

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Borough Secondary School Places (11 to 16) Strategy</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Monday, 7 March 2022
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Children's Services - Graham Howe

**PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

To ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places to meet the Borough's needs until 2027/28

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive:

- 1) adopts the Wokingham Secondary School (11 to 16) Places Strategy 2022.
- 2) adopts the strategy and approves a multi-year programme of secondary expansion at Piggott, St Crispins and Emmbrook Schools, with other schools to be identified, with authority delegated to the Director of Children's Services and the Executive member for Children's Services to finalise agreements and the programme of works.
- 3) delegates any necessary authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Resources, acting in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the lead member for children's services, to approve the procurement of the construction works and services as relevant to the secondary expansion strategy, with post 16 strategy and works programmes to be the subject of a later report to the council's Executive.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places in the borough. Basic need grant from the DfE, CIL and S106 funding are available to enable the Council to invest in both maintained and Academy / Free Schools to ensure there are sufficient places.

Currently the number of Year 7 places required is expected to rise, due to the number of children coming through from the primary sector. However, Key Stage 2 rolls are greater than Key Stage 1 rolls and it is projected that demand for Year 7 places will fall from 2023/24 onwards, until the Year 7 intake has dropped back to 2021 levels by 2027/28. Additional places will be required in the short term because it is expected (based on 2021 outcomes) that there will be a need for additional places to ensure a gender

balanced allocation. Just under 500 additional year 7 places are expected to be required between 2022 and 2027/28.

It is planned to create additional capacity by expanding existing schools. At this point a new school is not being put forward as the number of places required is expected to drop back in time to current levels. Schools have already advised the Council that they do not have surplus capacity to enable additional pupils to be admitted, using the current premises. Nine out of ten schools are Academies or Free Schools and as such cannot be directed to expand by the Council in the way that maintained schools can. Any expansion must be made on a partnership basis, with the approval of the Trusts running each school.

In devising the action plan a number of factors had to be taken into account. This included the willingness of Trusts to expand their schools, the suitability of sites, the popularity of the school, and the school location relative to major residential growth areas. The action plan and strategy have been developed in consultation with the headteachers of the borough's secondary schools.

The original intention was to invest only for additional temporary premises to meet growth needs. However, schools made it clear that they could not take on additional children unless existing accommodation deficiencies were also addressed. Accordingly a more ambitious programme is now proposed. Delivery will be dependent upon agreement by the Trusts to investment programmes that can be delivered within the Council's resources.

It is proposed that three schools are grown to be able (in the long term) to offer in the order of 200 (11 to 18) places each. These are the Piggott Secondary School, St Crispins School, and the Emmbrook Schools, with additional places possibly being required at other schools.

These proposals are in line with public responses to the 11 to 16 Secondary Strategy consultation in Autumn 2021.

## BACKGROUND

The Council has statutory duties to ensure there are sufficient school (11 to 16) and post 16 places. It receives capital grant funding (known as Basic Need funding) from the DfE to facilitate any growth required in provision for children of statutory school age (to age 16). Although the place sufficiency duty only applies to Wokingham resident children the Council has no power to restrict admission to Wokingham schools to Wokingham residents, so must ensure that sufficient capacity is available for non-Wokingham residents who are reasonably expected to be entitled to places at schools in the borough.

Basic Need funding is to enable investment in both maintained and Academy / Free Schools to ensure there are sufficient secondary school places for statutory school age children. Both statutory school age and post 16 places can be funded from other funding held by the Council, including CIL and S106 monies.

The number of children who will require Year 7 places is projected to increase until 2023/24, due to high numbers of children in Wokingham Key Stage 2 primary and junior school classes who will require secondary school places from September 2022 onwards. Although Key Stage 2 numbers are high, the number of children in Key Stage 1 primary and infant school classes is falling. Currently (October 2021) there are 2,347 and 2,349 Year 5 and Year 6 pupils (Key Stage 2) compared to 2,108 and 2,174 Reception and Year 1 pupils (Key Stage 1). Consequently, after an initial period of growth (peaking over the period 2023 to 2025) the number of children entering secondary school is projected to fall back to the 2021 level by 2028 (see the following table).

	<b>2021 /22</b>	<b>2022 /23</b>	<b>2023 /24</b>	<b>2024 /25</b>	<b>2025 /26</b>	<b>2026 /27</b>	<b>2027 /28</b>	<b>2028 /29</b>
<b>Year 7 places</b>	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176
<b>Year 7 projection</b>	2,159	2,242	2,298	2,265	2,219	2,166	2,268	2,167
<b>Year 7 additional capacity requirement</b>	90	75						
<b>Total Need</b>	2,249	2,242	2,298	2,265	2,219	2,166	2,268	2,167
<b>Year 7 Need Versus Places</b>	-73	-141	-122	-89	-43	10	-92	9
<b>11 to 16 places</b>	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865
<b>11 to 16 projection</b>	10,124	10,542	10,938	11,169	11,372	11,382	11,404	11,267
<b>11 to 16 additional capacity requirement</b>	390	225	150	75	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Need</b>	10,514	10,767	11,088	11,244	11,372	11,382	11,404	11,267

<b>11 to 16 Need Versus Places</b>	351	98	-223	-379	-507	-517	-539	-402
------------------------------------	-----	----	------	------	------	------	------	------

In addition to the rising number of children coming through from primary schools, it is expected, from the 2021 admissions round outcomes, that there will be a need for additional capacity to ensure a gender balanced allocation at least in 2022/23. This will be achieved through additional places at co-educational schools. In 2021 additional places were agreed at a number of co-educational schools to ensure all girls without a preferred school allocation could be offered a place. To comply with education law, the additional places had to be offered in accordance with each school's ranked applicant list. Additional allocations were therefore made to children of both genders. By September 2021 the total number of allocations and the number of places available before additional places were agreed were, effectively, in balance.

The analysis is done on the basis that the need to take specific measures to ensure a gender balanced allocation will have ended from 2023/24.

In total (taking account of both rising numbers and Year 7 places that cannot be filled) the analysis indicates that between 2022/23 and 2027/28 just under 500 additional Year 7 places will be required.

## **BUSINESS CASE**

The options for creating additional places are (a) agreeing additional offers with schools in their current buildings, (b) building additional capacity at current schools or (c) opening a new school. However, secondary schools have advised the Council that they cannot offer over their Published Admission Number (PAN) in 2022, without additional capacity. This rules out option (a), offers to schools using existing capacity. Option C (a new school) is not a preferred option because the projected increase is what is known as a "bulge", with place needs rising before falling back towards current levels. This would be an expensive option and challenging to deliver in an appropriate timescale. This leaves Option B, the creation of additional capacity at existing schools.

Therefore, officers have been working with schools to both explore options for the creation of additional places and to write the new secondary places strategy and action plan. The purpose of this report is to endorse both the strategy and the action plan.

The proposals will help address two issues that were raised by residents, namely the lack of sufficient places in schools within walking distance of homes on the south-east edge of Wokingham Town and of the southern edge of Twyford.

Nine of the ten Wokingham secondary schools are now Academies / Free Schools. Places can only be created at these schools with the express agreement of the school's governing Trust. They can only be directed to take additional children in very limited circumstances, and only by the Secretary of State for Education. They set their own admissions arrangements, including the number of places available for allocation. In doing this their primary responsibility is to the education of children on their roll. As important and independent institutions with key responsibilities for the education of the Borough's children they are the Council's most important partners when agreeing action plans to ensure there are sufficient places.

The action plan takes account of a number of factors. As noted above, it is based on discussions with schools that are willing to enter into agreements with the council to offer additional places. The proposed programme takes account of a range of factors including:

- The ability and willingness of Trusts to support school expansion: Some sites are already at the limits of development, and some Trusts take the view that their schools are already at an optimum size.
- The popularity of a school. A school that is oversubscribed will fill from its local area and is likely to retain these children, reducing roll churn (which is detrimental to school standards). A school that may not be able to offer all additional places as preference offers may still be useful, if it is sufficiently accessible (with good walking, cycling and public transport routes to the school from the homes of children offered the school because they cannot be offered a preferred school).
- The accessibility of the school from areas of greatest immediate need.
- The future need for school places locally. Schools in close proximity to ongoing major housing developments are likely to see sustained future demand.
- Each school's state of readiness for expansion. For example, there is a presumption against expanding schools with an Ofsted rating below the level of "Good".
- The need to ensure that projects offer good value for money.

Initial discussions with schools focused on the provision of high-quality temporary accommodation to meet the needs created by growth. However, schools and their Trusts made it clear that in order to be able to offer a good or better education to these additional children, pre-existing accommodation deficits would need to be rectified and appropriate accommodation provided for the full number of children expected to be on roll. This has necessarily led to an increase in the extent of the envisaged works and the budget required.

Having taken these factors into account the Council intends to pursue options for significant expansion (in effect, for the long term, creating a potential for each school to offer up to an additional form of entry, offering 1,500 places, with an admission number of 240) at:

- The Piggott School
- St Crispins School
- The Emmbrook School

An additional 60 places are projected to be required, to be delivered at other schools in the programme to 2027/28.

### **Revenue Costs**

The Revenue costs of school expansion would be met from the DSG Growth Fund.

### **Capital Spend Profile**

The schemes are still in development, but the current spend profile (as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23) is:

Commitment and spend profile	Spend profile	MTFP
21/22 FY	£150K	MTFP 2021/22
22/23 FY	£2.1M	MTFP 2022/23
23/24 FY	£4.5M	MTFP 2022/23
24/25 FY	£6.5M	MTFP 2022/23
25/26 FY	£4.5M	Future MTFP
26/27 FY	£5M	Future MTFP
27/28 FY	£4.25M	Future MTFP
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27M</b>	

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£100K	Yes	Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£2.1M	Yes	Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£4.5M	Yes	Capital

### Other Financial Information

There is adequate provision in the 2022/23 Growth Fund to support these proposals.

### Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

Statutory process with a formal Notice in a local newspaper, on line information and involvement of local stakeholders, likely to be conducted by schools, to support long term growth plans.

Initial statement of needs has been the subject of extensive consultation, with schools and the public.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Equalities Impact Assessment to be completed

### Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

This would investment programme would support the council's climate emergency programme, by enabling additional children to travel to school by sustainable modes of travel, and by increasing the proportion of the school building stock that has a low carbon footprint through enhanced insulation and low carbon source heating systems.

### List of Background Papers

None

<b>Contact</b> Piers Brunning	<b>Service</b> Learning Achievement and Partnerships
<b>Telephone</b> Tel: 0118 974 6084	<b>Email</b> piers.brunning@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank