

TITLE	Wokingham Primary School Places Strategy 2018
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 28 th June 2018
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Director of Corporate Services, Graham Ebers, Acting Director of Childrens Services, Lisa Humphreys
LEAD MEMBER	Pauline Helliar-Symons, Executive Member for Children's Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That there will be sufficient primary school places in the right locations to meet the needs of Wokingham Borough families.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wokingham Borough Council Primary School Places Strategy 2018 to 2028 is adopted.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places and has a detailed infrastructure plan which sits alongside the planning strategy. This ensures that school places are provided alongside new developments and sufficient new capacity is available to support new communities.

The report and attached Wokingham Borough Council Primary School Places Strategy 2018 to 2028 set out an analysis of the need for primary school places in the context of statutory duty and ongoing, large-scale residential development in the borough. In doing so, it considered the timing of the planned infrastructure provision. It looks at needs and responses in the short (3 year), medium (5 year) and long term (10 years). It shows:

- That in the medium and long term the current projections indicate the need for additional school places is linked to the provision of new housing.
- There may be a need to rationalise provision because while the adopted Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) and future Local Plan Update housing is expected to lead to additional demand originating in the new developments, the projections indicate other areas will see static or declining demand. This is consistent with (and indicative of the success of) the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy intent to focus growth into the SDL areas, where infrastructure can be provided through provision planned when the Core Strategy was devised and approved. This will be constantly monitored.
- That while there is no case to increase capacity in the North, Earley or South East Planning Areas, there are local pressure points in the Wokingham Town West (Wokingham Town and Winnersh), South West (Shinfield and Arborfield) and Woodley Planning Areas.
- That South West and Wokingham Town West areas have needs that can be met through the new provision planned in the SDL areas. This points to the development of these schemes continuing according to established timetables,

but with a need to manage the number of new places delivered locally, to ensure all schools continue to be sustainable.

- That Woodley requires additional provision, initially at least as bulge accommodation for September 2020, leading into permanent accommodation if the rise in population is sustained. This points to a need for a local working party of key stakeholders to agree how to address this issue.
- There are risks of both over and under provision because the child yield of new housing can only be estimated through projections and modelling until homes are occupied, but these can be mitigated through contingency planning.
- Capital costs are already budgeted for in the 10 year vision, using resources secured through Section 106 agreements for SDL schemes and government grant. Revenue costs will be built into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Growth budget in appropriate years.

Background

1. The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places. Where additional places are required, they can be provided through school expansion or the creation of a new school.
2. The Council has a detailed infrastructure programme which sits alongside the planning strategy as set out in the adopted Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plans. This ensure that necessary infrastructure, including school places, is provided alongside new developments and is able to support new communities. All four Strategic Development Locations include planned schools. Some of these have already been development, whereas others will be provided as development progresses.
3. One key purpose of the Primary School Place Strategy to consider the detailed timing of projects within the infrastructure programme; that is when the planned additional school places are required to support the projected demand. The capital programme is aligned with this need.
4. In addition to considering the planned infrastructure alongside the SDLs, the Strategy also reviews the sufficiency of school places in other areas of the borough. The positive planning approach to strategic development and infrastructure means that unplanned impacts are limited and manageable.

The previous strategy

5. Wokingham Borough's current Primary School Strategy covered the period from 2016 to 2018. It established the need to provide additional capacity in Earley, Woodley and the south west of the borough (as temporary provision until the new SDL school was ready), in addition to developing the agreed SDL school programme.
6. In accordance with the strategy the Council has:
 - Let contracts to expand three primary schools (Beechwood and Highwood primary schools in Woodley and Loddon primary school in Earley)
 - Gained Planning Consent for a fourth primary expansion programme in Earley (Aldryngton Primary School)
 - Created temporary provision to enable a planned new primary school to open in the south west of the borough (Shinfield) in advance of the completion of the permanent premises.
7. The three primary school expansion projects are all now offering additional places, and are expected to complete this year (2018/19). The fourth expansion project (Aldryngton) was subject to further scheme development. Although Planning Permission was awarded the level of need in Earley has not risen to a level to require the implementation of the scheme. Thanks to Loddon School being expanded we no longer need to expand Aldryngton, and may even have an excess of places in the short term as a result.
8. The Shinfield temporary provision was ready for use in 2016, but was not required that year. Although 30 children had to be diverted to schools out of the area on offer day, parents found alternative places for their children in established schools in

surrounding communities before the start of the new school year that September. Currently the permanent base for the school is nearing completion on the Shinfield West development site, (and is now expected to open in 2019).

9. The SDL primary school programme facilitates the delivery of 7 new primary schools (1 in North Wokingham, 2 in South Wokingham, 2 at Arborfield and 2 in the South of the M4 (at Shinfield & Spencer's Wood) SDLs) – all of which are planned with futureproofing capacity for additional forms of entry. To date this programme has led to the opening of the Montague Park Primary School in 2016 (South Wokingham SDL) and the construction of the permanent Shinfield West Primary School in Shinfield (South of the M4 SDL) (planned to open in 2019). Scheme development work has progressed in line with the SDL build out programme and planning consent has been awarded to the Matthews Green Primary School (North Wokingham SDL) and an application has been made for Planning Consent for the Arborfield Primary School (Arborfield SDL). Both the Matthew Green and Arborfield schemes are on programme to open in 2020.

Housebuilding and births

10. During the period of the last primary school places strategy residential development has recovered to the levels anticipated in the Core Strategy. This followed lower growth in the initial planning period for the Strategic Development Locations reflecting the past economic cycle. In the 3 year period leading up to the strategy (2013 to 2016) an average of 528 new homes per year were built in the borough. Given the number of new homes built in the period 2016 to 2018 and the number of homes in construction, it is expected that the average rate of development will be over 1,000 homes per annum for the 3 year period 2016 to 2019. Although the housing market is notoriously cyclical, the expectation is that the borough will continue to see the rate of development exceed 1,000 dwellings for the immediate future. This reflects the number of permissions held by developers and builders and the current level of activity. In the longer term delivery is likely to remain in the 950 to 1,000 homes per annum range, as expected.
11. However, the number of live births in years feeding Reception class admissions in the strategy period fell from 1,936 in 2011/12 (starting school in September 2016) to 1,769 in 2013/14 (starting school in September 2018). This was a fall of 170 children or 9%. The impact of this fall in birth numbers has more than offset the increased demand due to children moving into the area, and consequently in 2018 there were unused Reception class places in all 7 planning areas in the borough on offer day. The average for the next 3 years (2014 to 2017) is 1,836 (with a peak of 1,908 children in 2015/16) – any sustained increase in Reception rolls in the period 2019 to 2022 would be dependent on children moving into the area. The 2015/16 peak in the number of births (entering school in September 2020) largely reflects increases in Woodley and the South West – areas of significant house building but where birth numbers fell back in the subsequent year (2016/17).
12. The following table shows births by area since the peak years (2009 to 2012), with the South West and Woodley highlight. As can be seen Woodley represents the only significant challenge for 2020, as this is a single, very high birth number year.

	Born September 2011 to August 2012	Born September 2012 to August 2013	Born September 2013 to August 2014	Born September 2014 to August 2015	Born September 2015 to August 2016	Born September 2016 to August 2017
Area	Starting School September 2016	Starting School September 2017	Starting School September 2018	Starting School September 2019	Starting School September 2020	Starting School September 2021
Earley	342	326	282	286	293	286
North	234	267	208	225	228	210
South East	172	158	145	159	158	134
South West	331	280	298	289	312	301
Wokingham Town and Winnersh	506	518	483	513	511	521
Woodley	351	323	353	322	406	353
Total	1,936	1,872	1,769	1,794	1,908	1,805

13. In line with the adopted Core Strategy Local Plan most new homes up to 2026 will be constructed in one of the four adopted Strategic Development Locations. In the first three years of the strategy (2018 to 2021) it is expected that 3,777 new homes will be built in the borough.

14. The future need for additional school places is likely to be driven by families moving into the new homes in SDL areas. The detailed infrastructure programme which sites alongside the Strategic Development Locations, means that provision is already planned to accommodate this future demand.

Projecting Need

15. The strategy uses data from a number of sources including the projected rate of housing completions and national population and household projections to understand the potential make up of new families. This enables us to consider the likely impact of new housing on the demand for school places.

Analysis of Issues

16. The projection points to specific areas of need. Two of these (Wokingham Town / Winnersh and the South West) are in areas associated with proposed Strategic Development Location schools, where the detailed infrastructure plan already includes new schools, which have futureproofing for an additional form of entry each. The analysis supports the delivery of these schools on their current timetables – i.e. in 2020.

17. The third is Woodley, where approximately 600 homes have been built in the recent past and a further 300 are expected within the next three years. However, no further large-scale development is planned in the area and there is limited opportunity for significant development. Consequently the projected high level of demand (particularly in 2020) may reflect the short term impacts of the new homes, and in the long term demand may fall back to current levels (in an area where an additional 45 places per year / 315 places in total are being delivered through two expansion projects).

18. Unlike the Strategic Development Locations, there is currently no detailed infrastructure plan for Woodley. The strategy therefore proposes that a working party of key Woodley stakeholders is formed to consider the short, medium and long-term needs in the area and agree how to address them.
19. The analysis underpinning the strategy points to a considerable degree of uncertainty as to the number of children who will need primary school places in future. The number is very much dependent on the child yield of new housing. Whilst the location of most housing is known, the composition of households can only be estimated and therefore the demand for school places can only be looked at similarly. A flexible strategy, with contingency arrangements for both over and under-shooting projections, best addresses these uncertainties.

Indicative programme

Period	Woodley	South West (Arborfield)	South West (Shinfield)	Wokingham Town / Winnersh
Autumn / winter 2018	Stakeholder working party	Scheme tendered School organisation process starts	Scheme completed Sponsor recruitment starts	Scheme tendered Sponsor recruitment starts
Winter / Spring 2019	Proposals agreed	School partner appointed Construction underway	School partner appointed	School partner appointed Construction underway
Summer 2019	Scheme planning	Construction underway		Construction underway
September 2019			School opens	
Spring / Summer 2020	Delivery of 1 st phase scheme	School handed over		School handed over
September 2020	Bulge provision opens / 1 st phase of expansion	School opens		School opens

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£2,400K £30K	N/A Yes	Capital Revenue (DSG)

Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£16,684K £204K	Yes N/A	Capital Revenue (DSG)
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£9,217K £459K	Yes N/A	Capital Revenue (DSG)

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The capital funding for the Woodley provision will come from funds identified for the Aldryngton Primary School project, which is currently on hold, and does not form part of the works package proposed.

The spend is based on an assumption that initially the council will commit to a bulge class or classes with an expectation that if the evidence indicates a need for permanent expansion, the school will continue to grow.

The capital expenditure for the new SDL primary schools is managed through arrangements established for SDL infrastructure so is not identified above. It is though fully set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The relevant extract from the MTFP for 2018/19 is set out below. The programme requires some re-profiling of agreed schemes but can be contained within the overall allocation.

Provision will be made in the Dedicated Schools Grant Growth Fund for these schools for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 years at the appropriate time. The provisional amounts will include for 3 new SDL schools and 1 bulge class in this period.

The expected Growth fund budget for 19/20 is £800k, and it is unknown if the National Funding Formula will be implemented as proposed by the DfE in 2020/21. The Schools forum will need to approve and can reject the council proposals for the Growth fund in 2019-20 and (in view of the uncertainty around the National Funding Formula) it is unknown what the process will be beyond 2019-20. Therefore the following risks to the council's funding needs to be highlighted and are listed below:

Any spend on the Growth fund within or over the expected approved amount of £800k will need to be communicated to the Schools Forum for a decision. They can approve or reject a request to carry forward any overspend and, if agreed, fund it from the next year's budget (assuming there are sufficient funds). If it is rejected the spend will need to be funded from the General Fund.

In the event that the Schools Forum reduce or reject the council's Growth fund proposal the council can make an application to the Secretary of State to overrule their decision. It is likely that if the Growth Fund budget proposals exceed £800k, this application will be rejected.

The financial implication to the General fund could be 2019-20 £204k and in 2020-21 £459k (figures taken from the financial analysis in this report).

CAPITAL SERVICE BUDGETS				
Scheme description	Year 1 2018/19	Year 2 2019/20	Year 3 2020/21	Total of scheme
Basic Needs Primary Programme Extension/new build projects to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	3,122	1,641	5,715	10,478
Primary strategy - Aborfield Primary school New build project to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	500	1,000	8,000	9,500
Primary strategy - Highwood Primary school Extension project to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	475	0	0	475
Primary strategy - Loddon Primary school Extension project to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	475	0	0	475
Primary strategy - Montague Park Furniture and fittings for future years	56	37	34	127
Primary strategy- Shinfield west FFE Furniture and fittings for future years	44	44	44	132
Primary strategy - Spencer's Wood Primary School New build project to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	650	4,046	3,546	8,242
Primary strategy - Wheatfield Pri. Sch Furniture and fittings for future years	27	22	22	71
Primary strategy - Windmill Pri. Sch Furniture and fittings for future years	27	27	22	76
Primary strategy - East Park Farm Furniture and fittings for future years	27	27	27	81
Primary strategy - Matthews Green New build project to provide additional places throughout the Borough to meet need	1,200	8,200	4,046	13,446

Cross-Council Implications
The Arborfield SDL school will also include a new community use All Weather Pitch. The Matthews Green School project includes a community centre and has the potential to include a community use all weather pitch.

List of Background Papers
Primary School Planning Strategy 2016 to 2018
Draft new National Planning Policy Framework 2018

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