

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Improving Lives Select Commission
2.	Date:	24th October 2012
3.	Title:	CYPS Capital Projects Team and School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment Service report on school place planning
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

Pupil numbers are increasing within the Borough and creating a shortage of places available in certain areas. There is increasing pressure on school places due to the numbers of pupils and it is necessary to increase the number of school places available to meet demand. This report outlines the recent and future projects being undertaken to increase place availability within the Borough.

6. Recommendation:

That the content of the Report be received as an overview of the current position and future direction of travel.

7. Proposals and Details

Pupil numbers are increasing in the Borough, currently at the Primary stage and there is increasing pressure on school places in certain areas of the Borough.

School Organisation

- The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to maintained schools) (England) Regulations 2007 and the DfE's Guidance 'Expanding a maintained mainstream school by enlargement or adding a 6th Form' states that it is the LA's duty to ensure there are sufficient school places, promote diversity and increase parental choice. There should be a system where all parents feel they have the same opportunities to apply for the schools they want for their child. The aim is to provide quality provision for all children that is responsive to the needs of parents and children.
- DfE advise that proposals to expand successful and popular schools should be approved. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring schools should not in itself be sufficient to prevent expansion.
- Given the limited amount of Basic Need funds available, modular buildings are considered to be the most efficient approach to providing quality, affordable additional capacity within schools
- A number of consultations have been completed, a number of consultations are in progress and further consultations are planned during 2012/13

The presentation to the Commission provides details of work carried out / planned to provide additional school places.

Admissions

Number of applications processed annually

Transfer groups:

- Primary: 3,500 (FS2) / 500 (Y2/3)
- Secondary: 3,000 (Y6/7)
- TOTAL = 7,000

In Year Transfers: 2011/12

- Primary: 2,681
- Secondary: 850
- TOTAL = 3,531

CUMULATIVE TOTAL = 10,531

53 Schools are full or over subscribed in FS2 for the academic year 2012/13

8. Finance

The capital cost of the building projects is currently met from 'Basic Need' funding allocated to the Authority from the DfE. Basic needs funding is provided for the provision of sufficient school places.

Section 106 agreements are also in place for future developments and this funding requested for the provision of school places will be utilised to contribute to the provision of school places in future projects where applicable. Section 106 agreements are contracted to be activated at set points eg at 50% completion of a development etc.

In some cases there is also a need to request allocations from the Rotherham Schools' Forum to provide interim financial support to schools that have been expanded to bridge the gap between 1st September to 31st March as funding is allocated to schools following census day and additional pupils are not on roll for that financial year.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could influence pupil numbers at other schools. LAs are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the forward planning and provision of school places is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. It is likely that the expansion would enable more parents to access their first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Details of the work being carried out to ensure that there are sufficient school places are detailed in the presentation.

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