



Committee and Date

People Overview

Thursday 29 September 2021

Item

Public

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING IN SHROPSHIRE

Responsible officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the provision of school places across the county during the current plan period through to 2026 and the proposals to review provision following the adoption of the Local Plan in July 2022.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the People Overview Committee:

- notes the report and
- identifies any specific areas that it wishes to consider in more detail at a future meeting, noting that it is proposed to bring a further report to the Committee in early 2023.

REPORT

3.0 Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure sufficient schools are available in their area to provide primary and secondary education, whether in maintained schools or academies. This requires the provision of a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents choose for their child to be educated in the state funded sector.

3.2 The current school place planning programme has highlighted a number of risks that can impact on the authority's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities including: securing appropriate funding from a range of funding streams; realising some funding streams long after the projects are completed (eg capital receipts); external factors impacting on materials costs and programme timetables (eg pandemic); and, securing support from the host school/academy to expand provision.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 Where additional school places are required, whether on an existing school site or through a new school, there are a range of funding streams to meet the costs of any necessary capital works. These include: Government allocated basic need capital grant, contributions from housing developments through CIL and Section 106, and any potential receipts from the sale of surplus school sites within Council ownership. The securing of CIL funding and allocation of capital receipts is dependent on Cabinet approval.

5.0 Climate change appraisal

- 5.1 The tender processes for these large capital projects are set against the background of the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019. Contractors are increasingly required to demonstrate the high environmental credentials/standards set in the tender documentation, with projects targeting a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating (BREEAM is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for master planning projects, infrastructure and buildings).

6.0 Background

- 6.1 A Members' Scrutiny Development Session on school place planning was held on Tuesday 21 September and so this report does not seek to duplicate the detail covered by this training opportunity.
- 6.2 The local authority statutory duty for school place planning is delivered through officers in the Learning & Skills division in the Children's Directorate, who lead on the planning and commissioning of sufficient school places, whether these are in maintained schools or academies. The commissioning role relies heavily on forecasting the level of demand and supply of school places, providing the right number of places in the right locations at the right time. Support is drawn from across the Council from officers in planning, estates, finance, data intelligence, legal and property services in meeting this strategic commissioning responsibility, co-ordinated through a programme board chaired by an Executive Director.
- 6.3 The school place planning process requires the early and extended engagement with the schools and academies in the locations where pupil growth is forecast, primarily in those areas where significant housing development is planned. It is worth noting that the local authority has no powers to direct academies to expand and so local partnership working to secure the additional school places is essential and to date has been successful in Shropshire.
- 6.4 The Government has made clear their ambition for every school to be part of a family of schools in a strong multi-academy trust, though no target date or deadline has been set for this wholesale structural reform. It is unclear how the local authority would be able to deliver its statutory responsibilities for school place planning unless they are legally able to direct academies to expand provision if required.

The last major review of school place planning was carried out in late 2015 and engagement meetings with key stakeholders were held across the county in the first half of 2016, including with Council members. This was linked to and informed by the current Local Plan through to 2026 and the impact of this on school places. From this emerged a programme of works across the county to deliver additional school places in Shifnal, Market Drayton, Hadnall, Baschurch and Shrewsbury. With the exception of a new mainstream primary school in Shrewsbury, the programme has delivered additional school places through the expansion of provision on existing school sites.

- 6.5 The attached appendix summarises the programme of school place planning projects that have been delivered and are being delivered - following the review and subsequent engagement process - to meet the forecast requirements through to the end of the current plan period in 2026. While not within the original programme, the new special school in Bowbrook, West Shrewsbury – funded through the Government’s free school programme – has been added to the programme though it is being delivered by the Department for Education (DfE).
- 6.6 The Government has launched a national School Rebuilding Programme. Belvidere School in Shrewsbury, which is an academy, has been included in phase 1 of this programme and is being completely rebuilt. St Andrew’s CE Primary in Shifnal, a maintained school, has been included in phase 2 of the programme and will be either significantly refurbished or rebuilt. This will be added to the programme as well, though again this work is being funded by the DfE.
- 6.7 The draft Local Plan for the plan period 2016-2038 proposes to deliver 30,800 dwellings across the county, with proposals for the majority of development planned for the larger strategic and principal centres, significant growth in Shrewsbury, a new garden village in Bridgnorth (Tasley), and new strategic sites at Clive Barracks (Tern Hill) and the former Ironbridge Power Station. School place planning officers are already engaged in early discussions on the potential areas in which significant pupil growth may be expected, ahead of the formal adoption of the plan in July 2022.
- 6.8 Following the formal adoption of the Local Plan 2016-2038, Learning & Skills officers will lead on a major review on the potential impact of the plan on the provision of school places across the county. This review will be shared with and consulted upon with all the key stakeholders, including members, with a view to developing a new programme of works and securing funding, strongly based on the premise of the right provision in the right location at the right time. The review will be initiated in autumn 2022 and it is proposed that it be included in the programme for the People Overview Committee in the first half of 2023.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The report provides an update and summary of the school place planning programme based on the Local Plan through to 2026, which has and will see – once completed - the successful delivery of the required provision of school places for the children and young people of Shropshire, meeting the authority’s statutory duties. Notice is also given of the major review of school places which will be undertaken once the Local Plan 2016-2038 has been formally adopted in July 2022.

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

- School Place Planning review document – 2016
- 7 November 2018 – Cabinet – *Community Infrastructure Levy Update Report*
- 28 November 2018 – Cabinet – *School Place Planning*
- 4 September 2019 – Cabinet – *New School Provision in West Shrewsbury*
- 19 September 2019 – Council – *New School Provision in West Shrewsbury*
- 19 December 2019 – Council – exempt report
- 17 December 2020 – Council – exempt report
- 21 September 2021 – Members’ Scrutiny Development Session on School Place Planning

Cabinet member (portfolio holder)

Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight

Local member





All Council Members





Appendices

Appendix A: School Place Planning Projects – 2016 to date

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School and project type	Photo	Status
<p>Shifnal Primary New extension and internal alterations to provide two Key Stage S2 classrooms and enlarged nursery/early years facility. Masonry construction with curved steel roof and open ceilings. Bright render finishes give the building visual impact and a bold addition to the school site.</p>		<p>Completed September 2018</p>
<p>Baschurch CE Primary Extension to front of main school building in traditional construction and pitched roof to provide additional classroom. Internal refurbishment and re-configuration to provide access, Office accommodation and toilet provision, integrating the new classroom with the main school building.</p>		<p>Completed July 2019</p>
<p>Market Drayton Infant & Nursery Single storey flat roofed extension to provide additional classroom and extension and refurbishments to adjacent general purposes room to provide second classroom. Included additional toilet provision and refurbishments.</p>		<p>Completed August 2019</p>
<p>St Andrew's CE Primary, Shifnal Two class early years foundation stage extension. Masonry construction with laminated timber 'glulam' roof structure and underfloor heating. The high open ceilings give airy, spacious internal accommodation and the generous roof overhangs provide plenty of space for outdoor play.</p>		<p>Completed August 2019</p>

<p>Meole Brace CE Primary Extension to the school to provide two additional classrooms. Masonry construction with a mono-pitch roof supported by a laminated timber roof structure.</p>		<p>Completed August 2019</p>
<p>Hadnall CE Primary Alterations and extension to provide a new classroom, enlarged general purposes room, enhanced toilet facilities and a secure lobby. Masonry construction with flat mineral roof to match existing.</p>		<p>Completed September 2019</p>
<p>Mereside CE Primary Two number additional new build classrooms, and three number internal classroom refurbishments have been carried out at Mereside CE Primary.</p>		<p>Completed December 2019</p>
<p>Market Drayton Junior Extension of the main school building in traditional brick construction and pitched roof to provide additional two classrooms and circulation space linking existing music room to main school building.</p>		<p>Completed January 2020</p>

<p>Haughmond Federation A new single storey teaching Hub and six Key Stage 2 classrooms have been constructed at Harlescott Junior School for the start of the Autumn 2021 term. The remainder of the works, to construct three nursery classrooms, four reception classrooms, eight Key Stage 1 classrooms, hall, staff accommodation, external play areas and car parking are to be completed for Easter 2022 occupation.</p>		<p>On site, Sections 2 and 3 Completed August 2021. Section 1 to be completed for Easter 2022</p>
<p>Meole Brace Secondary New five classroom teaching block. An exciting new building designed to the Passivhaus standard which will guarantee low energy consumption, high efficiency and very good levels of internal comfort. A first for Shropshire Council and one of only a very few education buildings in the country built to this demanding standard.</p>		<p>On site, due November 2021</p>
<p>New primary school in Bowbrook Construction of a new mainstream primary school which will eventually provide two forms of entry for up to 420 pupils. The planned build will deliver sufficient provision for one form of entry in the first instance, but will include a two-form entry core, to allow for additional teaching accommodation to be added at a future date.</p>		<p>New school to open in September 2023</p>
<p>New special school in Bowbrook Funded by the Department for Education through their free school programme, a 120-pupil cross-phase special school, for children with social, emotional and mental health issues, will be built on a separate site next to the new mainstream primary school.</p>		<p>New school to open in September 2023</p>