

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 9 November 2021

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Draft School Place Planning Strategy 2022-25

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

As the education authority for Lancashire, the County Council has a range of statutory duties to fulfil. Our ambition to provide good access, quality and outcomes in education are set out in the Lancashire Education Strategy 2022-2025 which is also being considered at this meeting.

The School Planning Strategy 2022-25 delivers on this ambition with the aim to provide 'the right number of school places, in the right areas, at the right time to meet need'. It sets out a series of priorities for improvement, areas of growth and reduction in the need for school places, and areas for future action.

The draft School Planning Strategy (attached at Appendix 'A') is due to be presented at a future meeting of Cabinet.

Recommendation

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider and discuss the draft strategy as set out at Appendix A.
- ii. Discuss and agree any further recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.

Background

There are 628 schools in Lancashire of which 482 are primaries and 82 are secondaries which provide mainstream school places across the county. This strategy is primarily concerned with ensuring that there are enough places available at these schools, identifying where more are needed, and where in some cases a planned reduction in places is necessary.

As at October 2021, there are 175,701 pupils attending Lancashire schools of which 101,399 attend primary schools and 67,694 attend a secondary school. At a population level, we know that:

- birth rates have fallen 6.5% over the last 5 years, and 9% over the last 10 years
- higher number of pupils are moving into secondary phase, which is creating pressure on places
- there are pockets of growth in primary planning areas, mainly led by housing development and in some areas by inward migration
- we have an emerging challenge of surplus places as primary numbers in some areas reduce

Whilst, we perform well overall in meeting the need for school places, we know that in some areas of the county we need to develop a more innovative approach to make sure there are enough places available in a shorter time to respond effectively to growth in pupil numbers. This is reflected in the strategy as priorities for improvement in our approach and will require closer collaboration with our school partners, other responsible bodies and governing bodies to meet the need for places.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Financial

This strategy should be considered alongside the capital strategy for schools which is reviewed annually.

Legal

This strategy supports the County Council's statutory duty to provide good access, quality and outcomes in education through the provision of sufficient, good quality school places.

Equality and Cohesion

This strategy aims to:

- provide sufficient school places for every child in Lancashire who wants one
- promote high educational standards
- provide fair access and equal opportunity
- promote the fulfilment of every child's potential
- promote diversity in provision

- expand popular and successful schools, and
- increase opportunity for parents and carers to access schools of their choice

Property Asset Management

This strategy supports delivery of the Asset Management Strategy (Property) through adherence to good estate management guidelines set out by the Department for Education.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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NA

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A