

# **North Somerset Council**

## **REPORT TO THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL**

**DATE OF MEETING: THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: UPDATE ON PROGRESS TO-DATE IN DELIVERING THE EDUCATION COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2018 - 2021**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: SHEILA SMITH, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

**REASON: THE REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To receive and comment on the progress made to-date in delivering the projects listed in the Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2018 - 2021

#### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy is the Council's Education Delivery Plan. It sets out how the Council will work with existing and new partners to commission and deliver the right numbers of school and pre-school places in the right locations to meet Basic Need. This report reviews and provides a summary update of the school-place with actions recommended in the latest plan 2018 – 2021.
- 1.2 The latest Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2018 – 2021 was approved by the Executive on 4 September 2018 and is available for review at <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Education-Provision-in-North-Somerset-a-commissioning-strategy.pdf>

#### **2. POLICY**

- 1.2 Whilst there is no statutory duty on Council's to consult and publish their pupil place strategies, the Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy ~ 2018 – 2021 was produced and approved following consultation to enable the needs of the district to be strategically planned. The Council aspires to meet the school and pre-school place needs and to act in the interest of local children and young people.

### 3. DETAILS

3.1 For the 2019/20 school year, to date there have been enough school places to meet the needs for all children that require a mainstream primary or secondary school allocation.

There are also sufficient numbers of early years places for all those requiring pre-school provision.

3.2 The national offer dates for new school places from September 2020 are 1 March 2020 for secondary places (Year 7) and 15 April 2020 for primary-phase places (Reception and Year 3 in junior schools). The latest published numbers of pupils securing a preference school place on National Offer Day were as follows, noting that the figures for 2020/21 allocations will not be available until after September 2020:

For all preferences (home authority and outside of the area applications)								
	North Somerset 1 <sup>st</sup> Preference %		North Somerset one of preferred preferences %		England benchmark – 1 <sup>st</sup> preference %		England benchmark – one of 3 preference %	
Year	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2017/18	92.8	92.3	98.5	98.6	90	83.5	97.2	96.1
2018/19	93.9	92.7	98.7	98.4	91	82.1	97.7	93.8
2019/20	93.47	94.99	99.04	99.39	90.6	80.9	97.5	93

Source: [DfE Statistics: School Applications](#)

At local authority level for secondary places, for home authority residents Northumberland (98.4%), North Somerset (96.9%) and Central Bedfordshire (96.7%) achieved the three best first preference rates in 2019.

For primary-place allocations Redcar & Cleveland (98.4%), Northumberland (98.2%) and Hartlepool (97.5%) achieved the best first preference rates in 2019. All these authorities are in the North East region.

3.3 As at January 2020, of the 78 schools in North Somerset, 61 are academies. This is an increase of two from January 2019.

3.4 The strategy lists the actions to be progressed within each school place planning cluster area. These, together with the progress made for the Specialist and Alternative Provision Review, are listed in appendix 1 – attached.

### 4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The Education Provision in North Somerset ~ Commissioning Strategies were shared with the Children & Young Peoples Services (CYPS) School Organisation Scrutiny Steering Group, internal officer groups and the following external bodies prior to public consultation:

- Secondary Heads of North Somerset (SHINS)
- Primary Heads of North Somerset (PHANS)

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Group (SENDS)
- Education Excellence Partnership Board (EEPB)

Once reviewed, an updated draft Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy is published on e.consult and made available to the following groups:

- Schools/Partners/Governors (including parent governors)
- Members via the CYPS Policy and Scrutiny Panel and members Briefing Sheet
- Strategic Schools Forum
- Primary Heads' Association of North Somerset/Secondary Heads in North Somerset/ Heads' Association of North Somerset/Special Heads of North Somerset/School Cluster Groups
- The Education Excellence Partnership Board
- Heads and Chairs Briefing Forum
- Governors Association of North Somerset (GANS)
- Regional Schools' Commissioner
- Council's Corporate Management Team
- D&E Directorate's SLT
- Diocese of Bath and Wells, Diocese of Clifton and the Methodist Group
- Academy Partners via their MAT Trust Boards
- Early Years Partners
- Springboard
- Local Further and Higher Education Partners
- All members of the public and other stakeholders via e.consult
- Town and Parish Councils

When forming the 2018 – 2021 strategy, public information events were advertised and attended by schools, governors and other stakeholders.

4.2 The Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2018 – 2021 was approved for use by the Executive on 4 September 2018.

4.3 During the strategy period, the outcomes were submitted for review to the School Organisation Scrutiny Steering Group and to this committee as required.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 All capital expenditure resulting from this plan are subject to approval in accordance with the appropriate Financial Regulations.

### **Costs**

5.2 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the creation of the plan.

### **Funding – Capital**

- 5.3 The delivery of new school places is dependent on the provision of sufficient land and capital allocations appropriate to new place needs. Securing new school sites of sufficient size for a proposed new school and clear of physical constraints is complex.
- 5.4 The capital funds needed to progress all schemes contained within the commissioning strategy are not always in place. Officers continue to work to secure capital allocations from developers and through external funding sources as available.
- 5.5 Capital allocations come to the Council from a range of sources including: Basic Need; s106 contributions/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Free School Bids. The Department for Education (DfE) may also allocate bespoke funding for priority areas as national priorities dictate.
- 5.6 Basic Need Capital Allocations between 2011/12 – 2019/20 have totalled £63,268,316. The DfE Scorecards - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-school-places-scorecards-2018> provide a national and local snapshot of school places and the progress council's make towards ensuring there are sufficient at least good school places in each local authority areas across England.

Nationally across the primary sector there is a need for 45,600 new places by the 2020/21 school year with a growth from 2009/10 to 2020/21 predicted to be of 20%. There are 9.3% spare places across England. The cost for each new permanent expansion place averages at £16,596, £7,878 for temporary expansions and £19,611 for each new school places.

In North Somerset across the primary sector there is a need for 110 new places by the 2020/21 school year with a growth from 2009/10 to 2020/21 predicted to be of 14%. There are 11.8% spare places across the district. The cost for each new permanent expansion place locally averages at £14,346, £9,675 for temporary expansions. No new schools were complete at the time of the last scorecard submission. The % of new places created in good or outstanding schools nationally was 86%. Within North Somerset it was 100%, ranking us 1/136.

The secondary sector nationally predicts a need for 42,560 new places with a growth from 2009/10 to 2020/21 of 16%. There is estimated to be 11% spare places. The cost for each new permanent expansion place averages at £22,738, £8,889 for temporary expansions and £23,962 for each new school places.

North Somerset predicts a need for 190 new places with a growth from 2009/10 to 2020/21 of 7%. There is estimated to be 9.2% spare places. There were no new places secured during the last published accounting period.

- 5.7 The Council has reported £47,450,271 of spend with £15,818.145 of funding remaining to the DfE. This accounted for 1,498 primary and 480 secondary places to August 2018. The basic need allocation for 2020/21 is £0.

The Council is progressing 420 new permanent primary school places at Parklands Educate Together Primary School (to be available from June 2020, although the school opened in temporary accommodation in September 2018) and 210 new primary school places at Chestnut Park Primary School (funding agreement permitting).

18 new infant-phase places have been approved at Westhaven Special School from September 2019 and 10 places at a specialist hub for pupils with Autism will open at Nailsea School in September 2020.

The Council worked with Gordano Secondary and Priory Community School ~ An Academy who both increased their intakes by 28 and 44 pupils per cohort respectively (140 plus 6<sup>th</sup> form increases in Portishead and 220 places in Weston super Mare) from September 2018. Both schools also took breach classes of 30 pupils into their Year 7 cohorts in September 2019.

Whilst the North Somerset Enterprise Technology College (NSETC) closed in July 2019 with the loss of 300 years 10 and 11 plus 6<sup>th</sup> form places, Winterstoke Hundred Academy will open in September 2020. It will offer 150 places per each of years 7 – 11 cohorts (750 places) plus a 6<sup>th</sup> form of 200 pupils. The school will grow incrementally taking years 7 and 12 pupils from September 2020, with a whole school intake of up to 950 students by September 2024.

Whilst outside of this strategy period, the Council was successful in a recent Homes Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid. This included securing c£30m to deliver new secondary school places in Weston super Mare from September 2024 at the latest.

## **Funding – Revenue**

- 5.8 Schools core revenue funding is distributed through the national Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is split into 4 blocks: the schools block, the high needs block, the early years block and the central services block. There are restrictions about how much funding can be moved from the Schools Block, and the Department for Education has recently restricted North Somerset's movement from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to c. £650k (or 0.5% of the Schools Block for 2020/21).
- 5.9 As indicated in 5.8 above, funding for maintained special schools comes from the High Needs Block of the DSG. This funding stream is experiencing unprecedented levels of increasing demand, driven by significant increases in the number of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) who require specialist provision. In the current year, this has manifested itself, for example, in a 30%+ increase in estimated spending on placements in independent non-maintained special schools. At this stage, the DSG deficit is expected to reach at least £4m by the end of this financial year. Whilst some additional funding has been provided by the Department for Education, it is not expected this will be sufficient to offset increases in demand and the reduction in the amount of funding that will be transferred from the Schools Block of the DSG.

The need for additional local provision is proven, and financial modelling indicates that providing local places in maintained special schools is much more cost effective than provision in independent non-maintained special schools. In addition, it is likely that there will be some transport cost reductions, although the extent of these will be dependent on individual children.

## **6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 sets out how Local Authorities should exercise their statutory duties to secure primary and secondary education to meet the needs of the population in their area. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 enhanced the role of Local Authorities, making them strategic commissioners of services with a mandate to promote high standards for all and greater choice and diversity.

- 6.2 The Education Act (EA) 1996 Section 14A, added by Section 3 of Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 requires Local authorities to consider and respond appropriately to parental representations about school provision in relation to local authorities' functions under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996. Local Authorities must reasonably consider parental representations regarding the provision of schools and respond accordingly, including outlining any proposed action or, where it is considered action is not needed, to explain the reasons for this.
- 6.3 The Education Act 2011 maintains the role of Local Authorities as the strategic commissioner of services but provides greater autonomy of education provision by the encouragement of the establishment of academies, free schools, studio schools and Enterprise Colleges that are independent of the Local Authority. The Act gives Local Authorities '*a critical new role as strengthened champions of choice, securing a wide range of education options for parents and families, ensuring there are sufficient high-quality school places, co-ordinating fair admissions, promoting social justice by supporting vulnerable children, and challenging schools which fail to improve.*'
- 6.4 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Sections 6A, 7, 9, 10 and 11, amended by Education Act 2011 section 37 and the secondary legislation - The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 provides guidance on the statutory process local authorities must follow when considering inviting proposals / considering proposals to establish new schools. This legislation requires local authorities to give precedence to academy proposals when they consider there is a need for a new school in their area.
- 6.5 The Childcare Act 2016, section 2 allows the Secretary of State for Education to discharge his duty to secure free childcare for qualifying pupils on English local authorities. A failure to provide pre-school places means the Council would be in breach of this duty.
- 6.6 There is a current Government expectation that within the schools' system, academy status will become the norm, although a requirement for all schools to become an academy is no longer being progressed. Where there is a need for a new school, the first choice will be a new academy or free school.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council works to the principle of 'local schools for local children', encouraging all those who are able to walk to school where practicable. On occasions this may necessitate the creation of new schools in areas of residential growth, even when schools in the same school planning cluster(s) may have vacancies.
- 7.2 New school builds will have due regard to the planning guidelines for sustainability. This includes incorporating sustainable options into delivery plans where practicable and affordable within the budgets available.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 There was no requirement to produce a strategic school place delivery plan between the period 2018 - 2021. It is important, however, that the strategic plans and commissioning strategies the Council wishes to pursue in relation to its education

provision planning should be shared with schools and other partners. By consulting on proposed strategies, the risk of not providing the right forms of education in the future is mitigated.

- 8.2 In expanding schools, the Council must be mindful not to compromise the facilities available to pupils prior to expansion. This is to ensure that the accommodation available to pupils is not unduly affected and that infrastructure upgrades such as utilities and adequate group spaces are appropriate to the future needs of the school after development. Such changes require significant capital resources. In considering the needs of existing and new pupils, in some cases the cost of changes per pupil for new provision will exceed the national benchmarking average costs.
- 8.3 There is a risk that the capital funds needed to progress all the schemes contained within the commissioning strategy will not be found. Officers work to secure capital allocations from developers and through external funding sources as available to ensure that, as much as reasonably possible, places are provided to meet the area's needs.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

[Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes/No] No

- 9.1 The strategies within the Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2015 – 2018 document considered the need within North Somerset to providing genuine learning experiences for **all** children and young people 0 – 25 (pre-schools; schools/academies/post- 16/vulnerable learners).

Individual EIAs are undertaken for projects at the time of implementation.

## **10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2018 – 2021 is the People and Communities policy base for schools and pre-school strategic place decisions. The Council has a duty to undertake a review of provision to ensure that the best possible long-term educational outcomes can be achieved for children and young people and that local resources are used effectively across the whole district.

## **11. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 To not have plan and rely on meeting reactive needs across the district.

## **AUTHOR**

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## **APPENDICES**

See Appendix 1

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2018 – 2021 - <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Education-Provision-in-North-Somerset-a-commissioning-strategy.pdf>
- Executive Committee Meeting on 4 September 2018 - <http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc29015.pdf>