

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services **DATE:** 13 March 2019
Scrutiny Panel

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PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on current school expansion projects, the latest pupil projections and proposals for meeting future demand as set out in the School Places Strategy 2008-23.

2. Recommendation

That the Panel note the School Places Strategy 2018-23 and the principles for managing school places set out within the Strategy.

3a. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Slough's approach to school places reflects the following wellbeing priorities:

- **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

Slough's approach to school places will contribute to the following 5 Year Plan Outcomes:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.

4. Other Implications

4.1 Financial

There are no financial implications to the information in this report. However, the cost implications of the expansion programme are outlined in School Places Strategy in Appendix 1.

4.2 Risk Management

There are no risk management issues to the information in this report. A full summary of risks around school place planning was presented to Cabinet in September 2018. The key risks are:

- Mismatch of supply and demand and the pressures and destabilising effects on the school community.
- Funding pressures over the next 4 years.

4.3 Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications to the information in this report.

4.4 Equalities Impact Assessment:

The preparation of this report has not necessitated an Equalities Impact Assessment.

4.5 Land and Property Implications:

There are no site implications as a consequence of the data in this report.

However, there are property and land implications of the school expansion programmes:

- Grove Academy has opened on the former TVU site and will move to a site in Chalvey for September 2020
- Expansions of existing schools and bulge classes will generally use existing school land and not impact other council plans
- The Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) expansion programme agreed by Cabinet in March 2017 affects a number of council sites.

6. Background

6.1 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 the expansion or contraction of school provision.

6.2 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.

- 6.3 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 over the last year few years and reduced the pressure on some year groups where the surplus capacity was below target levels.
- 6.4 The Strategy will be updated on an annual basis to reflect the latest demographic information and provide updated forecasts. The next version will consider the impact of the proposed closure of Burnham Park E-Act Academy for instance.

Early Years:

- 6.5 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:

- 6.6 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 the 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.
- 6.7 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:

- 6.8 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 Langley Grammar which are all being funded by the Council.
- 6.9 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:

- 6.10 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:

- 6.11 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 is being expanded through the addition of new buildings.

Alternative Provision (or PRU) places:

- 6.12 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 has expanded into an adjoining site where refurbishment works are just completing. For secondary pupils two new annexes are planned for Haybrook College, one in the former Thomas Grey building and the other an additional building on the Haymill site to complete in 2020/21.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The Panel is requested to consider the report and provide any comments.

Appendices

A - School Places Strategy 2018-23