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP).
Traffic risks.	Sound transport planning. Transport considerations will be considered on a site by site basis as part of statutory process for expanding existing schools and as part of planning process.	Promoting green travel plans.

Communications and community support.	Effective communication plan. Formal consultation will take place as part of statutory process for expanding existing maintained schools, where prescribed conditions met and as part of the planning process, where planning permission is required.	
Timetable for delivery – projects delivered later than required for pupils, or not delivered as planned as schools choose not to cooperate or do not have the capacity to expand.	<p>Forward planning. From approval, large projects are likely to take at least 24 months to complete and open places to pupils.</p> <p>Projects need to start in good time with the possible risk that this provides some short-term overprovision.</p> <p>Work closely with schools and heads' groups to ensure buy-in.</p> <p>Allocate adequate funding for projects.</p>	

c) Human Rights Act and other Legal Implications

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires a local authority to secure that sufficient schools are available at primary and secondary stages of education for their local area. Sufficient means sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, and includes practical instruction and training appropriate to pupils' different needs. A local authority must exercise its functions under this section with a view to security diversity in the provision of schools, and increasing opportunities for parental choice. This duty applies to pupils of compulsory school age only. In exercising its functions under this section, a local authority shall in particular have regard to (a) the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools (except that this duty does not apply to special schools), (b) the need for securing that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs, and (c) the expediency of securing the provision of boarding accommodation for pupils for whom education as boarders is considered by their parents and the authority to be desirable.

The Council also have general duties under s.13 and 13A of the Education Act 1996 to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of its community by securing that efficient primary and secondary education and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area and that its education functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring

fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential.

School places are provided at a variety of state funded provision, including maintained schools (schools controlled or aided by the Council), academies (converted and new academies, also known as free schools, funded directed by the Department for Education). The methods of expanding, making changes and opening new schools differs depending on whether it is a maintained school or an academy.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

The equality implications of individual proposals will be assessed on a case by case basis.

The positive impacts of expanding provision include:

- All Slough children (including new arrivals which comprise a high percentage of BME families) obtaining a school place with a variety of admissions choices/ options available,
- All new places being highly disabled accessible, and
- SEN and PRU places expanding.

e) Land and Property Implications

Publication of the School Places Strategy does not have any direct land implications. Where individual projects have land implications approval will be sought on a site by site basis.

f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

None.

**5. Supporting Information**

5.1 The School Places Strategy 2018-2023 sets out Slough's proposals for ensuring there are sufficient, suitable, high quality school places for every resident child and young person over the next 5 years. Also included are the key principles and approach taken by Slough when planning expansion or contraction of school provision.

5.2 Between 2001-2 and 2010-11 the number of births in Slough rose by 48%. The impact of this growth together with the inward migration levels to the town has required a major expansion in provision across all education sectors. The primary school estate has been expanded by 50% over the last 10 years and by 2020 the secondary estate will have also have been expanded by 50%. Expansion programmes for increasing places for the other sectors are underway, these are summarised below.

5.3 The number of births in Slough peaked in 2010-11 and 2011-12, both these years saw 2760 births, since then births levels seem to have stabilised and the average is now 2600 per year. The other key factor affecting demand is in-year applications from new arrivals to Slough. This has slowed considerably over the last year or so and reduced the pressure on some year groups where the surplus capacity was below target levels.

- 5.4 The latest demographics and School Census data will be monitored for changes that affect the forecasts and actions presented within the Strategy. Any significant changes will be reported back to Cabinet.

**Early Years:**

- 5.5 There continues to be a focus on place development for two, three and four year olds in Slough. The conclusion from the latest Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is that 1520 new places are required by 2023. Capacity is being increased in the private, voluntary and independent sector to deliver the growth required.

**Primary Places:**

- 5.6 The opening of Grove Academy in 2017 means that Slough has sufficient Reception classes to meet projected demand and provide some surplus capacity. A certain level of surplus is welcomed in each year group to accommodate new arrivals to Slough. While there is surplus capacity in lower year groups which is projected to rise, there is an existing pressure in some higher year groups and some junior bulge classes may be required over the next few years. Contingency classes are available in a number of schools should they be required.
- 5.7 The recent slow down in new arrivals has reduced the likelihood that bulge classes will be required, however it is possible that applications could suddenly pick up again and it is prudent to maintain some contingency bulge classes in case this happens. A number of schools have reduced their admission number as a result of the increase in surplus capacity in lower year groups and others are considering a similar reduction. The reduction in admission numbers will need to be coordinated by the LA to ensure sufficient capacity remains available in all parts of the town.

**Secondary Places:**

- 5.8 A high number of secondary free schools have opened in Slough in recent years including Grove Academy which opened for September 2017: in total they will provide 22 new forms of entry. In addition to this, projects are underway for adding 6.5 forms of entry at four existing Slough schools including Westgate School, Wexham School and Langleigh Grammar which are all being funded by the Council.
- 5.9 It is expected that together these projects will provide sufficient capacity until 2020-21, when forecasts indicate there will be a pressure on places for 3 or 4 years before demand reduces and surplus capacity again becomes available. Although demand is forecast to exceed capacity from 2020-21 this does not support the case for a new school as the shortage of places is temporary. At this point it is assumed that an increase in capacity at existing schools will provide the places required.

**Post-16:**

- 5.10 The higher birth rates will start to significantly affect post-16 demand from 2019 and continue for the next decade. Post-16 provision is increasing in line with secondary capacity and overall 950 additional places will be built as part of current expansion projects.

**SEND Places:**

- 5.11 The majority of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will be educated in mainstream schools. However a proportion will require specialist provision. Those requiring full time specialist provision attend a Special School while those pupils whose needs can be met through a combination of mainstream and specialist facilities will be allocated a place in a Resource Unit. The Council has a programme

underway to expand both types of provision. A number of new resource units have just opened or will soon open and a number of existing SEND Resource Units are being expanded. At the same time capacity in all 3 of Slough's existing special schools will be expanded through the addition of new buildings.

#### **Alternative Provision (or PRU) places:**

- 5.12 Alternative Provision caters for those pupils who are unable to be educated in mainstream schooling due to illness, exclusion or other reason. Such provision can also be utilised by schools where pupils are at risk of exclusion. It has been assumed that the proportion of the population that requires Alternative Provision will remain unchanged and new places have been planned on this basis. The growth required in this sector is being delivered through the expansion of existing alternative provision schools. For primary pupils Littledown School will expand onto an adjoining site once the refurbishment work completes towards the end of 2018. For secondary pupils two new annexes are planned for Haybrook College, one a replacement building due to be refurbished by the end of 2018 and one an additional building on the Haymill site to complete in 2020.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The School Places Strategy 2018-2023 sets out Slough's school place requirements over the next 5 years and presents a comprehensive strategy for delivering the places required over the planning period. The expansion projects previously agreed by Slough will provide most of the forecast growth in provision required over the next 5 years. Over the next 12 months proposals will be developed for providing the additional secondary forms of entry required for 2020 and programme agreed for the expansion of Early Years provision.
- 6.2 The Cabinet is requested to consider the report, provide any comments and approve the strategy.

## **7 Appendices**

- 7.1 School Places Strategy 2018-2023.

## **8 Background Papers**

- 8.1 None