

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE EDUCATION ORGANISATION PLAN**

**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012

**From:** Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children and Young People's Services

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** N/a **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** To seek Cabinet's approval of the Education Organisation Plan, which sets out the Council's:

- Statutory responsibilities in relation to school place planning
- Approach and agreed policies for fulfilling these responsibilities
- Identified response to pressure for school places across the County.

**Recommendation:** Cabinet is asked to:

- a) Endorse the proposed approach to reviewing and updating the Education Organisation Plan on an annual basis, including the delegation of responsibility for approving the annual review to the Cabinet Member for Learning
- b) Approve the Plan as the main communication vehicle with key stakeholders, relating to the provision of statutory education in Cambridgeshire.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Standards and Framework Act 1998 placed a requirement on local authorities to produce a five-year School Organisation Plan. The Education Act 2006 removed this requirement. The impact of subsequent legislation means that schools have greater levels of autonomy, fewer are maintained by the Authority and the Authority's main focus is as a commissioner rather than a provider of education services. This commissioning role extends across all phases of education: early years (0-5 years of age), 5-16 (the statutory school age range) and post-16 provision.
- 1.2 These changes have led officers from Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) to identify the need to publish and maintain an overarching document, setting out the requirements relating to school place planning (for 5-16 year olds), including children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATION ORGANISATION PLAN**

- 2.1 The Academies Act 2010 and the Education Act 2011 reinforced the recent shift towards local authorities becoming the commissioner, rather than provider, of school places. This change has led to uncertainty in some quarters regarding where responsibility for the planning and delivery of school places to meet future education requirements rests. However, it is clear that regardless of the expansion of the academies programme, the statutory responsibility for securing sufficient school places remains with local authorities.
- 2.2 The Education Organisation Plan, included as an appendix to this report, sets out the requirements relating to school-place planning and the method by which the Council's responsibilities are delivered. It will act as a communication vehicle with a number of stakeholders, including:
- State-funded schools, including academies
  - The Church of England Diocese of Ely and Catholic Diocese of East Anglia
  - Other education providers, including national academy chains
  - County and District Council planning colleagues
  - Housing developers
  - Parents and the public.
- 2.3 In this regard, the Plan should be considered to sit alongside the existing Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and the Post-16 Participation Plan referred to earlier. The CSA was approved by Cabinet in 2007, and the Participation Plan will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in June 2012.

## **3. STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION ORGANISATION PLAN**

- 3.1 The Education Organisation Plan is targeted at a number of diverse audiences. To support this, the main section of the Plan has been written to provide a high-level overview. More detailed summaries of the legislative and policy frameworks which underpin the work of the CYPS Infrastructure Service are included as appendices.

3.2 The Education Organisation Plan is in three distinct parts:

- **Part A**, which provides a summary of the Council's statutory duties and how these are delivered
- **Part B**, which provides an overview of how school place planning is undertaken, and how the Council approaches and implements the outcomes of reviews of education provision and sets out the Council's approach to deciding where to make investment in the school estate, as part of the five-year, £500 million rolling CYPS capital programme
- **Part C**, which provides an overview of identified pressures on school places, and details of the approach identified to address these within the CYPS five-year capital programme.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

4.1 In developing the Education Organisation Plan, officers have consulted widely with a range of stakeholders. These have included:

- All Cambridgeshire state-funded schools, including academies
- Representative education and headteacher groups, including Schools' Forum and Admission Forum
- District Council planning officers
- Education officers from both the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses.

4.2 In addition, the Plan has been considered by both a sub-group of the CYPS Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the full Committee.

4.3 Following the feedback and comments obtained through these various consultations, the Plan has been significantly redrafted to make it more accessible to all stakeholders.

#### **5. REVIEW AND REFRESH OF THE PLAN**

5.1 One of the weaknesses of the previous School Organisation Plan was that it covered a five-year period. Given changes to demographic profiles and education policy, it rapidly became out of date. In recognition of this, the Education Organisation Plan has been written to be more flexible and responsive to these changes. The structure adopted makes reviewing and updating the Plan easier, so that it remains an accurate record of the Council's responsibilities and how these are being delivered.

5.2 To support this approach, the Education Organisation Plan is not a means through which new policy will be developed and approved. This will be done through existing democratic processes. Changes in legislation and/or policy will be included in an update to Parts A and B of the Plan, as required.

5.3 Part C of the plan will be reviewed and updated annually. An integral element of this process is the annual review of the CYPS rolling five-year capital programme, which is agreed by Cabinet as part of the Integrated Planning Process. As Part C of the Plan reflects the schemes identified within the capital programme, it is not considered that this would need to be agreed

separately each year by Cabinet. Instead, it is proposed that the annual review should be approved by the Cabinet Member for Learning, through the Planning Places Project Board.<sup>1</sup>

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 Moving forward, it is recognised that communication of the Education Organisation Plan and its purpose are critical to ensure that it meets the objectives identified above in section 3. To support these objectives, and the proposals for maintaining the Plan as an up-to-date document, it will be available only in an electronic format.
- 6.2 The Plan will be uploaded to the Council's website and will be shared with:
- All County Councillors
  - All Cambridgeshire schools, including academies and independent schools
  - The Diocese of Ely and Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia
  - District Councils' Chief Planning Officers
  - Neighbouring Children's Services Authorities.
- 6.3 The Plan will also support the Council in taking a proactive approach to communicating where investment in the school estate is being made. A key part of this will involve demonstrating that the investment is targeted at meeting the needs of local communities and that the approach adopted will support delivery of effective education outcomes.
- 6.4 If Cabinet support the approach for reviewing school place provision and identifying investment requirements set out within Part C of the Plan then, for future years, the Education Organisation Plan will form a key piece of evidence to support the annual review of the five-year capital programme. This approach to identifying the need for additional places will be developed alongside the development of a coherent approach to commissioning places for providers identified in Part B of the Plan. This will then provide a basis for underpinning the planning and commissioning of high quality education provision to meet the needs of children and young people across Cambridgeshire.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning Places Project Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Learning. It includes the Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning, the Head of the CYPS Infrastructure Service, the Heads of the Primary and Secondary and Special School Education Advisory Services and the Head of Commissioning Enhanced Services. The role of the Project Board is to provide strategic guidance and oversight of ongoing school place planning reviews and implementation projects.

## **7. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING**

### **7.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The Education Organisation Plan sets out the ways in which the Council works with schools and education providers to secure sufficient good school places to meet the demand of local communities. Having good school places can be a key factor in people determining where to live. Providing good quality school places will also mean that children and young people can develop the skills to help them prosper later in life, and will support the ongoing development of the Cambridgeshire economy.

### **7.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

The Council will work with schools and local communities to provide sufficient local school places to meet the demands of local communities. This will help promote the role of schools as being central resource within their local community. In addition, where possible, schools are located to enable safe, sustainable travel within walking and cycling distance of the communities they serve.

### **7.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

The Education Organisation Plan sets out how the Council, working with schools and educational providers, to commission sufficient school places to meet the needs of local communities. This will ensure that the education provision available responds to meet the changing needs of local communities. It will also help reinforce the links between schools and their local communities.

### **7.4 Ways of working**

The shift in the Council's focus to become a commissioner rather than a provider of education provision, outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report, requires the Council to take a greater leadership role as part of fulfilling its statutory duties. The implication of this role and the Council's adopted approach are set out in detail in Part A of the Education Organisation Plan.

Through its commissioning role the Council works closely with local members, schools and communities as part of the planning and review of school place provision. Through this approach, set out in detail in Part B of the Education Organisation Plan, the Council ensures that the views of parents and local communities are taken into account during the future commissioning of education provision to meet the needs of communities.

## **8. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Resource and Performance Implications**

The CYPS five-year rolling programme accounts for over £500 million. The Education Organisation Plan will become one of the documents and key pieces of evidence that supports the annual review of this programme. It will ensure that the Council can effectively demonstrate that the investment within the capital programme is being targeted at the areas with the greatest need.

### **8.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

The Council retains the statutory duty to secure sufficient education provision for all children and young people aged 5-16 (the statutory school age) as outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report. One of the purposes of the Education Organisation Plan, as set out in section 3 of the report, is to outline the Council's duties and how these are met through the planning and review of the relevant education provision for children and young people.

Details of the Council's statutory duties are summarised in Part A of the Education Organisation Plan, with a more detailed overview being provided in Appendix A of the Plan.

### **8.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

Parts A and B of the Education Organisation Plan set out the Council's approach to reviewing and commissioning education provision to meet the needs of all children and young people, aged 5-16 years. Specific focus is included in both Parts B and C to how the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs are met through the ongoing review and commissioning of school provision.

### **8.4 Engagement and Consultation**

The Education Organisation Plan sets out in Part B, the Council's approach to involving local communities and schools in the review and commissioning of school provision.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambridgeshire Education Organisation Plan	Room 2B1 Castle Court Cambridge