



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL PLACES PLAN 2011-2015: CONSULTATION

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

This draft decision notice sets out the recommended response to Hampshire County Council's (HCC) consultation on its draft School Places Plan 2011-2015. The consultation closes on 31 March 2012. The consultation document can be viewed at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/draft-spp-2011.pdf>

Hampshire County Council produces a School Places Plan annually, which considers the projected need for school places across the County in response to forecasted changes in population and the capacity of existing and proposed schools. The City Council has been consulted on the 2011-15 School Places Plan and comments are invited by 31 March 2012, after which the County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services will consider and approve the Plan.

The Plan acknowledges that there is existing pressure on primary school places in Winchester Town from an increased birth rate, in-migration and additional housing development. Extra capacity will therefore be needed within the Town. Further provision is also required to meet the needs of major developments, which for Winchester District are currently the three Strategic Allocations set out in the emerging Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy. Provision for Winchester North

and North Whiteley has not yet been finally agreed, but the following provision is currently suggested:-

Winchester North	West of Waterlooville	North Whiteley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-school facilities • new primary school • an extension to the existing secondary school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-school facilities and • land for 2 new primary schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-school provision • 2 new primary schools • secondary school with provision to meet existing need as well as additional demand from new development.

Other large developments, and the cumulative impact of several small developments in some areas, may require additional places at existing primary schools.

Since the publication of the School Places Plan HCC issued a [press release on 20 Feb 2012](#), stating that they are considering the provision of a new 2 form entry primary school at Westgate School, Winchester to start taking pupils from 2014. This would still require some expansion of other schools, but to a much lesser extent than the alternative which is to provide the additional places needed in the established primary schools in Winchester.

HCC has announced that its Portfolio Holder will formally consider the option and decide whether to consult on the decision on 23 March 2012 (papers will be available to read online by 16 March 2012). These detailed proposals are not part of the draft School Places Plan. The comments which it is recommended be made on the School Places Plan (see Appendix 1) have been sent to HCC as an officer 'holding' response, so that they are available to the Portfolio Holder by 23 March.

The School Places Plan is used to substantiate contribution requirements from new development. The level of contribution is set out in:- "Developers' Contributions towards Children's Services Facilities". This document is not out for consultation, but provides useful additional information and can be viewed at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/developers-contributions-december-2011.pdf>.

Education contributions are currently secured through Section 106 agreements with developers but this will change when Winchester City Council adopts a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (expected by September 2013). At this time, Winchester City Council will become the charging authority responsible for collecting and pooling funding. This will mean that S106 can no longer be sought for general education provision (although it is likely to continue to be used for on-site provision in major developments), and contributions for general school place provision will need to be collected through the City Council's CIL. The Council's CIL will be based on a balance between the facilities needing funding and development viability and, once collected, it will not be earmarked for specific infrastructure/facilities. There will be competing priorities for CIL funding, which will mean that the funding may not necessarily go towards school places. These issues will need to be explored through the development of the Council's CIL.

DECISION

1. That the Council responds to the consultation on the draft 2011-2015 Hampshire School Places Plan with the comments set out at Appendix 1.
2. That the Council welcomes the County Council's decision to consult on the provision of a new primary school within Winchester Town and urges that this be undertaken promptly to enable a rapid decision. The outcome of the decision should if possible be included in the School Places Plan.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Background

The School Places Plan (SPP) sets out how school provision will be made across the County in response to forecasted changes in population. Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory duty to plan the provision of school places. This is mainly driven by forecasts of pupil numbers changing in response to population movements and birth rate variations.

A drop in numbers can lead to a reduction in school provision through reduced admission or decreased school provision. However, not all unfilled places in a school are surplus places; some capacity is needed to allow for differences in the size of individual cohorts and some parental choice. HCC monitors school places across Hampshire and considers that a school is full when it has less than 5% of its places unfilled.

Additional numbers of pupils may lead to the creation of a new school or the expansion of existing schools by adding permanent or temporary accommodation; a number of schools have been expanded in recent years in response to rising demand for places.

In 2010, the Academies Bill was introduced which enabled local communities to set up 'free schools' and 'academies'. HCC has adopted a neutral stance with regard to academies and maintains productive working relationships with them in the best interests of Hampshire children.

Planning for School Provision

The SPP sets out how and when new school provision needs to be made. HCC principally base their forecasts of the demand for school places on the number of spare reception places (or junior places for junior schools) in an area against the number of children that are seeking to start school. They use trends in birth rate, in-migration and new development to forecast and plan for changes in demand for school places, taking factors such as parental choice into consideration¹.

¹ although most parents will seek local school places they can apply for schools that may not be in their own borough/district or county, or choose independent schooling. This can lead to some schools becoming over subscribed; giving the impression that there is a shortage of school places in this area. However this may not necessarily be the case.

On average, 92% of pupils living in Winchester Town take up places at maintained primary schools, the remainder attend schools elsewhere. The SPP predicts that this percentage is expected to increase in the current economy. In addition to this, an increase in birth rate and in-migration has been forecast for the next 10 years.

There will also be substantial housing development in the District. The Council's emerging Core Strategy provides for an additional 11,000 dwellings within the District to 2031. Approximately 7,500 of this will be delivered through 3 Strategic Allocations: - Winchester North, North Whiteley and West of Waterlooville. These are major developments which will increase the local population to the extent that new schools will need to be provided on-site by the developer/landowner. HCC expect that any new school sites required to meet the needs of these major developments should be provided, free of charge, by developers and a financial contribution made to meet the cost of the additional school accommodation. Where sites are also providing for a shortfall in existing education provision, then a proportion of funding will be provided by HCC.

Meeting Demand

The trend of increasing birth rate in Winchester Town, alongside in-migration and additional housing development, has increased the pressure on primary school places in Winchester Town and extra capacity will be required. Additional capacity has been provided at St Bede and Weeke Primary Schools and some schools have agreed to admit above their Published Admission Numbers pending a longer-term plan to provide additional places in the Town.

In addition, further provision will be required for the Strategic Allocations. Development at Winchester North is expected to provide pre-school facilities, a new primary school and an extension to the existing secondary school. Development at West of Waterlooville will provide pre-school facilities and land for 2 new primary schools. Evolving plans for North Whiteley suggest a requirement for pre-school provision, 2 new primary schools and a secondary school, which provides an opportunity to meet existing need as well as the additional demand from new development.

Other large developments, and the cumulative impact of several small developments in some areas, may require the provision of additional accommodation at primary schools; HCC propose that this will be assessed when firm proposals are made. However, it is recommended that the City Council should urge that the requirement for new primary school provision in Winchester Town should be clarified and information on how this could be provided (funding availability, site availability) should be included within the SPP. The County Council have recently announced that they are considering the provision of an additional 2 form entry primary school at Westgate School. The County decided on the 23 March that a consultation on this option will be taken forward.

Winchester Town is a net importer of secondary school pupils. The draft SPP forecasts that for the immediate future, it will not be necessary to provide any additional secondary school places as changes in pupil numbers are likely to be managed within existing secondary school capacity by reducing the availability of places for out of catchment admissions. However, in the longer term, additional capacity may be required to cater for further housing development after 2016 and the development at North Whiteley provides an opportunity to look at the provision of secondary schooling in this area.

The City Council has commented in the past that the School Places Plans are not sufficiently definitive about what is needed and that they fail to plan ahead adequately. Unfortunately the problems with education provision in Whiteley and Winchester are now such that these shortcomings are all too apparent. Even so, the SPP still does not contain a 'plan' to resolve these issues and even where suggestions are put forward they are vague and tentative. With major developments planned in both locations, which could potentially secure substantial new education provision, the SPP needs to be expressed as a definitive plan so that negotiations with prospective developers can be based on it.

The problems with primary provision in Winchester have been drawn to the County Council's attention over several years, although the SPP omits a clear plan as to how they will be resolved. Recent statements from the County demonstrate that they are considering the extension of various schools and the provision of a new primary school site (over and above proposed provision at Barton Farm). The strategy for improved provision needs to be clarified and set out urgently so that the City Council can work with the County Council to help deliver it.

It is recommended that the City Council should comment that the SPP should include a firm commitment to the provision of improved primary education facilities in Winchester and a secondary school at North Whiteley to support the proposed strategic allocations and meet existing demand in the area. It is also recommended that following the decision to consult on the development of a new primary school at Westgate School (made on the 23 March) the resulting strategy should, if the timing allows, be included in the final SPP. Without a clear and firm strategy in the SPP the City Council is unclear as to how best to help improve provision and the ability to negotiate essential education provision in association with development may be undermined.

Funding Education Provision

HCC asks local planning authorities to seek contributions through Section 106 agreements between the City Council and developers for development in areas where the School Places Plan demonstrates that the development will create a shortfall in school places. The contribution requirements are set out in a separate document: - Developers' Contributions towards Children's Services Facilities.

The Council is seeking to adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) by September 2013, at which time it will become the charging authority responsible for collecting and pooling CIL funding. This will also mean that S106 can no longer be sought for general education provision, although it is likely to continue to be used to

deliver on-site provision on major developments (such as at North Whiteley and Barton Farm). Other contributions will need to be collected through the Council's CIL and the City Council will decide how the funds it receives are distributed between potentially competing infrastructure and service providers.

The Council's CIL will be a balance between the facilities needing funding and development viability. Once collected, CIL is not earmarked for specific infrastructure/facilities and there will be competing priorities for CIL funding, which will mean that the funding may not necessarily go towards school places. These issues will need to be explored through the development of the Council's CIL.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None directly as a result of this consultation. The development of a CIL Charging Schedule is likely to require additional work to assess viability of development within the District and set an appropriate levy. Provision is made within the Council's budget for this work.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

With the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

The report and resulting decision were been corrected and updated to reflect the County Council's decision on 23 March to consult on the option of a new primary school at Westgate School, Winchester.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 29.03.12

Councillor Robert Humby – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement

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Dear Ian

Hampshire County Council School Places Plan 2011-2015

Thank you for the opportunity to view the draft Hampshire County Council School Places Plan 2011-2015. We wish to make the following comments on the draft Plan:-

1. The School Places Plan (SPP) should include a firm commitment to the provision of improved primary education facilities in Winchester and a secondary school at North Whiteley to support the proposed strategic allocations and meet existing demand in the area.
2. The County Council's decision to consult on the option to develop a new primary school at Westgate School (made on the 23 March) is welcomed and the resulting strategy following this consultation should be decided as soon as possible and, if the timing allows, be included in the final SPP.

Reason:

Without a clear and firm strategy in the SPP the City Council is unclear as to how best to help improve provision and the ability to negotiate essential education provision in association with development may be undermined.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Opacic
Head of Strategic Planning