

Public Document Pack

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20 February 2024

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Committee will be held at **10.00 am** on **Wednesday, 28 February 2024** at **County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ**.

The meeting will be available to watch live via the Internet at this address:

<http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

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Agenda

- 10.01 am 1. **Declarations of Interests**
- Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt please contact Democratic Services before the meeting.
- 10.03 am 2. **Urgent Matters**
- Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances, including cases where the Committee needs to be informed of budgetary or performance issues affecting matters within its terms of reference, which have emerged since the publication of the agenda.
- 10.05 am 3. **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee** (Pages 5 - 12)
- The Committee is asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 (cream paper).
- 10.10 am 4. **Responses to Recommendations** (Pages 13 - 30)
- The Committee is asked to note the responses to recommendations made at recent meetings.

- 10.15 am 5. **Chichester School Proposals** (Pages 31 - 62)
- Report by Director of Children, Young People and Learning.
- The Committee is asked to consider the proposals for the relocation of Jessie Younghusband School, the expansion of St Anthony's School and the amendments to the catchments areas following public consultation.
- 11.15 am 6. **Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027** (Pages 63 - 106)
- Report by Director of Children, Young People and Learning.
- The Committee are asked to consider the draft Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027.
- 12.00 pm 7. **Performance and Resources Report - Quarter 3 2023/24** (To Follow)
- Report by Director of Finance and Support Services, setting out the finance and performance position as at the end of December 2023.
- The Committee is asked to examine the County Council's corporate performance, finance, savings, delivery and business performance for the services within the remit of this Committee for the period October-December 2023.
- 12.30 pm 8. **Work Programme Planning and Possible Items for Future Scrutiny** (Pages 107 - 126)
- The Committee is asked to agree its draft work programme (Appendix A) in accordance with the scrutiny checklist attached (Appendix B) and highlight any further possible items for future scrutiny.
- The Committee is also asked to review the Forward Plan entries relevant to its remit (Appendix C) and consider whether it wishes to enquire about any of the forthcoming decisions within its portfolio.
- 12.35 pm 9. **Requests for Call-In**
- There have been no requests for call-in to the Scrutiny Committee within its constitutional remit since the date of the last meeting. The Director of Law and Assurance will report any requests since the publication of the agenda papers.
- 12.37 pm 10. **Date of Next Meeting**

12.37 pm 10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 12 June at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester. Probable agenda items include:

- Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman
- Business Planning Group membership
- SEND Improvement Plan – EHCP Timeliness
- Performance and Resources Report 2023-24 – Quarter 4
- Family Safeguarding Model

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by Friday 31 May 2024.

To all members of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

Webcasting

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Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

17 January 2024 – At a meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Linehan (Chairman)

Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Evans	Mr Cristin
Cllr Burgess	Cllr McGregor	Mr Lloyd
Cllr Cherry	Cllr Mercer	Mrs Coles, joined 11am
Cllr Cornell	Cllr Smith	
Cllr Dabell	Cllr Sparkes	

Apologies were received from Cllr Hall and Mrs Oldroyd

Also in attendance: Cllr Russell

33. Declarations of Interests

33.1 In accordance with the County council's code of conduct the following declarations were made:

33.2 Cllr Burgess declared a personal interest as a member of Crawley Borough Council, under agenda item no 6.

33.3 Cllr Cherry declared a personal interest as being a Governor at the Burgess Hill Academy, and also a leader of Burgess Hill Town Council, under agenda item no 6.

33.4 Cllr Cornell declared a personal interest as governor at Manor Green College in Crawley, under agenda item no 6.

33.5 Cllr Dabell declared a personal interest as his daughter is the headteacher of Baldwins Hill Primary School in East Grinstead, under agenda item no 6.

33.6 Cllr Mercer declared a personal interest as a governor of St Andrews, Nuthurst, and the chair of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, which has Brantridge School in West Sussex, and as Cabinet Member for Horsham District Council under agenda item no 6.

33.7 Cllr Sparkes declared a personal interest as member of Worthing Borough Council, under agenda item no 6.

34. Urgent Matters

34.1 No urgent matters were raised.

35. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

35.1 A member said that whilst the minutes were accurate they did not reflect the robust debate on the issue of SEND. The Chairman agreed that some wording be added to this effect.

35.2 Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 be approved as a correct record with the above amendment, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

36. Responses to Recommendations

36.1 Resolved – That the Committee notes the responses to the recommendations provided from recent meetings but asked that:

36.2 The first full item on page 14 be dealt with as two distinct items.

36.3 The survey shared by the Parent Carer's Forum be reviewed by the Business Planning Group for consideration as to whether it should be part of the scrutiny of the SEND Improvement Plan.

36.4 The Committee be reassured that lobbying of Government on funding continues and that they be kept updated.

36.5 An update be provided to the Committee on support for young carers.

37. Children's Social Care Quality Assurance

37.1 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, Cllr Russell, introduced the report highlighting that it was the latest report to focus on actions since the full Ofsted inspection and it outlined the commitment, focus and drive to get the service on to a good grading and then, in time, outstanding, through the implementation of the Continuous Practice Improvement Plan.

37.2 The members of the Committee asked questions and a summary of those questions and answers follows.

37.3 Officers agreed to reflect the work by the scrutiny committee in the governance process in future reports. It was highlighted that the work was also externally scrutinised by the Department for Education (DfE) who ask very similar questions to the Committee.

37.4 Consistency is the biggest challenge around compliance and the service provided. A key area for focus is increasing the voice of the child and the family, moving towards family feedback. Feedback from the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leaver's Advisory Board (CLAB) had led to a change in the language used and would feed into future quality assurance audit activity.

37.5 Initially the audits looked at compliance and have now moved on to looking at the quality of assessments, with the number of audits increased to 50 randomly selected cases a month. The Ofsted framework tool is used for gradings. The results are reviewed by the Performance and Assurance Action Board, team meetings, directorate leadership meetings

and key themes are shared with stakeholders at multi-agency meetings. Any audit graded as Inadequate is moderated by a head of service and a reflective conversation takes place with teams within five working days. The case will be re-audited after six weeks (previously 12 weeks) to ensure purposeful change is happening. The auditor reviews the statutory documentation, additional information collected on a child's record, the journey over the last six months, as well as a framework of questions and other tools, such as the Bright Spots survey, to gather information.

37.6 The most common theme amongst **complaints** received was communication with families. This was being worked on to ensure that families have contact details for social workers and embedded co-ordinators. Customers can often be happy that work is progressing, but the system shows a case as overdue because the final response letter has not been sent. Overdue responses are escalated to the heads of service to understand why there has been a delay or support a response being sent.

37.7 Whilst previously audits had been regarded with some suspicion by staff, a culture change within the service had meant they were now regarded as a positive process and that was helping with staff recruitment and retention, slowing down turnover in front facing social worker teams and had become part of the package to staff.

37.8 Children are prepared for the Bright Spots Survey through information shared by schools, social workers and PAs. Support from an independent person can be given to children who need it to complete the survey. The survey also offers children the opportunity to speak to someone in the Voice and Participation team. Responses to the Bright Spot surveys are improving with the recent survey for Care Leavers reaching a response rate of over 50%. Responses are reviewed within 24 hours and if there are causes of concern they are actioned according to normal processes and procedures.

37.9 Children whose cases progress to Child Protection Conferences are made aware that they have the option to have an advocate with them by the service. To date every child who had asked for an advocate had received one. Regular communication exists with the advocacy team, with quarterly meetings taking place to work on improving the uptake of advocates.

37.10 Some members questioned whether the report was balanced enough to really allow the Committee to identify where issues were occurring. Officers responded that it was a full report with positives and negatives, and transparency about areas of continued work.

37.11 Resolved – That the Committee:

1. Welcomes the quality assurance process and how this is embedded within the service as it moves from compliance to quality.
2. Asks that reference is made to member scrutiny as part of the quality assurance process and that this is included in future reports.

3. Recognises the continued progress to increase the number of audit outcomes rated as good and outstanding, and that this is an ongoing process and key part of the continued practice improvement.
4. Notes the positive response to the Care Leavers Bright Spots survey and the work with the advocacy service to capture the voice of children, young people and families to make improvements to our quality of practice.
5. Welcomes the increase in complaint response times at the end of Quarter 4.
6. Notes the comments made around the balance of scrutiny reports to ensure both successes and areas of development are clearly set out.

38. School Place Planning across West Sussex

38.1 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, Cllr Russell, introduced the report highlighting the challenges in forecasting requirement for sufficient school places impacted by fluctuating birth rates, shifts in parental preference, academy schools setting their admissions levels, new housing developments moving areas of habitation, migration and delays in the building of new schools.

38.2 The members of the Committee asked questions and a summary of those questions and answers follows.

38.3 The impact of previous reviews of school provision had not been assessed although they were overseen by Ofsted and there had been no indication that arrangements had been inappropriate. A member was concerned that the qualitative outcomes of organisational changes, in terms of the experience of children and attainment, is not looked at.

38.4 Committee members asked officers to ensure there were clear, widely promoted, communications for parents and pupils included in the Planning School Places document and on the County Council website, particularly for areas where it was known there was pressure on school places and pupils might not get any of their preferred options, including clear information around the transport implications of attending a school further away. The challenges in Southwater area last year and the increase in a preference for co-educational places was acknowledged. Schools and the County Council have encouraged parents and carers to visit a wider number of schools to see what they could offer their child.

38.5 Committee members also felt that local county councillors should be informed of any areas where high numbers of parental preferences were not met before school places were issued. They felt briefings by district and borough areas would be useful. Officers advised that there had been briefings to the County Local Committees in previous years and officers would be happy to provide briefings at meetings of a similar format.

Members also wanted to be more involved at an earlier stage of the Planning School Places process so that they could feed in local knowledge.

38.6 Members felt that those who had not received any of their preference school places should be given the priority for an independent appeal of the decision before those who had been given a chosen preference option but still chose to appeal. Officers agreed to investigate the legal implications of this request.

38.7 Members asked for more information on alternative provision to be provided in the document to confirm if there are sufficient placements and if not, how long a pupil might need to wait for a placement. **Action:** Officers agreed to supply some further information to the Committee on how this experience might be for a family and what resilience is built into the provision.

38.8 Members were assured that accurate information was held on children who elected to be home educated. Children missing from school are regularly monitored and could lead to elective home education (EHE) arrangements being established.

38.9 The County Council does not hold information on how many children in West Sussex attend independent schools. Officers were reviewing the potential impact of the Government proposal to remove tax incentives to independent school provision. However, in the past there had not been an influx of pupils coming to the local education authority when an independent school closed, as parents tended to relocate their students to other independent schools. The County Council has had experience in dealing with unexpected influxes of pupils, such as when families are displaced from elsewhere in the world, and the number of surplus school places held across the county gives flexibility to place pupils.

38.10 Members asked that in areas where there were expected to be applications in excess of planned admission numbers, such as Adur, that information be made available for parents covering areas such as travel costs. Officers confirmed they had held information sessions for families in the Shoreham area and were committed to holding more to work with the secondary schools to increase the amount of information available to parents. Officers also confirmed that conversations were taking place with two schools in the Adur area on how to increase the number of places available. A study is underway with the schools and see if the expansion of those schools is something the County Council would wish to explore, including the funding of capital for the costs of the provision. The outcome of the feasibility study is expected in the spring.

38.11 Members expressed concern that, with growing numbers of academy schools in the county, who were in control of their own admission numbers, that the County Council had fewer negotiating powers when it came to creating more school places. Members were reassured that lobbying of Government on this issue was taking place. The County Council would also continue to have dialogue with all schools on school places and particular pressure areas.

38.12 Members were reassured that officers regularly reviewed district and borough council local plans and areas of housing development when planning school places. It was acknowledged that the development of housing on the edge of one district or borough could impact on the demand for school places in another. When there were delays in the development of new schools the County Council has responsibility to mitigate the delay in delivery.

38.13 Members requested that there be greater clarity on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and future planning with the document.

38.14 The Chairman had further questions but would put them in writing to the officers. It was agreed that the responses to those questions would be shared with the Committee and on the public record.

38.15 Resolved – That the Committee:

1. Highlights the importance of getting school place planning right, and the educational and social impact the allocated school can have on children and their families.
2. Raises the importance of having clear communication for parents and families particularly in areas where there are pressures on school places. The Committee asks that there is a clear plan in place for this, including clear information around transport implications, and that this is set out in the Planning School Places document and on the website.
3. Asks that there is further and more detailed information on SEND provision within the Planning School Places document.
4. Asks that County Councillor engagement is more robust and would welcome consultation with members on a district and borough level to be able to feed into the school place planning process.
5. Raises the importance of resilience within school place planning and asks that the impacts of wider pressures and risks, and how these will be managed are more clearly set out in the Planning School Places report.
6. Asks the service to explore if appeals hearings for those who do not gain one of their first 3 school preferences could be prioritised and if this would benefit those families.
7. Recognises the challenge of increasing numbers of schools becoming academies on the County Council's influence on school place planning and welcomes the continued lobbying of Government to highlight the risk around this.

39. Work Programme Planning and Possible items for Future Scrutiny

39.1 The Committee discussed the Work Programme, and it was agreed to ask the Business Planning Group to:

39.2 Review progress on the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing of Children and Young People.

39.3 Review the decision on the consultation on the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, the expansion of St Anthony's School and proposed Catchment Area Changes.

40. Requests for Call-In

40.1 There had been no requests for call-in to the Scrutiny Committee within its constitutional remit since the date of the last meeting.

41. Date of Next Meeting

41.1 The next meeting would be held on 28 February 2024 at 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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CYPSSC Action and recommendations tracker 2023-24

The recommendations tracker allows scrutiny committees to monitor responses, actions and outcomes against their recommendations or requests for further action. The tracker is updated following each meeting. Once an action has been completed, it will be removed from the tracker at the next meeting.

Recommendations

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
Children's Social Care Quality Assurance	17/01/24	Asks that reference is made to member scrutiny as part of the quality assurance process and that this is included in future reports.	Acting Assistant Director Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	-	All future reports on QA will include a reference to member scrutiny of the reports and form part of the quality assurance process.	Complete
School Place Planning across West Sussex	17/01/24	Raises the importance of having clear communication for parents and families particularly in areas where there are pressures on school places. The Committee asks that there is a clear plan in place for this, including clear information around transport implications, and that this is set out in the Planning School Places document and on the website.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	The 2024 Planning School Places Report makes specific reference to transport implications in the extra notes added this year for parents/carers at the end of each District & Borough Council area. For September 2025 admissions there will be information sessions planned for any area	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					where there is expected to be significant pressure on places in the format followed for September 2024 admissions in Shoreham & Southwater.	
School Place Planning across West Sussex	17/01/24	Asks that there is further and more detailed information on SEND provision within the Planning School Places document.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	Further information has been added and links given to sources of extra information.	Complete
School Place Planning across West Sussex	17/01/24	Asks that County Councillor engagement is more robust and would welcome consultation with members on a district and borough level to be able to feed into the school place planning process.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	Opportunities for Member briefings/engagement in each District & Borough Council area would be welcomed and will be facilitated by the Department.	Complete
School Place Planning across West Sussex	17/01/24	Raises the importance of resilience within school place planning and asks that the impacts of wider pressures and risks, and how these will	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	The County Council still has almost 10,000 surplus places across the County which is still above the 5%	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
		be managed are more clearly set out in the Planning School Places report.			suggestion from the National Audit Office. The school place planning will address the pressure on places is often related to popularity of schools rather than a shortfall of places but the increased engagement with academies to enable extra places to be provided and this will help improve the resilience.	
School Place Planning across West Sussex	17/01/24	Asks the service to explore if appeals hearings for those who do not gain one of their first 3 school preferences could be prioritised and if this would benefit those families.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	This request has been checked with Legal Services and it is not possible to give those families any preference. All requests for independent appeal are prioritised the same.	Complete
School Place Planning	17/01/24	Agreed to submit additional questions from the	Committee Members	—	The questions and responses are attached	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
across West Sussex		Committee for response following the meeting.			as an appendix to the tracker	
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan	15/11/23	Considers it imperative that the experiences of families are listened to throughout the improvement process and that their views on how the improvements are creating better outcomes are sought throughout the improvement journey.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	Regular meetings with the Parent/Carer Forum and the Head of SEND and Inclusion have been implemented and do influence decision making and planning. Further improvements are planned as part of the response to the Area SEND AP Inspection report.	Complete
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan	15/11/23	Highlights communication to parents and carers as a top area for improvement and ask that this is progressed as a priority as part of the improvement plan.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	-	February 2024 - This is already a priority for the service and was also an agenda item on the SEND and AP Strategy Partnership Board on 6 February 2024. January 2024 - This item will be addressed through the SEND	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					improvement plan with communication as and co-production as a cross cutting theme across all 6 Partner Working Groups.	
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan	15/11/23	Asks that the County Council explore in more detail what can be done to support young people into employment and training.	Interim Assistant Director Education and Skills	March 2024	February 2024 – update to be provide at the end March 2024 January 2024 - This is being explored under Partner Working Group 5 which is focusing on transitions and preparation for employment.	In Progress
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan	15/11/23	Asks whether the Mind of My Own app can be used to capture the views and experiences of young people with SEND.	Re-allocated to Assistant Director Education and Skills	June 2024	This may be achievable with Mind of My Own as the platform should be able to support this application. The Assistant Director Education and Skills will explore this as part of the outcome of the SEND Area Inspection	In Progress

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					and subsequent improvement activity planning.	
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan	15/11/23	Agrees that the Committee should have regular oversight of the SEND improvement plan to assess the progress being made on improving outcomes and experiences for children and families and will add this to their work programme for scrutiny.	Chairman of CYPSSC/Democratic Services/Assistant Director Children Transformation.	-	This has been added to the Committee's work programme as a standing item. The outcome of the SEND Area Inspection will be used to inform the areas of focus this once it is published.	Complete
The Care Leavers Service in West Sussex	13/09/23	Welcomes the work being progressed to provide Personal Advisors to children we care for between 16 and 16½ years, and the importance of considering where the child is in their education and training when transferring to a PA. The Committee asks to be kept updated on the progress of this and when implementation is expected.	Assistant Director (Corporate Parenting)	-	February 2024: The recruitment process is completed for all managers and all posts now recruited to. Personal Advisor roles have all been advertised and the recruitment process is nearing completion. We expect all roles to be fully recruited to by the end of the financial year as planned.	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					<p>Quality Assurance work indicates that the transfer point between PEP and Pathway plan is strengthening as monitored at CYPL monthly performance board.</p> <p>October 2023: The planned changes will be implemented when the increased staffing resource is in place. A business case has been submitted and approved by DLT that will address the issues noted in ILACs re: caseload weighting and capacity. The recruitment process is now underway and it is estimated that the newly recruited PAs will start in the service early in 2024.</p>	

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
Early Help - Review of new service model	07/06/23	Asks that the Committee is provided with the outcome of the planned work to gain feedback from children and families using the service.	Head of Service – Early help	-	<p>February 2024 - This work has progressed and a Young People’s focus group was held on 08.02.24 with a group of young people, facilitated by Early Help and the Voice and Participation team, where we asked young people specific questions to gather their feedback.</p> <p>An online survey has been developed with the same questions and this will go live online for the duration of next half term, from 19th Feb – 28th March. The service aims to promote this in all online spaces and through our Early Help service and in particular the</p>	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					<p>Dedicated Schools Team.</p> <p>The service is planning <i>family voice</i> events with the Voice and Participation team throughout late spring/summer, on the back of local events within the community. Voice gained through these activities will be used to shape the service offered to families.</p> <p>Early Help has also formed a Voice Champions group with the aim promoting seeking voice from families and partners. As an additional measure we are including young people's voice in our interview process for new candidates</p>	

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					<p>applying for roles in early help.</p> <p>October 2023: An outline plan is now in production in collaboration with the Voice and Participation team on a range of approaches to seek the voice of children and young people. The lead service manager has connected with another local authority to help with the development of our approach. This work is reviewed and monitored through a project group and is part of our identified priorities for our Supporting Families work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.</p>	

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
Support for Young Carers	1/03/23	Highlights the importance of promoting the identification of young carers and asks that support and guidance provided to schools and other partners focuses on how they can proactively identify young carers, including suggesting schools ask specific questions on caring responsibilities at school entry stage.	Assistant Director (Education and Skills)	-	<p>February 2024 - Briefing sessions were held with Headteachers last half term on the support available for young carers. Updated Guidance materials was also sent to all schools.</p> <p>January 2024: No further update at present.</p> <p>October 2023: Education Matters (autumn 2023) highlighted responsibilities for schools in relation to Young Carers and the service working with schools to work out how to gather the correct information regarding caring status. Eight schools have signed up to be part of a pilot project</p>	Complete

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					<p>and to acquire the Young Carers in Schools Award. Promotion of awareness and identification of young carers remains a key priority for the team this academic year.</p> <p>June 2023: Resource packs have been created for primary and secondary schools which aim at identifying, understanding and supporting young carers.</p> <p>New guidance will suggest that schools may wish to explore ways of seeking out this information on entry to school but in ways that are sensitive and avoid putting the</p>	

Topic	Meeting (date raised)	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/ Member	Follow up	Response/Progress/ Deadlines	Status
					child or parent in a difficult position.	

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Additional Questions from 17 January 2024 meeting

Agenda Item & Question	Response
Agenda Item 6 – School Place Planning in West Sussex	
Impact of academisation on planning school places – what lobbying has been undertaken to highlight this to central government?	We have spoken to the DfE Regional Team and have written to Damian Hinds MP, Education Minister on this issue. We will await a response and will also raise this at the annual conversation with the regulator, Ofsted.
Impact of academisation on planning school places – are you aware of any changes in legislation being considered in respect to own admission authorities not being required to provide additional school places? Do we know how many academy trusts are currently consulting on their admission arrangements?	There are no changes to legislation that we are aware of nor are any planned at this time. The MATS that have consulted on their admission arrangements are Sir Robert Woodard Academy, Shoreham and Southwater Infant Academy. This is entirely at the MATS discretion and not something that the Council can influence.
Impact of academisation on planning school places – Has an assessment been done on the impact academisation is having on place planning? -e.g. do we know to what extent we could resolve capacity issues if local authorities could instruct academies to increase/reduce numbers.	No formal assessment has been undertaken other than the Open Box Consulting Report on Shoreham places that spoke about the challenge to LAs on place planning when dealing with academies as own admission authorities. However, the service is considering the long term plans and strategy towards academisation and what the impacts of this will be on school place planning and the shape of the service within the Council.
Impact of academisation on planning school places – are academies able to make their own decisions on reducing capacity as well as expanding (referring to discussion on Southgate Primary academy which is reducing PAN by 30).	All academies are able to make their own decisions on increases in admissions and this is something that the Council cannot play a active role in. However, academies must consult on decreases in numbers as seen for example with Southwater Infants.
Crawley Secondary School Places (delay in Forge Wood Free School) - how long on average does it take to plan, build and open a secondary school?	There is no prescribed timescale but it is expected that the timescale will be in the region of 3 to 5 years.

Additional Questions from 17 January 2024 meeting

<p>What is the Mid Sussex Secondary School (Agenda page 137) – does it relate to the housing proposed between Crawley and Copthorne? What contingency is in place should the assumptions regarding these developments not come to fruition?</p>	<p>This will be the proposed Bedelands Secondary Academy at Burgess Hill. It has been delayed due to tender costs and we are speaking with local schools to agree places until it is delivered. At this point we still expect the school to be complete by 2026 (in temporary provision) and permanently by 2027.</p>
<p>Crawley Secondary School places - Will there be a point where we will need to deliver significant additional capacity, regardless of the vagaries of developments.</p>	<p>We continue to monitor pupil demand for places but the much anticipated new Forge Wood High School, Crawley has still to be delivered by the DfE and so WSCC are having to expand provision at existing schools.</p>
<p>Crawley Secondary school places - (agenda page 140) – do we have any alternative solutions or contingencies to address the overcapacity given the delay in Forge Wood, above the work outlined with the schools mentioned, and is there any work the Council are able to help drive forward the Forge Wood school development?</p>	<p>We are providing some additional capacity at other local schools to address demand. The service also continues to pressure the DfE for an update on the delivery of Forge Wood High School.</p>
<p>Crawley Secondary School Places – what could or should Crawley Parents/families to do help mitigate the issue of lack of secondary school provision in their area and what expectations should be urgently and clearly communicated to Crawley families in respect of this.</p>	<p>Parents/Carers should visit/contact as many of the local schools as possible and read the admissions policy that determines the criteria for admission so they can make informed applications. They can also contact Admissions.North@westsussex.gov.uk for advice.</p>
<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (agenda page 52) – recognising that the level of need for some students is increasing, how is this taken into account when assessing capacity in SEND provision?</p>	<p>The SEN Team is aware of the increase in SEN demand and are working on how best to target provision by encouraging greater inclusion in mainstream schools, some Special Support Centres (SSC) provision and expansion to Special School provision.</p>
<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - What immediate measures are in place to increase capacity given the current capacity issues?</p>	<p>Capital projects are being progressed to expand SEN provision by way of satellite provision eg QE2 School & Arun House and other projects are being progressed in this way.</p>

Additional Questions from 17 January 2024 meeting

<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - How is the rise in demand of EHCPs taken into account when projecting future demand for SEND places? Is this built into the analytical processes used (referred to on page 51).</p>	<p>Significant further work is needed on predicting SEND demand and the service is actively working on this. The development of a new SEND Strategy will also deal with this issue and development work will be supported by the Delivering Better Value initiative in due course. As part of this work a new post dealing exclusively with SEND Sufficiency is being established and will be recruited to in the near future.</p>
<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Where the council is rationalising school places and the estate, is there a plan to make use of any buildings to meet SEND places?</p>	<p>This is an option that has been considered but needs to have regard to the WSCC Estates Strategy and Business Cases will be needed to be progressed through capital governance.</p>
<p>Primary School Places – (agenda page 33/4) – Para 3.1 refers to 35 new primary schools being required by 2032. 3.3 refers to a decline in primary numbers for next 4-5 years. Could this be explained.</p>	<p>The reference to potentially 35 new primary schools is based on having all of the housing from over 70,000 new homes that are detailed in each District & Borough Council’s Local Plan etc. That is a long term scenario whereas we are currently seeing a drop in primary numbers.</p>
<p>School Transport (agenda page 47) – What initiatives are the council promoting regarding school transport and what liaison takes place with other services, e.g. those who manage and maintain PROW.</p>	<p>We continue to encourage children to walk or cycle to school and transport assistance for mainstream schools is minimal in comparison to SEND need. Where walking routes are not deemed available they will be assessed as appropriate with the appropriate service.</p>
<p>Early Years (agenda page 48) - what has been/ will be the impact of the additional entitlement requirements?</p>	<p>The implications of the extra funding and entitlement for Early Years is still being determined. As the Early Year Programme is delivered the impact will be considered as part of the sufficiency planning.</p>
<p>Summer Born Children – (agenda page 46) – a child has to legally attend school in the term following their 5th</p>	<p>There are a small number of families who delay their child starting school but the numbers are too small to have an impact as the</p>

Additional Questions from 17 January 2024 meeting

birthday. Do many families request a delay in starting school, and does this impact school place planning?

Admissions Team typically handle over 8,000 changes of school requests and new entrants each year.

Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee

28 February 2024

Chichester School Proposals – relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and Expansion of St Antony’s School – Publication of Statutory Notices

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills approved the launch of a public consultation on proposals to expand the number of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) places in at St Anthony’s school, the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and an adjustment of catchment areas ([decision CYPLS05\(23/24\)](#)).

The consultation ran from 14 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

Following the review of the consultation feedback, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills is preparing to approve the progression of the proposals to Statutory Notices as set out in the attached draft decision report.

Focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals and provide comments to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills for consideration to assist the decision making. The Committee will also hear from the local members.

Key lines of enquiry include:

- Whether the aims for SEND provision and the SEND strategy provide a reasonable basis for the plans for the future expansion of St Anthony’s
- Whether this provides a justification for the changes planned for Jessie Younghusband and the impact on pupils, families and the community
- That the need for mainstream primary places in Chichester will continue to be met by the proposals
- That the consultation responses have been addressed fully and fairly in preparing to proceed with the proposals.
- Any further comments for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills ahead of her decision.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

Background and context

A key objective within the County Council's [SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024](#) is to increase provision for children and young people with SEND through the creation of additional places in Special Schools to support children to access local schools whenever possible and where it meets their needs. There is a need to expand St Anthony's Special School in Chichester to meet the need for special school places in the area.

Jessie Younghusband Primary School shares a site with St Anthony's. A new primary school is being built to the west of Chichester to meet the need for places arising from a new housing development (Minerva Heights). This could provide a new base for Jessie Younghusband and an opportunity for the school to expand at that new location. Such changes would also require a reorganisation of primary school catchment areas.

Following engagement with the schools, a set of proposals were developed and a public consultation was carried out to seek views on these proposals. The outcomes of the consultation have been considered and an approach is being proposed.

The background and context to this item for scrutiny are set out in the attached reports (listed below), including resource and risk implications, Equality, Human Rights, Social Value, Sustainability and Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessments.

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

Contact Officer: Katherine De La Mora, Senior Advisor – Democratic Services, 0330 22 22535

Appendices

Annex A: Draft Key Decision Report – Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and Expansion of St Antony's School – Publication of Statutory Notices

Appendix 1: Consultation Summary

Appendix 2: Proposed Catchment Areas

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

DRAFT: Report to Cllr Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People Learning and Skills**March 2024****Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and expansion of St Anthony's Special School****Report by Mr S Nyakatawa, Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills)****Electoral divisions: Chichester North and Chichester West**

Summary

Jessie Younghusband Primary School is a 4-11 Primary School providing up to 210 places. The proposal is to relocate Jessie Younghusband from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places) which is being built on the housing development west of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights.

St Anthony's School in Chichester is a Special School for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning difficulties. It shares a site with Jessie Younghusband. There is a need to expand St Anthony's to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council's [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2019-2024](#). The relocation of Jessie Younghusband would leave a vacant building which could be used for the purposes of expanding St Anthony's special school.

The creation of a new primary school is for the purpose of accommodating the additional children who will come to live in Minerva Heights which means it is also necessary to propose revisions to the catchment areas of other schools in the local area (as outlined in recommendation 3 below) should the proposals proceed.

In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills approved the launch of a public consultation, in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, to seek views on the proposed changes ([decision CYPLS05\(23/24\)](#) refers). Details of the consultation process and the feedback received are set out in section 2 of this report.

The proposals have reached the stage at which members can comment on the proposals in light of the feedback and the initial assessment of that feedback in the context of the reasons for the original proposals and the range of considerations set out in this report. The recommendations are based on the current assessment only.

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills is asked to approve:

- (1) The publication of formal statutory proposals for the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the primary school site within the Minerva Heights development. The new school is expected to open in September 2025.
 - (2) The delegation of authority to the Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) to determine whether the changes set out in recommendation (1) should proceed following consideration of any representations received during the statutory proposal period.
 - (3) The revision to the catchment areas for Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Parklands Community Primary School and Fishbourne C of E Primary School as set out in the plan at Appendix 2, effective from 1 September 2025, should the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband school proceed.
-

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 There are two parallel strategic responsibilities for the County Council sitting behind this proposal, both linked to the sufficiency of school places and the need to ensure the optimum effectiveness of educational provision is available in all school settings. Those responsibilities apply equally to mainstream school place planning as it does to planning places for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 1.2 An opportunity arises with the housing development at Minerva Heights to the north and west of Chichester as a new primary school will be built to accommodate the additional pupils who will come to live there. The opportunity relates to the option to provide a school which not only accommodates those children but which also provides places for children already accommodated within one of the Chichester primary schools enabling the provision of primary education across the city to be adjusted to facilitate a more efficient and beneficial overall provision for the children of the city.
- 1.3 The County Council wants to ensure that all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can access local schools whenever possible and where it meets their needs. This will also lead to reducing the number of children and young people with SEND needing to move into higher cost, out of county education provision. Increasing provision for children and young people with SEND in local special schools is in line with the key objectives of the County Council's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- 1.4 Depending on the requirements of the EHCP, children will require a place in a mainstream school, Special Support Centre (SSC) or maintained special school. In recent years, the requirement for SSC and special school placements has

increased significantly and projections indicate that this trend will continue. Additional capacity is therefore required in maintained special schools so children can attend a school close to home. This will have the added benefit of reducing revenue costs of out of County placements in Independent and Non - Maintained Schools (INMS) and to decrease home to school transport costs.

- 1.5 St Anthony's School in Chichester is a Special School for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning difficulties. Current places are insufficient to meet the need for special school places in the area resulting in children being placed in INMS. There is an urgent need to expand St Anthony's to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2024.
- 1.6 Sharing a site with St Anthony's School is Jessie Younghusband Primary School which is a 4-11 Primary School providing up to 210 places (Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30). The school is a successful over-subscribed primary school with a good Ofsted rating.
- 1.7 The shared site restricts the potential of expansion for both schools. The County Council has therefore worked closely with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies at both St Anthony's Special School and Jessie Younghusband Primary School to discuss options to them to expand. These discussions have led to a proposal that is intended to be beneficial for both schools.
- 1.8 In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills [approved](#) the launch of a public consultation to seek views on relocating Jessie Younghusband from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places/30 PAN) which is being built by the developer on the housing development west of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights. The intention is that all current pupils on roll at Jessie Younghusband, and those who are successful in obtaining a place for starting school in September 2024, will automatically transfer to the new school site.
- 1.9 The consultation also sought feedback on the proposal to expand St Anthony's School into the buildings vacated by Jessie Younghusband Primary School. This expansion could create circa 50 additional places for children with SEND aged between 4 and 16.
- 1.10 The new primary school at Minerva Heights was secured through a Section 106 Agreement and the site is of sufficient size to accommodate an expansion to 2FE (420 places) should demand arising from the new development and wider planning area warrant an additional form of entry. The relocation therefore provides scope for future expansion of a successful primary school thereby providing greater financial sustainability due to increased pupil numbers and school budget share.
- 1.11 Under the terms of a Section 106 agreement, CC/4301/14, the housing developer has opted to construct the new 1FE primary school. The construction programme indicates completion of the school site for September 2025 occupation.
- 1.12 The creation of a primary school in a new location together with the need to include the additional children who will live in Minerva Heights means it is now necessary to review current catchment areas for primary admissions in the local

area and to see if this can align capacities of the schools that currently provide places for children from this area. Pupil numbers within the relevant catchment areas need adjustment once the development is complete. As part of the consultation, views were also sought on the proposed changes to the primary catchment area in Chichester considering both the new school being built at Minerva Heights and the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School. The changes would affect the catchment areas for Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Parklands Community Primary School, and Fishbourne C of E Primary School.

2 Consultation and engagement

- 2.1 The consultation launched on the 14 December 2023; copies of the public consultation document were distributed to the following: Members of Parliament, Local members, District and Parish councillors, union representatives, neighbouring authorities, the parents/carers, staff and governors of the affected schools, early years providers, local libraries, the Diocese of Chichester and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The consultation was also [published](#) on the Your Voice Engagement Hub section of the County Council website and the proposals received local press coverage. Local Members of the County Council had already been offered the opportunity to attend a briefing on 24th October 2023 regarding the proposed consultation.
- 2.2 All schools were notified in advance of the consultation and asked to support any families who might require additional help such as language support or access to IT to enable them to complete the consultation. They were also provided with a draft letter to share with both staff and parents in advance of the consultation going live and provided guidance on how to access the online consultation process. The County Council relied on schools to distribute this information to parents and the wider community.
- 2.3 The consultation period ended on the 31 January 2024. The consultation period met the statutory timeframe and was extended from the required four weeks to a seven-week consultation to allow for the Christmas break.
- 2.4 Responses to the consultation were received via the online survey and by email. It should be noted that respondents to the consultation did not always provide answers to all questions and sometimes gave more than one answer to questions. One response was received after the closing date of 31 January 2024 and therefore is not included and does not form part of the analysis of comments received.
- 2.5 In total 624 people completed the online survey and 39 separate emails were received.
- 2.6 A summary of all online responses is included as appendix 1. This will be fully considered ahead of any final decision and any further feedback but this report and appendix 1 offer an initial assessment and response to that feedback.
- 2.7 An online petition objecting to the proposals was brought to the attention of the County Council. It had 666 signatures on 31 January 2024. The County Council is not able to verify addresses and names with regard to duplication or locality in line with the County Council's [Petitions guidance](#). It is however recorded and has been considered alongside the other consultation responses. The issues it

raised (traffic, environmental impact, walking and cycling and community cohesion) are covered in the responses to consultation provided in appendix 1.

- 2.8 A petition was received via the County Council's e-petitions page of the website requesting a Pedestrian Crossing at Sherborne Road/Norwich Road, Chichester. The petition closed on 31 January 2024, coinciding with the closure of the public consultation on the proposals regarding Jessie Younghusband School. The petition received 23 signatures, which have all be verified as valid.

Initial Assessment of consultation responses

- 2.9 One of the main concerns raised regarding the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband was in relation to the accessibility of the school for those choosing to walk, cycle or scoot to school. A collection of photographs and dash cam footage was submitted as part of the consultation responses showing the traffic congestion around St Pauls Road, Broyle Road and access to Sherborne Road which would be used to access Minerva Heights by some of the pupils who attend the current site. Officers are currently in discussion with the Safer Routes to Schools team regarding the suitability of a proposed walking/cycling route to the relocated school via the nearby Centurion Way.
- 2.10 In response to the question in the consultation regarding the expansion of St Anthony's School into the buildings vacated by Jessie Younghusband Primary School, by circa 50 places, 229 respondents were in support, 332 opposed the proposal and 63 did not have a preference either way.
- 2.11 The following considerations are offered by way of response to issues raised in the consultation:
- i) *To enable the expansion of St Anthony's without relocating Jessie Younghusband, by using land or facilities elsewhere.*
The provision of additional SEN places at St Anthony's Special School on the current site alongside Jessie Younghusband Primary School is not viable. In addition the Headteacher and Governing Body advise the benefits of expansion on the current site will allow increased provision for pupils in the Chichester area and the continued benefit of using the existing specialist provision on the site;
 - ii) *There will be no benefit to the pupils of Jessie Younghusband and it will be disruptive for current pupils.*
The Minerva Heights development will see a new 1FE (210 pupils) primary school building being provided that has the potential to be expanded, when need requires, to 2FE (420 pupils). This means the potential to expand a popular school and to increase its resources and resilience through expansion and thereby enhance the quality of education.

The relocation of a popular and oversubscribed school will allow it to move into modern buildings and have the potential to expand to 2FE (420 places). The existing pupils on roll will continue to attend the school in its new buildings and as the Minerva Heights development progresses there will be the ability to consider when a further expansion to 2 FE (420 pupils) will be required without additional disruption.
 - iii) *The loss of community links to the school in its established location.*

The retention of the existing catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School and expansion to include most of the Minerva Heights development was requested by the Co-Chairs of Governors at Jessie Younghusband Primary and provides the most pragmatic way of retaining the same community links to the area and also recognising the growth of the Minerva Heights development and the benefits of children new to that development being able to join an established well regarded school.

iv) *The lack of a safe walking route to the new school*

Concerns about the availability of a safe and accessible walking route from the existing catchment area of Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the new site at Minerva Heights have been considered by officers who have walked the routes to and from the school via both the Centurion Way and using St Paul's Road. Considering the various factors which need to be taken into account and by reference to knowledge about routes used by primary school pupils across the County it was concluded that both routes are considered suitable for children to walk, accompanied as necessary by parents/carers;

At this stage it is not possible to predict the likely patterns of future parental preferences to identify what further mitigation might be explored. However, all schools are expected to have a School Travel Plan to:

- Reduce the number of vehicles on the journey to school
- Improve safety on the journey to school
- Encourage more active and sustainable travel choices

v) The proposed changes to the catchment areas of both Parklands Primary School and Fishbourne Primary School received a high level of support through those in favour and those who neither supported or opposed the proposals;

Additional consultation and engagement

2.12 The Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee will be considering the proposals at its meeting on 28 February. The views of the Committee will be considered before a final decision is taken. This will include the comments of the Committee on the consultation responses and on the response of the service to the feedback and issues raised as set out in this report.

2.13 The local county councillors will also have the opportunity to express their views to the Scrutiny Committee. They have also been able to use the opportunity of the public consultation to make their views known and to listen to the views of their communities in preparation for the submission of any final comments, which the Cabinet Member will take into account.

3 Detail of Proposals

3.1 A feasibility study for the expansion of St Anthony's Special School into vacated Jessie Younghusband Primary School buildings has been instructed to identify estimated costs. This has suggested that the capital costs could be comparable to other similar SEN projects at some £3m. Further design work, procurement and competitive tendering would be needed following business cases progressing through the County Council's capital governance process. The

option of expanding St Anthony's Special School through a new build and leaving Jessie Younghusband Primary School on its current site has been estimated to be significantly costly and likely to exceed £13m. It is not considered that the option of having no expansion to St Anthony's would be in compliance with the County Council's responsibilities nor its SEND strategy.

- 3.2 If the final proposal remains to progress with the proposal to relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the primary school site within the Minerva Heights development. In accordance with [DfE Guidance on Making Significant Changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to Maintained Schools](#), this requires the County Council to move to the next stage in the consultation process, to issue statutory proposals that set out the proposed changes. This consists of a 4-week period where the public can make further representations by letter or email. However, it should be noted that these representations cannot be a repeat of the evidence already provided but offers the opportunity to highlight new information to the decision maker.
- 3.3 To enable any decisions to take effect from September 2025, it is recommended that the statutory notices run during April and May 2024 followed by a decision on the proposals to enable communication before the summer holiday. There would then follow further discussions with the schools concerned, as appropriate, to ensure parents are clear on the arrangements for September 2025 entry.
- 3.4 Approval is sought to delegate authority to the Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) to determine whether proposals should proceed following consideration of any representations received during the statutory proposals period. The outcome of this process will be the subject of a future key decision by the Assistant Director.
- 3.5 This decision also seeks approval to revise the catchment areas of the following three schools should the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband be confirmed (see plan at Appendix 2):
 - Revise the catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School to include the whole of the Minerva Heights development as well as the area of land to the right of the development, whilst retaining its existing catchment area.
 - Revise the catchment area for Parklands Community Primary School to finish along the boundary line of Centurion Way, where it borders the Minerva Heights development, whilst retaining the remainder of their existing catchment area.
 - Revise the catchment area for Fishbourne C of E Primary School by removing the existing area which falls within the Minerva Heights development, retaining the remainder of their existing catchment area.

4 Other options considered

- 4.1 There is an option to undertake an Academy presumption process to seek applications from Academy Trusts to open a new school on the Minerva Heights development. This is not the preferred option as the proposal to relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary School provides sustainable places and an option to expand an existing Primary School rated as Good by Ofsted. Further, this option

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Annex A

would not enable the expansion of St Anthony's School which would enable the County Council to meet the additional demand for SEND Specialist places.

- 4.2 The option to not relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary and expand SEND provision at another WSCC special school or to repurpose provision elsewhere has been considered and discounted as the challenges of operating St Anthony's on a split site arrangement are impractical and not supported by the Headteacher or Governing Body.

5 Finance

Revenue consequences

- 5.1 Revenue funding for mainstream schools is regulated through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block National Funding Formula (NFF). The school would therefore continue to receive funding through the current mechanism. There are no direct revenue funding implications against County Council funding because of this proposal for relocating Jessie Younghusband Primary School.
- 5.2 Revenue funding for special schools is regulated through the DSG High Needs block and once again there are no direct revenue funding implications against County Council revenue funding. The school would continue to receive funding through the current mechanism.
- 5.3 The revenue funding implications against the DSG High Needs Block will be updated once the more detailed business case is brought forward regarding the proposed expansion of St Anthony's.

Capital consequences

- 5.4 Any project will go through the County Council's capital governance process, which will require a Business Case and officer approval followed by a cabinet member decision. It will then enter the Capital Programme leading to a designed scheme which will need to be approved. The funding, if this project is approved, would be a mixture of Basic Need, SEND Funding & Section 106. It would need to be weighed against other competing expansions and provision of places that fall within the available SEND, Basic Need and Section 106 funding. The expansion of St Anthony's school is a priority project within the SEND Sufficiency Plan.
- 5.5 The opportunity to convert and use an existing building for increased SEN provision represents good value through minimising the carbon impact of new buildings. Increasing SEN places allows the County Council to both meet the needs of the local population and also provide a suitable provision at a reduced cost compared to INMS placement costs.
- 5.6 If this proposal is agreed, there will be a need for staff to work in a different location however impact will be minimal due to the short distance of the move and an appropriate communication/consultation process will be followed. There are no proposed reductions to staffing numbers resulting from this proposal.
- 5.7 If this proposal is agreed, in accordance with the West Sussex County Council relocation policy, provisions for mileage allowance resulting from staff relocation do not apply due to the minimal distance.

- 5.8 If this proposal is agreed, the Governing Body will work with West Sussex County Council Officers to support staff through the process of relocation.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
That the new developer built primary school will not be complete for occupation in September 2025	There is regular liaison between the County Council and the developer with progress being monitored closely. There is an obligation within the S106 Agreement to provide the new school
Insufficient capital funding for expanding St Anthony's	Should the proposals be approved to expand St Anthony's Special School these will result in a revenue benefit to WSCC and a Business Case will be progressed through the County's Capital Governance process to secure sufficient capital funding.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 Our Council Plan

Investment in educational provision to ensure children and young people achieve their potential and make the best use of resources is a key strand of the [Council's plan](#) for its residents.

7.2 Legal Implications

No significant implications. The consultation arrangements and proposals for further formal consultation are in line with regulatory requirements.

7.3 Equality Duty and Human Rights Assessment

A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached at appendix 3. This has included any relevant considerations arising from the feedback to the consultation. In summary the conclusion is that there will be significant benefits to the proposals overall, especially in relation to the expansion of St Anthony's. This is particularly the case given the positive implications of the proposed changes with respect of supporting provision of more local places for SEND and Alternative Provision to meet the needs of some pupils within their community which currently are not being met.

The consideration of the equality duty was applied both to the process of undertaking the consultation and the analysis of feedback to ensure that due consideration was given to the needs of persons with protected characteristics and the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

7.4 Climate Change

The proposed relocation of Jessie Youngusband Primary School could result in an increase to the levels of pupils travelling in vehicles to schools and thereby leading to increased pollution through vehicles. This will be addressed through the development of the School's Travel Plan. The increased capacity for St

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Annex A

Anthony's should mean a lower than expected need to provide out of county SEND places and a consequent reduced need for longer journeys to and from school.

7.5 **Crime and Disorder**

None.

7.6 **Public Health**

No significant implications. Opportunities for children to walk or cycle to local school provision will be encouraged through the development of the School's Travel Plan.

7.7 **Social Value**

There is a significant social value in enabling children to have access to school provision within their local community, with all of the benefits of being closer to family and community and the reduced travel for those with special needs having to access schooling out of County.

Mr S Nyakatawa,

Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills)

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Appendices

Appendix 1– Summary of responses received to the online consultation

Appendix 2 - Plan of the proposed catchment area changes

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers - None

Analysis of Responses to Public Consultation Summary Report

Proposed Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Expansion of St Anthony's School, and Catchment Area Review

A public consultation exercise was undertaken by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) between 14 December 2023 and 31 January 2024 via social media, email, paper form and online via the Your Voice website <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/jessie-younghusband-st-anthony-s-and-catchments>

The consultation sought views on the proposals from stakeholders, the local community and responses were collected via the Your Voice webpage.

The consultation sought feedback from the community on the intention to;

Relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary School from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places) which is being built on the housing development West of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights.

Expand St Anthony's school by circa 50 places, utilising the vacated buildings of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, providing much needed additional places for children aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning needs.

The proposals also included the revision to the catchment areas for Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Parklands Community Primary School and Fishbourne C of E Primary School, these catchment changes will only be implemented if the proposal to relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary school are approved. Details of the proposed revisions can be found in Appendix 2.

There were 624 survey responses received during the consultation, entered on the Your Voice website from parent/carers, local residents, school staff and governors. No responses were discounted as all were correctly input. There were no postal responses received. One response was received after the closing date of 31 January 2024 and therefore is not included and does not form part of the analysis of comments received.

Representations opposing the proposals were received from the following groups and associations; The Governing Body of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Chair of Governors of Parklands Community Primary School, The East Broyle Residents Association, Summersdale Residents Association and local members of Chichester District and City Councils.

An online petition was organised objecting to the proposals for the school to relocate to the new housing development known as Minerva Heights and was brought to the attention of the County Council. It had 666 signatures on 31 January. The response levels that the petition has received are noted, however the petition has not been submitted in a format whereby the County Council is able to verify addresses and names with regard to duplication, accuracy, or locality, in line with the County Council's [Petitions guidance](#) .

A petition was received via the County Council's e-petitions page of the website requesting a Pedestrian Crossing Sherborne Road/Norwich Road, Chichester. The petition closed on 31 January 2024, coinciding with the closure

of the public consultation on the proposals regarding Jessie Younghusband School. The petition received 23 signatures, which have all be verified as valid.

The consultation webpage received 1,641 visitors in total, 624 or 38% of whom went on to complete the survey.

Of the 624 responses received, in relation to the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School 223 (35.7%) were in support of the proposals, 370 (59.3%) were opposed to the proposals and 31(5%) neither supported or opposed the proposals.

442 (70.8%) respondents made varied comments and concerns in relation to the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School. The main focus of these concerns has been summarised in the table below: -

Concern Raised	Response to Concerns
<p>The number of proposed houses at the Minerva Heights (MH) development justifies its own school, why have you decided to move Jessie Younghusband Primary School (JYH) and reduce the number of school places available for in excess of 2,500 homes?</p>	<p>The Minerva Heights development is only expected to deliver some 1,600 homes when fully complete. The first phase (currently underway) is for 750 homes with an expected 850 homes in the second phase. Pupil numbers will therefore grow over time but the level of initial demand for places will be small. This size of development will, in time, require up to a 2 Form Entry (FE) (420 pupils) primary school. The relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School allows an existing primary school to move into the new buildings and increase, over time, to 2FE and ensure sufficient local provision. Overall pupil numbers across the City have declined in recent years and there is sufficient capacity across the whole of the City to meet projected demand.</p>
<p>Why is the school at MH not being built as a 2 form entry from the outset.</p>	<p>The developers are building the first phase of the primary school which will have classrooms for a 1 Form Entry (FE) primary school (210 pupils) but with core facilities sized to meet a 2FE (420 pupils) need in the future. The pupil demand from the Minerva Heights development does not warrant a 2FE primary school at this stage. However, the County Council has stated that it does expect, in time, to require the school to expand. As Jessie Younghusband Primary School currently admits pupils from across the city the relocation to Minerva Heights should enable local need from the proposed catchment area to be met.</p>
<p>Moving JYH away from the centre of the current estate will damage the community focus.</p>	<p>The County Council would hope that Minerva Heights will provide an extended community rather than something separate. This should be helped by providing a link to the new area through</p>

	<p>the full use of the school site from the start. The new location for Jessie Younghusband Primary School should not prevent it from meeting the community needs and focus of its proposed catchment area as schools typically serve a large community area.</p>
<p>JYH is already oversubscribed increasing the catchment area will make it harder for residents in North Chichester to secure a place</p>	<p>The new school will have the capacity to expand and meet demand for this popular school. Overall demand for places is decreasing.</p>
<p>The majority of children currently walk, cycle or scoot to JYH, there is no safe way for this to continue, Centurion Way has no lighting and regularly floods, the other option is walking along the narrow path along the main road, which is not safe, with no pedestrian crossing</p>	<p>Centurion Way is used by many walkers and cyclists and is a popular route. Flooding is infrequent and very seasonal and only significant on a small stretch and can be managed as for any path affected by wet weather. Discussions have begun with WSP.com (a multinational engineering and design firm) on options for improvements. Feedback from local residents and observation of school start and finish times shows that many pupils are already transported to school in vehicles. The alternative route crossing St Paul's Road and using a tarmac footpath alongside St Paul's Road to enter Minerva Heights from the North is no different to many other routes used by parents and carers to accompany their children to schools across the County.</p>
<p>Increased traffic to/from the MH development is not promoting WSCC transport/climate change policies</p>	<p>The County Council will look to the school to develop its existing School Travel Plan and encourage greater numbers of pupils to walk, cycle or scoot to school, accompanied as necessary by parents/carers, and thereby reduce the need for parents/carers to use vehicles.</p>
<p>MH school site is inadequately designed with roadways too small and insufficient parking to consider pickups / drop offs. This will result in dangerous environment for children at both ends of the school day.</p>	<p>The County Council wishes to encourage more pupils to walk, cycle or scoot to the new school site, accompanied as necessary by parents/carers, and thereby reduce the number of vehicles that might wish to access the school. It is not considered sustainable to design school settings to accommodate vehicle pick up and drop off.</p>
<p>Why wasn't there a public meeting held to share openly the proposals and respond to parent's concerns?</p>	<p>The format of online consultations has been used since 2020 to allow the opportunity for anyone interested to read the proposals rather than limiting the opportunity to one public meeting. Many people find it easier to make their views known through digital media rather than in a public forum. It also provides a better</p>

	record of comments. The consultation itself is the opportunity for anyone to express their concerns so that all issues are considered by the Cabinet Member in making their decision on the proposals. Responses to issues cannot always be given immediately when voiced as they may need to be considered more fully.
Jessie Younghusband Primary should not move location. Therefore, its catchment should not increase. As part of the planning approval for Minerva Heights, a primary school was promised. That should be delivered.	A primary school is being delivered for Minerva Heights as required through planning. The County Council initially suggested a reduced catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the Co-Chairs of Governors and they asked that the consultation should be on retaining the existing catchment and increasing it to include most of the Minerva Heights development. The current proposals fulfil the requirement that a school will be delivered on the Minerva Heights development.
All schools are popular and do not have spaces. This will just add further pressure for school spaces in an area of the city which has no other options for primary schools. Previously promised new schools were never built which is why JYH is already oversubscribed.	Many of the existing primary schools across Chichester such as St Joseph's Infant & Junior Schools and Kingsham Primary School have pupil numbers significantly below the school's capacity and therefore alternative school places are available in the City. A proposed primary school at Graylingwell was not progressed due to the limited pupil demand from that development and the site constraints did not allow for it to be expanded. The County Council recognises Jessie Younghusband Primary School is a popular and oversubscribed school and that is due to parental preference as places do exist at other schools across the City. The proposals provide the best means of enabling the school to expand.

Of the 624 responses received, in relation to the expansion of St Anthony's school into the vacated Jessie Younghusband Primary School buildings 229 (36.7%) were in support of the proposals, 332 (53.2%) were opposed to the proposals and 63 (10.1%) neither supported or opposed the proposals.

443 (70.9%) respondents made varied comments and concerns in relation to the expansion of St Anthony's School into the vacated Jessie Younghusband Primary School buildings. The main focus of these concerns has been summarised in the table below: -

Concerns Raised	Responses to Concerns
St Anthony's school should not expand on the Jessie site, it serves a wide catchment area there will be a greater increase in traffic as the majority of pupils arrive by	The Governing Body of St Anthony's Special School believe the expansion of places on the current Jessie Younghusband site will enable a greater

<p>minibus, taxi or car generating traffic unrelated to the area, at the expense of a school serving the immediate locality, in safe walking distance of most pupils.</p>	<p>benefit to meeting the needs of its pupils rather than operating on a split site. The proposed increase in pupil numbers at St Anthony's will allow it to meet more needs from the Chichester area and reduce the need to send children with SEN further afield. The number of vehicles accessing the site will be similar to that at most other Special Schools across the County. It will be the same, or possibly greater, if the expansion is across two sites.</p>
<p>Support the need for increased SEND provision, however St Anthony's site is large enough for an expansion, which is the obvious solution and not at the expense, disruption and inconvenience of pupils and staff at Jessie Younghusband School?</p>	<p>This is not the case and is not supported by the Governors. Further expansion on the St Anthony's site whilst retaining the current number of pupils at Jessie Younghusband Primary School will place significantly greater pressure on the traffic accessing the site. The proposals allow for increased numbers of children with SEN to receive local provision and for Jessie Younghusband Primary School to relocate into a modern building that has the capacity for expansion when need requires.</p>
<p>We are aware of the huge deficit that the council is carrying (£70m) and that currently no feasibility study has been undertaken and no budget has been set for the proposed adaptation and refurbishment of JYH for use by St Anthony's so how can this even be a viable proposal?</p>	<p>This may be a reference to an accounting deficit related to SEND as part of the level of Government funding for education. It has no bearing on the County Council's capital investment in delivering school places. The County Council must meet demand for such provision and the funding deficit does not override that obligation.</p> <p>The proposals will help limit the significant financial cost of SEN provision by increasing provision for the Chichester area and limiting the need for pupils to be transported to other schools. All capital projects require a Business Case that progresses through the County's Capital Governance procedures to ensure an appropriate budget is secured.</p>
<p>St Anthony's school currently has 235 places. The proposed plan would provide a further 50 places from the conversion of JYS. WSCC anticipate that 300 places will be required over next 5 years. This means that by the time the relocation and conversions are complete, capacity is likely to already be insufficient. The proposal does therefore not meet the stated aim of expanding SEND provision to meet the anticipated demand.</p>	<p>The additional 50 places will provide a much needed increase in SEN Places. The County Council will continue to explore options for increasing SEN places across the County. A number of other schemes are underway or in preparation as part of an earlier Cabinet commitment to SEND provision.</p>

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Of the 624 responses received, in relation to the revision of the catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School 173 (27.7%) were in support of the proposals, 328 (52.6%) were opposed to the proposals and 123 (19.7%) neither supported or opposed the proposals.

Of the 624 responses received, in relation to the revision of the catchment area for Parklands Community Primary School 178 (28.5%) were in support of the proposals, 194 (31.1%) were opposed to the proposals and 252 (40.4%) neither supported or opposed the proposals.

Of the 624 responses received, in relation to the revision of the catchment area for Fishbourne C of E Primary School 180 (28.8%) were in support of the proposals, 150 (24.0%) were opposed to the proposals and 294 (47.1%) neither supported or opposed the proposals.

249 (39.9%) respondents made varied comments and concerns in relation to the revision of the catchment areas with the majority of the comments relating to the proposals for Jessie Younghusband Primary School. The main focus of these concerns have been summarised in the table below:-

Concerns Raised	Response to Concerns
The new catchment area for JYH will mean that children from North Chichester will be phased out of being able to attend the school in the future	As Jessie Younghusband Primary School is already heavily oversubscribed this currently means many families are unable to secure places. The relocation and expected future expansion of the school will give more pupils the opportunity to attend the school. Children from the North of Chichester are still able to attend other schools in the area such as St Josephs Infants & Junior School, Parklands Primary and Portfield Primary.
JYH is already oversubscribed increasing the catchment area will make it harder for residents in North Chichester to secure a place	Parents already have the ability to express a preference for any school and this may not always be to the closest school to the home address. As the school is already oversubscribed the admissions criteria are currently used to allocate places up to the Published Admissions Number and all pupils are offered a place at an alternative school. The proposals will provide an opportunity for JYH to expand.
Why has the Parklands Catchment been reduced by over half for a two form entry school and JYH catchment increased massively for a one form entry school?	The revised catchment area for Parklands School reflects the need to revise its catchment if Jessie Younghusband Primary School relocates to Minerva Heights and the wishes of the Co-Chairs of Governors at Jessie Younghusband Primary School to retain their existing catchment area and expand to include most of the Minerva Heights development. It also anticipates the potential expansion.

The proposed new catchment for Jessie Younghusband is completely unrealistic, for an already as the council describe "oversubscribed primary school" to triple the size of the catchment area, but only create 210 additional primary school placements is not a long term investment

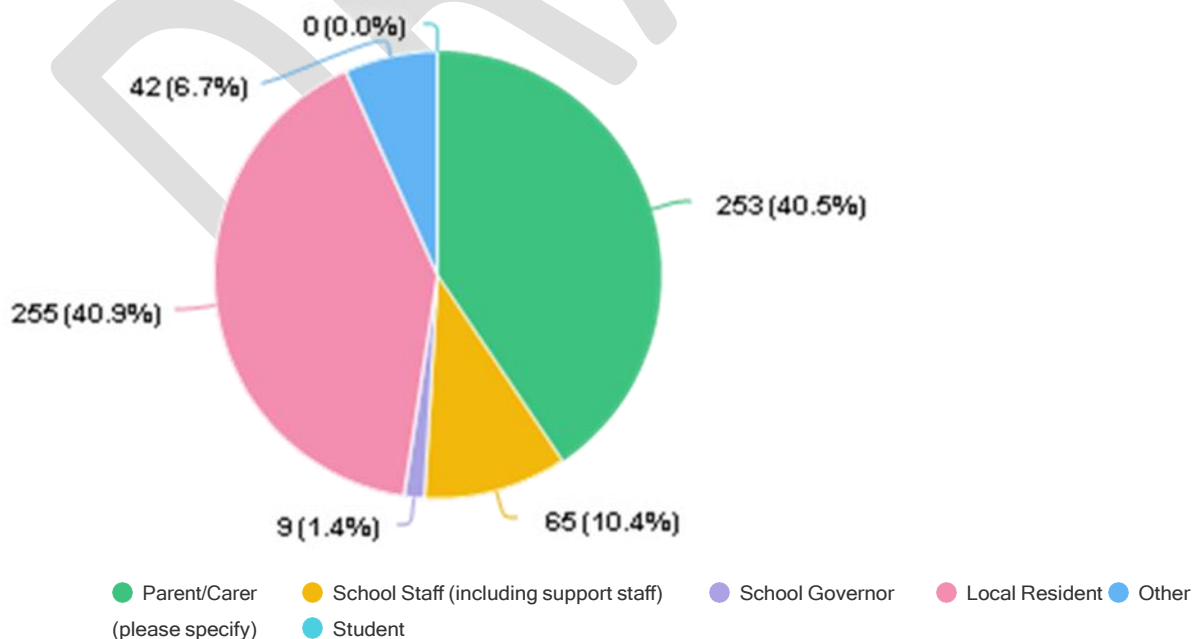
The proposed catchment area is larger than initially proposed by the County Council. As catchment areas are reviewed on a regular basis this may be an issue to explore at a future date. Pupil numbers and demand for places will continue to be assessed to inform any review of catchment areas.

The County Council asks social demographic questions to help monitor the effectiveness of its surveys and to undertake an equalities analysis in fulfilment of its Public Sector Equalities Duties under the 2010 Equalities Act.

In line with the County Council's policy outlined above not all respondents chose to answer the following questions.

Which of the following best describes you?

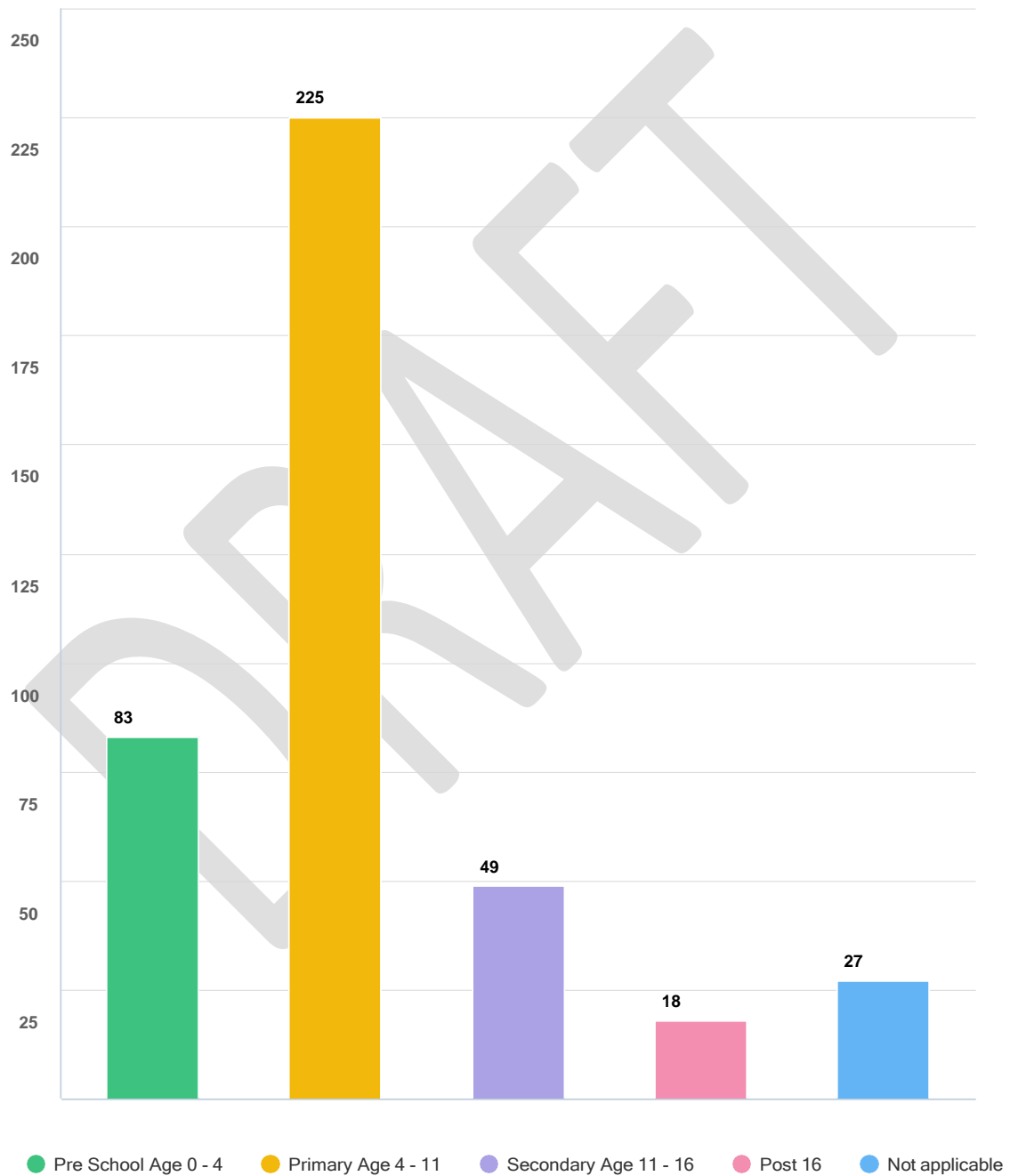
Parent/Carer	253	40.5%
School Staff (including support staff)	65	10.4%
School Governor	9	1.4%
Local Resident	255	40.9%
Other	42	6.7%
Student	0	0%



If you are a Parent/Carer, how old are your children?

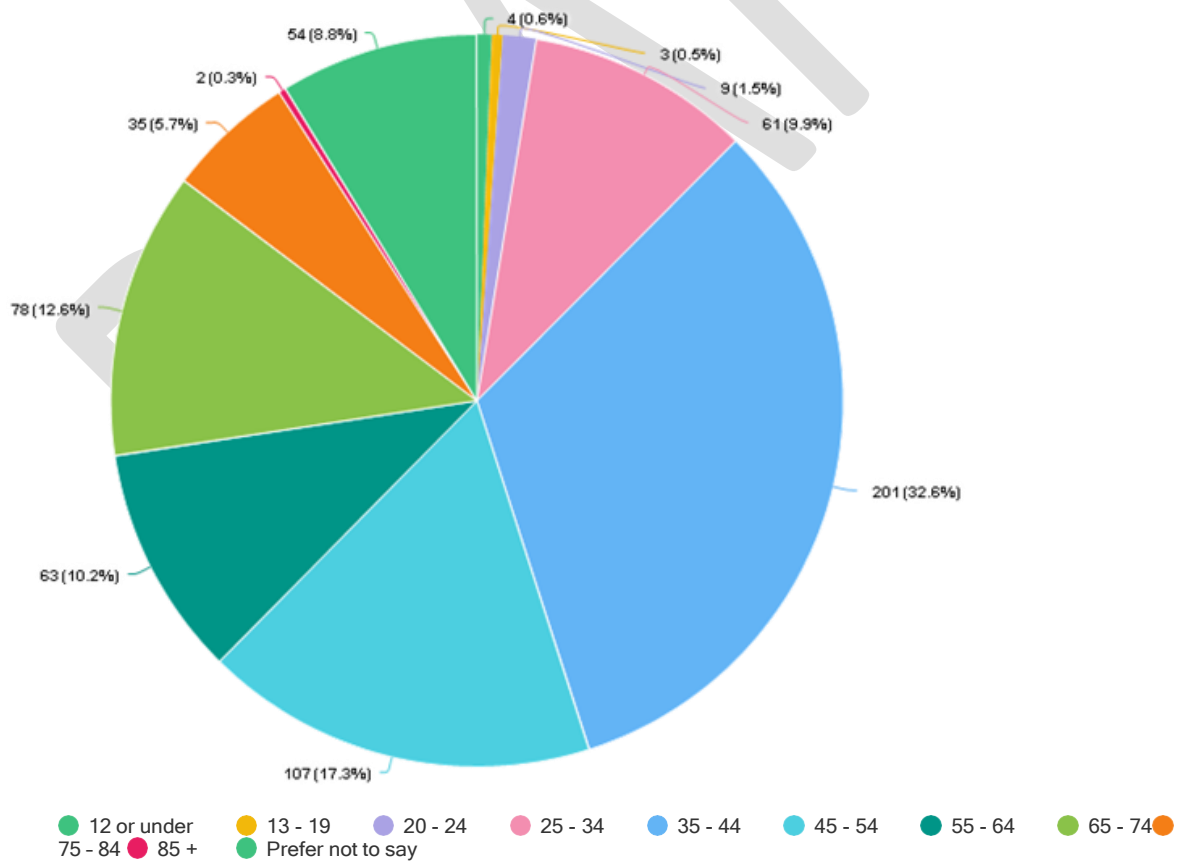
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Pre school 0-4	83
Primary Age 4-11	225
Secondary Age 11-16	49
Post 16	18
Not Applicable	27



Age

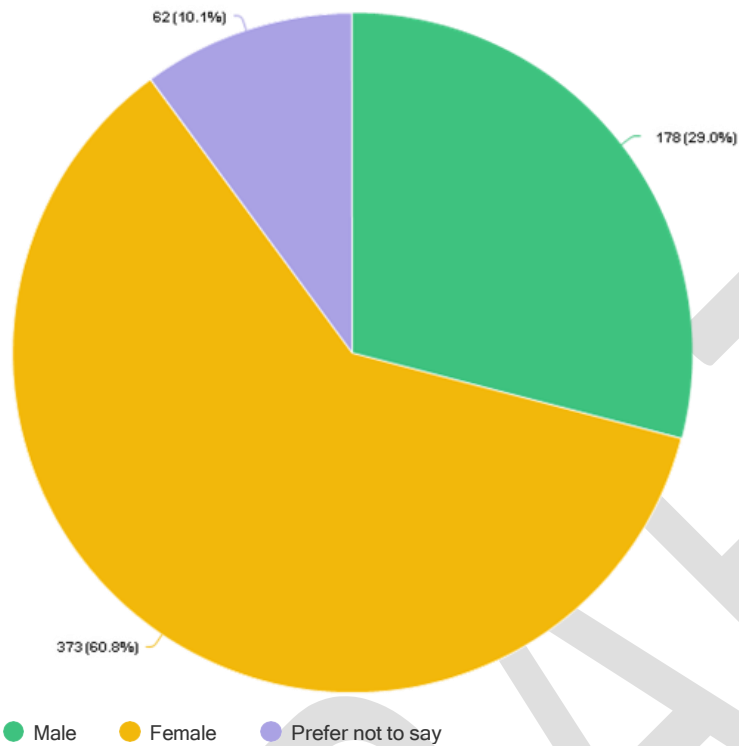
12 or under	4	0.6%
13 - 19	3	0.5%
20 - 24	9	1.5%
25 - 34	61	9.9%
35 - 44	201	32.6%
45 - 54	107	7.3%
55 - 64	63	10.2%
65 -74	78	12.6%
75 - 84	35	5.7%
85+	2	0.3%
Prefer not to say	54	8.8%



Sex (note this question is about sex as defined by the 2010 Equalities Act. It is not about gender)

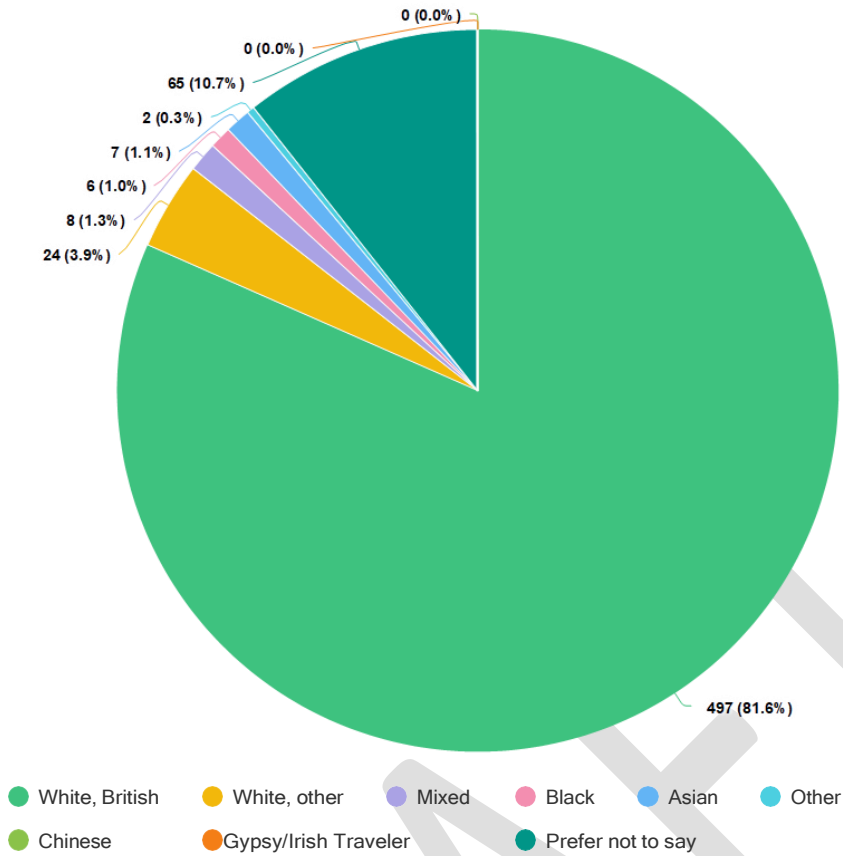
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Male	178	29%
Female	373	60.8%
Prefer not to say	62	10.1%



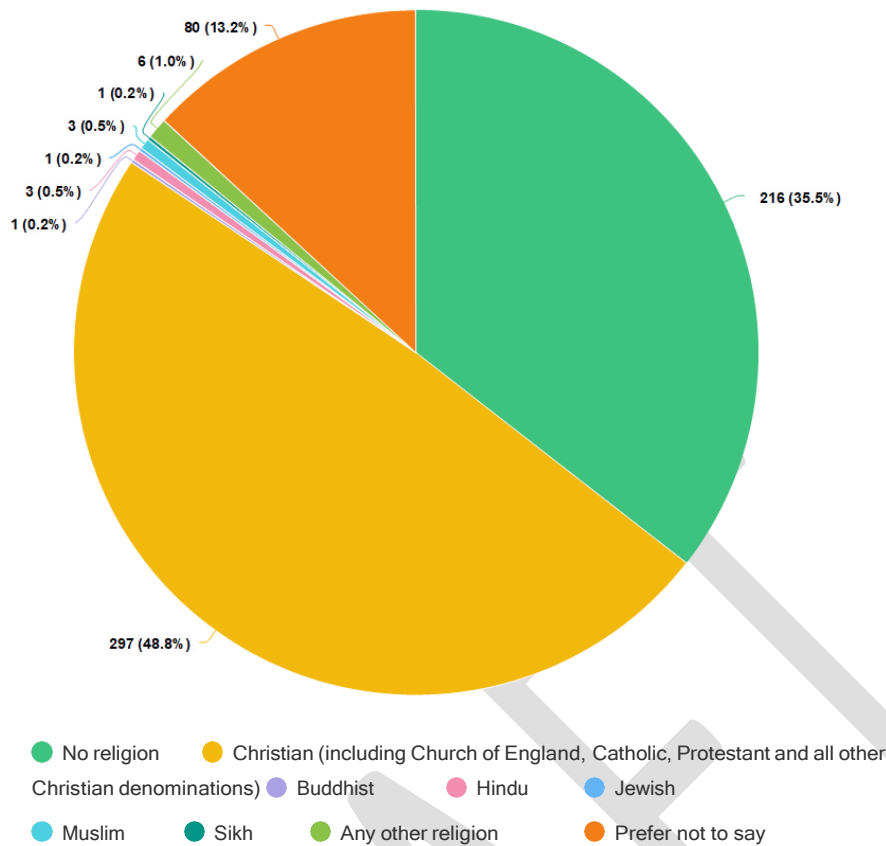
What is your ethnic group?

White British	497	81.6%
White Other	24	3.9%
Mixed	8	1.3%
Black	6	1%
Asian	7	1.1%
Other	2	0.3%
Chinese	0	0%
Gypsy/Irish traveller	0	0%
Prefer not to say	65	10.7%



What is your religion?

No Religion	216	35.5%
Christian	297	48.8%
Buddhist	1	0.2%
Hindu	3	0.5%
Jewish	1	0.2%
Muslim	3	0.5%
Sikh	1	0.2%
Any other religion	6	1%
Prefer not to say	80	13.2%



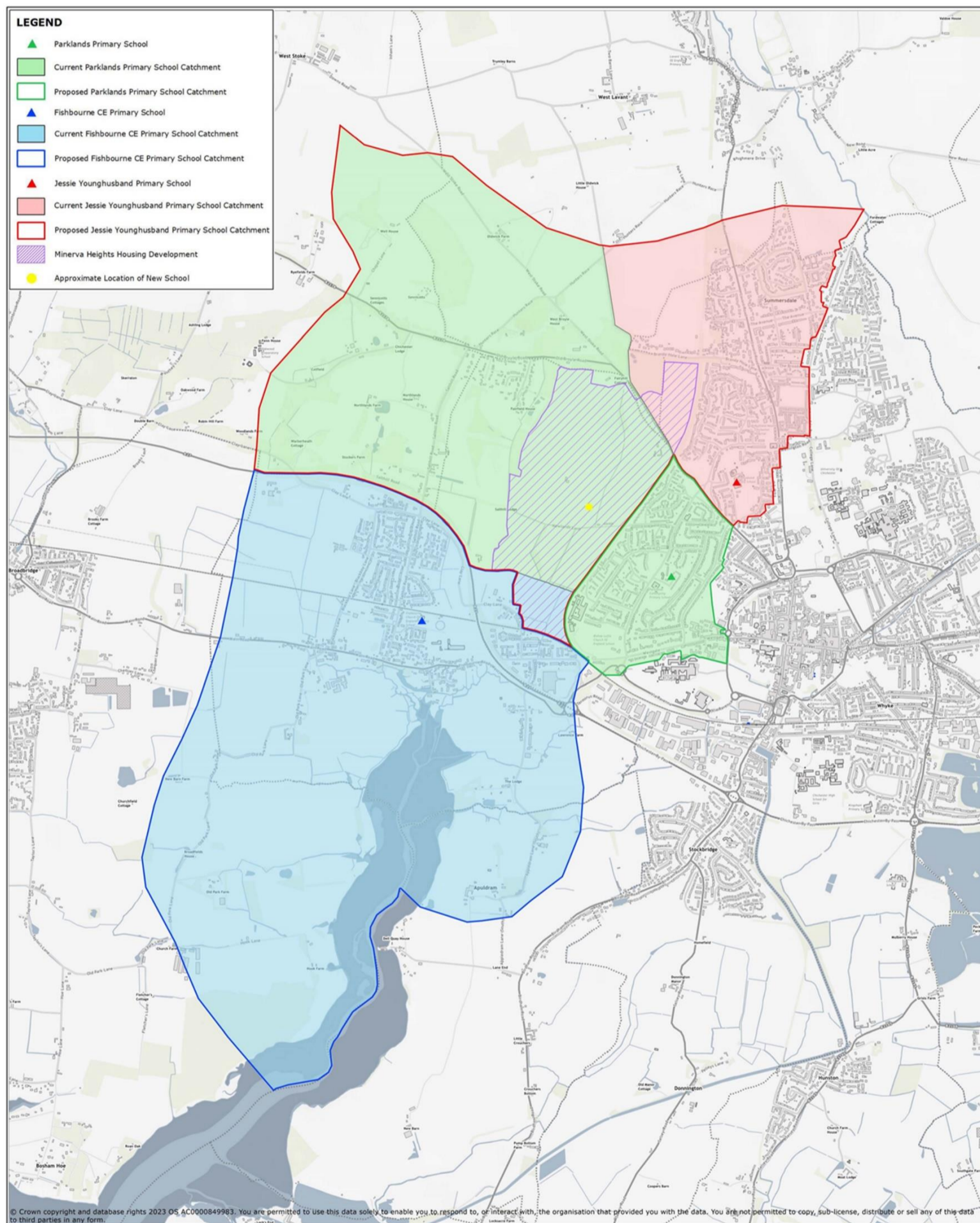
An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in more detail (Appendix 3) showing no detrimental impact on the equality groups of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, part-time workers or those with caring responsibilities, socio-economic groups or other socially excluded communities).

Proposed Revisions to the catchment areas for schools closest to the Minerva Heights development.

Parklands Primary School - the catchment area is proposed to now finish along the boundary line of Centurion Way, bordering the Minerva heights development, the area to the right will remain unchanged, green boundary line on the map.

Jessie Younghusband Primary School is proposed to now include Minerva Heights (purple hatched area on the map) as well as the area to the left of the development, red outline boundary on the map.

Fishbourne Primary School is proposed to remain predominantly unchanged, with the top boundary now going around the Minerva Heights development blue outline boundary on the map.



School Locations & Catchments in relation to ' Minerva Heights

	Scale @ A1:	1:11000	Produced by Property Information Team	
	Plot Date:	03/11/2023	Property & Assets Directorate	

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Proposed Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Expansion of St Anthony's School and Catchment Area Review

Equality Impact Assessment

Contact Details

Service/department/section: Organisation and Planning, Education and Skills,

Full name: Tracey Dunn

Job Title: Schools Planning Officer South and West

Email/phone: 0330 222 3048

Submission date: 14 February 2024

1. About the Policy, Procedure or Change

Title of Policy, Procedure or Change:

Proposed Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Expansion of St Anthony's School, and Catchment Area Review

Briefly describe the purpose of the changes being made:

Jessie Younghusband Primary School which is a 4-11 Primary School providing up to 210 places. The school is a successful over-subscribed primary school with a Good OfSTED rating.

Sharing a site with Jessie Younghusband Primary School is St Anthony's School in Chichester, a special school for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning difficulties. Current places are insufficient to meet the need for special school places in the area resulting in children being placed in Independent and Non -Maintained Schools (INMS) often out of area. There is an urgent need to expand St Anthony's to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2024.

The shared site restricts the potential of expansion for both schools. The County Council has worked closely with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies at both St Anthony's Special School and Jessie Younghusband Primary School to discuss potential options to enable St Anthony's Special School to expand and to provide a similar opportunity for Jessie Younghusband.

The proposal is to relocate Jessie Younghusband from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places) which is being built on the housing development West of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights. All pupils currently on roll and those who have applied for starting school for September 2024 entry will automatically transfer to the new school site.

The new site is of sufficient size to accommodate an expansion to 2FE (420 places) should demand arising from the new development and wider planning area require this. The relocation therefore provides scope for expansion in the future of a successful primary school thereby providing greater financial sustainability for the school.

The plan is then to expand St Anthonys School by circa 50 places providing much needed additional places for children aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning needs.

There will also be a review of the primary catchment areas for Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Parklands Community Primary School, and Fishbourne C of E Primary School to take into consideration the new school being built at Minerva Heights and the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School.

Who do the changes apply to?

- Parents/pupils
- Staff at the school
- Community/residents

2. Data collection; consultation; and evidence

- a) Please provide a summary of the data you have used to develop the policy, procedure, or change.
 1. The proposal is based on research data relating to the proposed housing development (Minerva Heights) and the associated planning application and s.106 agreement, data relating to admission forecasts, populations projections and parental preference requests relating to the schools in the area. There is also SEND data relating to the level of demand for particular types of special school provision and which has been used to develop the SEND Sufficiency Plan. This includes data on the sufficiency of provision within the County and the level of use of INMS, both current and projected.
 2. The proposals were developed into briefing papers for stakeholder including local MPs, County Councillors, Chichester District Council, Local Parish Councils, Teaching Associations and Unions. Headteachers and Chair of Governors of the schools affected, The Roman Catholic Diocese Of Arundel & Brighton and the Church of England Diocese. Advice and feedback from these stakeholders have informed the proposals.
 3. A public consultation exercise was held in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory [guidance for making prescribed alterations to maintained schools](#) to obtain feedback regarding the proposals between 14 December 2023 and 31 January 2024. This was promoted by a social media press release, via the schools communication system, through the Your Voice Residents eNewsletter, and included a survey of respondents' key characteristics in line with the WSCC's policy on the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information from this consultation response has been considered in finalising the proposals.

b) Describe the impact the proposals may have on employees and or community members in each of the equality groups below. If you assess that there is no impact on an equality group, please give your reasoning.

- **Age:**

There will be no impact on any persons affected on the basis of age. The range of pupils affected covers the whole of the primary age range and children within the area or who will come into the area over time. No groups or individuals are differently affected due to their age.

- **Disability:**

Disabled children will be positively impacted by this proposal. The proposal will increase the number of available places for children at the schools which provide places for children in mainstream education and for disabled children and for children with Special Educational Needs. It will reduce the need for such children to be placed outside their area and reduce the travel associated with school attendance.

- **Gender (sex):**

Children of both genders will be positively impacted by this proposal which will improve the organisation of education at the schools and across the County in line with national guidance. The schools are co-educational.

- **Gender reassignment:**

There will be no specific impact for children that may at any stage in their school life be considering gender reassignment as all schools, wherever located and organised will approach such matters in line with national guidance. The schools have inclusive admissions policies and this will not change.

- **Marriage or civil partnership:**

No impact on stakeholders that are either married or in a civil partnership. The proposals only affect school aged children. The partnership status of their parents or carers is not material to the proposals in any way.

- **Pregnancy and maternity:**

No impact on stakeholders who are pregnant as the proposals have no direct or indirect impact which could relate to pregnancy or maternity.

- **Race:**

There will be no impact of the proposals on children from different ethnic groups. The schools have inclusive admissions policies and those are not engaged or affected by the proposals.

- **Religion or belief (including no belief):**

There will be no impact for children from religious backgrounds or those with none although the proposals will improve the organisation of education at the schools

and across the County in line with national guidance. The schools have inclusive admissions policies. The schools in question are not faith based.

- **Sexual Orientation:**

There will be no impact for persons with different sexual orientation although the proposal which will improve the organisation of education at the schools and across the County in line with national guidance. The schools have inclusive admissions policies.

- **Part time workers:**

Part-time workers may be impacted by this proposal which could extend the journey time to or from school in some cases, although many pupils are already transported to Jessie Younghusband Primary School in vehicles so the extension on the journey should be minimal. Any impact can also be considered as part of the schools' travel plans.

- **Caring responsibilities:**

Those with caring responsibilities may be impacted by this proposal which could extend the journey time to or from school, although many pupils are already transported to Jessie Younghusband Primary School in vehicles so the extension on the journey should be minimal. Any impact can also be considered as part of the schools' travel plans.

- **Armed Forces and veteran families**

No specific impact is identified

- **Care Leavers**

No specific impact is identified.

- **Socio economic groups (e.g. unemployed; students;):**

There is no identifiable impact for any particular socio-economic group in the community.

- **Other socially excluded communities or groups (e.g. homeless):**

There is no identifiable impact for any particular socio-economic group in the community.

3. Summary and Progressing the Equality Duty

Is there an opportunity to use this policy, procedure or change to show we are working to progress any of part of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Improve quality of opportunity between different protected groups.
- Foster good relations between different protected groups, people who share Protected Characteristics and/or local non-legislative factors are identified.

This impact Assessment and the consultation process have provided a reference point to ensure that careful attention is made to the impact on pupils in protected groups - especially those referred to in this document and ensure that their interests are kept in mind should the proposals be implemented.

a) The overall findings are green – no adverse impacts.

4. Action Planning

Identified Impact(s) on Protected Characteristic or local non-legislative factor(s):

No identified impacts. No action planned although there will be a further period of public consultation should the proposals be approved and a further assessment of impact may be required.

Responsible Lead Officers:

Graham Olway, Head of Organisation and Planning, Education and Tracey Dunn, Schools Planning Officer South and West, Education

Completion date:

14 February 2024

Review date:

April 2024

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Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee

28 February 2024

Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 – 2027 – Cover Report

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

The proposed Early Years and Childcare Strategy - Right from the Start sets out the vision for early years and childcare support for children and their families in West Sussex. The Strategy has been developed with stakeholders to ensure there is a strategic framework for efficient quality provision to maintain efficient and quality provision that provides the best outcomes for Children. This will help support the expansion of early years entitlement from April 2024.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills is due to approve the Strategy in March 2024 as set out in the attached draft decision report.

Focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 -2027 and provide comments to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills for consideration as part of her decision-making.

Key lines of enquiry include:

- The overall aims and objectives of the Strategy and how the benefits of the approach will be realised. Are these clear and as expected?
- How have the feedback and issues identified by stakeholders been addressed within the strategy to ensure full ownership?
- How the implementation and impact of the strategy will be monitored. Do members see anything missing from the approach proposed?

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

1. Background and context

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills is due to make a decision on the adoption of the Strategy in March 2024, following consideration of the Committee’s feedback.

The background and context to this item for scrutiny are set out in the attached reports (listed below), including resource and risk implications, Equality, Human Rights, Social Value, Sustainability and Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessments.

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

Contact Officer: Katherine De La Mora, Senior Advisor – Democratic Services,
0330 22 22535

Appendices

- Appendix A: Draft Key Decision Report – Right from the Start Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 – 2027

Annex 1: Right from the Start Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 – 2027

Annex 2: Strategy Engagement Analysis

Background papers

None

Report to Cllr Jacquie Russell Cabinet Member for Children Young People, Learning and Skills

March 2024

DRAFT: Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 -2027

Report by Steve Nyakatawa Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills)

Electoral division(s): all

Summary

The Council have a range of statutory duties related to early years and childcare services including providing enough childcare places to meet the needs of families in West Sussex. This includes expanding early years entitlement by increasing access to free childcare which will commence in a phased approach from April 2024 to meet Department for Education Guidance.

The County Council along with partner stakeholders has developed 'Right from the Start' the Early Years and Childcare Strategy to support changes locally. It seeks to improve collaborative working and ensure a strategic framework to maintain efficient and high-quality provision that creates the best outcomes for children. The Strategy sets out the vision to support early education entitlements for children and their families from pre-birth to aged five, and wraparound childcare provision from birth to 14.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children Young People, Learning and Skills is asked to approve adoption of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-27.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 There has been a renewed interest in early years provision from the government and Ofsted. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of young children requiring additional support whilst resources have tightened. This has the potential to widen the gap between our least advantaged children and their peers. The challenges faced by families, and for service providers have been exacerbated as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.
- 1.2 Research shows that development from conception to age 2 lays the foundation for a child's physical, emotional, social, educational, and economic future and

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Appendix A

investment at this stage of their lives will result in long-term positive change. This is cited in the 2021 research "[The best start for life: a vision for the critical 1001 days](#)".

- 1.3 The Study of Early Education and Development research from 2012 also found that attendance at high quality early years and childcare settings had wide ranging developmental benefits including: verbal and cognitive development, socio-emotional development including self-regulation.
- 1.4 The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education programme found strong correlations between the quality of provision accessed as well as the impact of home learning environments on young children.
- 1.5 In 2021, the population aged 0-19 years old in the county was approximately 184,000 (approx. 20.5%) (ONS).
- 1.6 In January 2024 there was a total of 1,188 registered early years and childcare providers across West Sussex, of those that have been inspected, 96.5% are good or outstanding.
- 1.7 All 3 and 4-year-olds and some 2-year-olds in England are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year.
- 1.8 96% of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds benefited from a universal funded place in 2023 in West Sussex, with around half of these taking up an extended 30 hours place. 87% of eligible 2-year-olds took up a funded place this is considerably higher than nationally, where an average of 74% benefited from a funded place
- 1.9 In July 2023 the proportion of West Sussex children that attained the Good Level of Development (GLD) – a performance measure assessed at the end of a child's reception year was 67.5% which is comparable to the national figure. Outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds were lower with just 42.3% achieving a GLD compared to 51.6% nationally.
- 1.10 West Sussex County Council wish to enable universal and targeted support from pre-birth to aged five through its first Early Years and Childcare Strategy. The Strategy will drive local changes and create a framework to support implementation of the Council's legal functions and embed efficient and enhanced services.
- 1.11 There are several reasons, to adopt a county wide Early Years and Childcare Strategy that will support outcomes for children especially attaining a good level of development as they start school:
 - Services for pre-school children can be disjointed and partnership arrangements could be improved.
 - High standards of Early Years and County Council provision need to be maintained so the sufficiency of places and recruitment challenges are managed across the sector.
 - Earlier identification of children with SEND is required to assist more seamless transition to school.

- Engagement with children, parents and providers is improved so together, we can improve safeguarding and health and educational outcomes.
- The government expansion of the early years entitlement and wraparound childcare from April 2024 will add additional pressure to local authorities and the services as they will be required to support an increased number of children from an earlier age.

1.12 It is recognised that COVID has impacted on the experiences of families and children. This will inevitably vary between families, but it will have had an impact on the access to services and support received as well as the opportunities to socialise and develop language. An aim of this strategy is to ensure the best support for addressing inequalities which may have resulted from the pandemic.

1.13 The Early Years and Childcare Strategy is critical for improving the outcomes of children, families, communities, across the county, contributing to the [Our Council Plan 2021-2025](#) and the [Children and Young People's Plan 2022 to 2025](#).

2 National Policy Context

2.1 The Childcare Act (2006) contains statutory duties and legal requirements for Local Authorities (LA), and they are required to:

- provide early years services and joint working between agencies to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and narrow the gap.
- ensure sufficient early education and childcare for the early years entitlements at two, three and four,
- enable parents to take part in employment and employment-related activities through enabling them to access childcare provision for children aged 0-14, or 18 for children with a disability.
- ensure information is readily available for both childcare providers and families to help them meet their other childcare duties.

2.2 The Children and Families Act (2014) placed additional responsibilities on Local Authorities to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and built on legislation in The Equalities Act (2010). This was strengthened by the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Subsequent guidance has further developed the requirement of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

2.3 Free childcare is being expanded to support more parents returning to work after their parental leave ends. Currently, parents working over 16 hours a week with an income of less than £100,000 are entitled to 30 hours free childcare a week for children aged three to four. The scheme will be expanded so that working parents of all children over the age of nine months will be entitled to free 30 hours of childcare. There will be a staggered approach so childcare providers and councils have time to prepare for the changes.

- From April 2024, working parents of two-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
- From September 2024, 15 hours of free childcare will be extended to all children from the age of nine months.

- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week.

3 Proposal details

- 3.1 It is proposed to adopt the Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027 as set out in Appendix 1. The County Council want to ensure the best start for all children and support positive choices for families and are committed to eight priorities.
1. Facilitate the early identification of additional needs so that children and their families benefit from an inclusive, tailored support service with timely intervention, including effective transitions processes.
 2. Families are supported early by services to be resilient, building on strengths and encouraging self-help so that children are cared for and kept safe whilst balancing the need for safeguarding.
 3. All children and their families will have equal access to high quality provision and services which are local, where barriers to that access are removed, diversity is celebrated, and children are enabled to reach their full potential.
 4. Families are enabled to promote good physical health for themselves and their children from conception and beyond so that inequalities are reduced and those with health needs are understood and well supported.
 5. Families are enabled to promote good mental and emotional health for themselves and their children from conception and beyond so that inequalities are reduced and those with emotional and mental health needs are well supported.
 6. Participation from parents, carers, children and their community ensures that co-production is as the heart of planning so that services are fully accessible and meet the needs of their users.
 7. The Early Years and Childcare strategy is underpinned by a strong, collaborative leadership system to ensure ongoing focus and commitment to delivering the most effective services for children and families.
 8. There is sufficient, financially sustainable early years and childcare provision across the county to meet the needs of families and support is available for the sector to maintain a highly qualified workforce with desirable career pathways.
- 3.2 The Strategy will be implemented through a Strategy Delivery Plan which will be underpinned by Priority Action Plans. These will link activity to existing council and partner strategies and priorities. The delivery plan identifies key leads to drive collaborative action forward against key performance indicators that will be reported to senior officers. Partners will provide case studies to illustrate progress and evidence impact.

- 3.3 The intention is to report on progress to the Children's First Partnership Board so that the outcomes are overseen at a county wide level. There will be an Early Years and Childcare Working Group to drive the aims of the strategy, chaired by a partner to encourage ownership beyond the County Council. Details of how this will be made available to the public will be considered in due course.
- 3.4 The expansion of early years and childcare provision will be managed through operational governance within the Childrens Young People and Learning Department's operational structures.

4 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 4.1 The alternative would be not to adopt the strategy and continue with early years services split across education skills and working in isolation from partner stakeholders, which risks duplication of work and disjointed services.

5 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 5.1 To ensure that the voices of all stakeholders were reflected in the strategy, the early years and childcare team identified a number of methods for seeking views to assist in shaping the strategy.
- 5.2 In September 2022, three focus groups of parents; providers and LA teams were formed as part of a Local Government Association peer review to support in writing and creating their own Early Years and Childcare Strategy. The peer review gleaned key information from stakeholders and made a series of recommendations, which helped officers start to develop the strategy.
- 5.3 From April 2023 all parents' carers and providers of Early Years services were invited to take part in engagement. An external Early Years professional was engaged who incorporated the feedback and themes into a draft strategy to enable final views to be sought.
- 5.4 The main themes raised during this engagement were:
- Investment in the early years remains a challenge and will need some review.
 - Equal access to high-quality provision and services will be required to ensure that all children have the best start in life.
 - Ease of access to information and pathways can be confusing, therefore a joined up and simplified offer should be available.
 - Review and reinstate universal services at all levels e.g., health visiting, pre and peri natal.
 - Access to information needed to be improved to enable both parents and providers to effectively support children with additional needs.
 - Close, collaborative working between services will be required to ensure services are continual and simple to navigate.
- 5.5 In September 2023, there was a public consultation to seek views on the strategy and draft priorities using the council's Your Voice platform which was widely publicised. Over 90% of respondents agreed that the priorities identified were the right ones.

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- 5.6 In November 2023, an engagement event was held with strategic leads and senior managers. They considered the stakeholder feedback and themes which informed the priorities for the strategy set out in paragraph 3.1. A summary of the consultation and feedback can be found in Appendix B.

6 Finance

6.1 Revenue consequences

- 6.2 The Early Years Teams within the council are fully funded and staffed by the centrally retained element of the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Strategy will form part of this existing teams work.

- 6.3 As a result of the expansion in early years entitlement the Early Years DSG block is set to increase by £37.5m (65.1%) in 2024/25. Of this, £26.6m relates to the introduction of 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of two-year-olds from April 2024 and for eligible working parents of children from age 9 months to 2 years from September 2024. The remaining additional funding is due to an increase in the hourly funding rates of £2.55 for two year-olds and 84 pence for three and four year-olds (£10.1m), increased funding to the Council's four maintained nursery schools (£0.3m), and additional Pupil Premium and Disability Access Funding (£0.5m). These allocations are provisional and will be updated in July 2024 for the January 2024 census count.

- 6.4 Capacity to support the expansion of the early years provision from April 2024 will be in part enabled by changes in the funding regulations from 2024/25, whereby the County Council will be allowed to retain up to 5% of funding for the under 2 year old, 2 year-old and 3 and 4 year-olds to support central costs in enabling the service. In setting it's Early Years budget for 2024/25 the County Council has retained 4% of these main entitlement funding streams to fund Early Years staff and specialist services such as speech and language therapy, training and equipment.

- 6.5 The remaining 96% of the DSG funding will be paid to providers based on an hourly rate which has been agreed as follows for 2024/25:

- £11.39 per hour for eligible children aged between 9 months and 2 years
- £8.27 per hour for eligible two-year-olds, and
- £5.82 per hour for eligible three and four-year-olds

6.6 Capital consequences

- 6.7 The Department for Education (DfE) have announced a Childcare Capital Grant to support the expansion of early years and childcare with West Sussex receiving an allocation of £1.872m. Within the guidance, the DfE have advised that the funds are provided to local authorities to support the provision of new places to support the expansion of 30-hours entitlement places for children aged 9-months to 3-year-olds and wraparound provision for primary school aged children.

- 6.8 The capital funding will be subject to further Key Decisions as part of the County Council's Capital Governance arrangements.

- 6.9 The effect of the proposal:

(a) **How the cost represents good value**

There is no additional cost associated with the strategy.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

As partnership working progresses under the Strategy, the council may need to consider looking at the structure of its future early years teams.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

The work under the strategy will be driven within existing resources, systems and assets.

7 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
<p>Priority levels drop amongst key stakeholders.</p> <p>Gap in direct management of the Early Years and childcare Team and Head of Service leaving</p>	<p>Frequent updates to Children’s First Partnership Board</p> <p>Recruitment of a Strategic lead Role is underway.</p>
<p>Capacity to deliver on the expansion of childcare is rightly prioritised which could reduce the momentum for joint working to realise the overarching aims of the strategy.</p>	<p>Early Years Lead or interim post is in place to allow for a focused decisions to be made in a timely manner whilst strategically liaising with partner stakeholders and maintaining momentum of the expansion and strategy within the teams.</p>
<p>An increase in children accessing provision from age 2 and the focus on earlier identification of additional need will increase pressure on teams within the Children’s Services Directorate such as SEND and Early Help</p>	<p>Aligning strategies and ensuring budgets are pooled will mean that intervention happens at the earliest opportunity to reduce or prevent the support required in the long term, alleviating the pressure on teams</p>
<p>Disillusionment with the Strategy Delivery Plan among parents and practitioners.</p>	<p>Create an accessible, meaningful framework, governance structure and clear communications plan that keeps everyone informed.</p>
<p>Joint commissioning is not prioritised to ensure</p>	<p>An Early Years lead in role will champion and advocate for Early Years services and ensure it is prioritised across all partner strategies. This will</p>

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
sufficient and aligned provision	minimise duplication and maximise working efficiencies to have a positive impact on children’s outcomes
The use of the centrally retained budget to support other services risks appropriate support being removed from the early years and childcare sector and the council not being able to manage the sufficiency of places or the quality of the places effectively.	Work in a joint way with other services to ensure that they are also covering the early years aspect of this work, this will be addressed through the working party groups for the priorities.
Silo working risks fragmentation of service design and adversely impacts the delivery of an aligned and effective service for children and families	Strong communications and engagement plans.

8 Policy alignment and compliance

8.1 Our Council Plan –

The Early Years and Childcare Strategy links to all four priorities of [Our Council Plan 2021-2025](#) and is focused on providing children with the best start in life. It is integral to the Children and Young People’s Plan.

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations – there is an emphasis on health, well-being, safety and resilience for both families and providers though joint working with children’s services.

A sustainable and prosperous economy – central to the Early Years and Childcare Strategy is a focus on workforce development and financial sustainability of childcare providers. The expansion of funded entitlements and wraparound childcare sit within the strategy and will support families in returning to work.

Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential – accessible, continuous and high-quality provision for all children including those with additional needs and vulnerabilities and their families are available at the earliest opportunity, leading to improved outcomes before children start school.

Making the best use of resources. – the strategy will support this through a partnership approach and joint commissioning where possible to avoid duplication between organisations and create clear pathways for families from birth onwards

8.2 **Legal implications –**

The statutory and legal responsibilities of the Council with respect to early years and childcare are reflected in the work of the Education and Skills team and their existing roles and responsibilities. The objectives work within the current statutory role of a local authority and with clear reference to national policy and direction where the DfE has so determined.

8.3 **Equality duty and human rights assessment –**

The Strategy focuses on ensuring equality for all. It explicitly tackles both disadvantage and inequality based on socio-economic factors, vulnerability and special educational needs. It focuses on improving opportunities for high achievement for all whilst overcoming barriers to success for those identified as being at risk of underachieving, thereby aiming to provide equity and justice for all.

Data collection and analysis will monitor progress and improved outcomes of the diverse range young people and families to ensure that high quality provision and support is being accessed proportionately by the local population. All families, regardless of having a protected characteristic or not, will be monitored to ensure they are accessing provision in line with their peers, allowing interventions if needed.

8.4 **Climate change –**

Whilst there are no standards linked to the environment for providers of early education and wraparound care, providers will be encouraged to consider how to make their businesses more energy efficient particularly as they expand. Any new builds under the capital programme will be subject to the standards adopted by the County Council which have regard to the County Council's Climate Change Strategy. Children should also be taught about the environment as part of the educational programmes.

8.5 **Crime and disorder –**

We will ensure close working partnerships with Children's Social Care, Communities and Early Help teams, to strengthen joint working between all partners in tackling a reduction in families becoming at risk of being involved in crime. We will also work with safeguarding partners, police and local community programmes to ensure that we support the prevention of the youngest children in families becoming involved in crime.

8.6 **Public health –**

The Strategy supports Public Health specifically through the development of healthy life skills and improved wellbeing for children. We will be working closely to ensure strategies align and priorities are matched.

8.7 **Social value –**

The Strategy supports Social Value by helping individuals or groups in the community who may be disadvantaged or reducing inequality between groups. It aims to provide children and young people skills, opportunities and pathways to successful achievement and learning. This aims to improve longer term

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positive engagement in society through ensuring young people have the skill, knowledge and confidence to contribute positively within society.

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Appendices

Annex 1 – 'Right from the Start: West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027'

Annex 2 – Strategy Engagement Analysis

Background papers - None

DRAFT

Right from the Start, West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027

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Introduction

Right from the Start, West Sussex Early Years and Childcare strategy, has been developed to acknowledge the importance that the early years provision plays in establishing and embedding positive outcomes for children. It recognises that family life is vital for developing children's health and wellbeing.

"Children are part of families, who are part of communities, who are part of society. If we want a diverse, inclusive and welcoming society we first have to include children in settings, which are part of communities"
(Ann Van Dyke, 8 November 2023)

Services supporting early years children and their families can make a difference when they work together. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is committed to working with our partners to ensure that services are fully coordinated. We want to provide seamless pathways for children and families so that they have universal opportunities from conception to five years old. We want to create a system-wide approach to early years and childcare, considering life chances, health, and educational outcomes, supporting families in birth and beyond, overcoming deprivation and reducing inequalities, ensuring children are safe and happy.

WSCC know that good, high quality, affordable childcare from birth is an essential ingredient in economic, social, educational outcome and recovery from COVID. Investment in the expansion of funded entitlements for early years education and childcare is central to this strategy, along with the development of pathways to support the early years and childcare workforce.

Vision

"From birth every child is nurtured, supported, and given the opportunity to develop well and achieve their full potential in inclusive, safe, inspiring environments. The voice and needs of children and their families is sought and acted upon with holistic needs being identified early and effectively met, enabling children and families to be healthy and thrive."

The strategy considers all children and their families from conception to 5 years in West Sussex and those up to 14 years who are accessing childcare provision (19 if they have a Special Educational Need or Disability).

It seeks to support families back to work, support providers and professionals and build and strengthen communities. This will lead to the best start for all children and enable positive choices for families. Right from the Start will drive continuous improvement in early years and childcare provision in West Sussex.

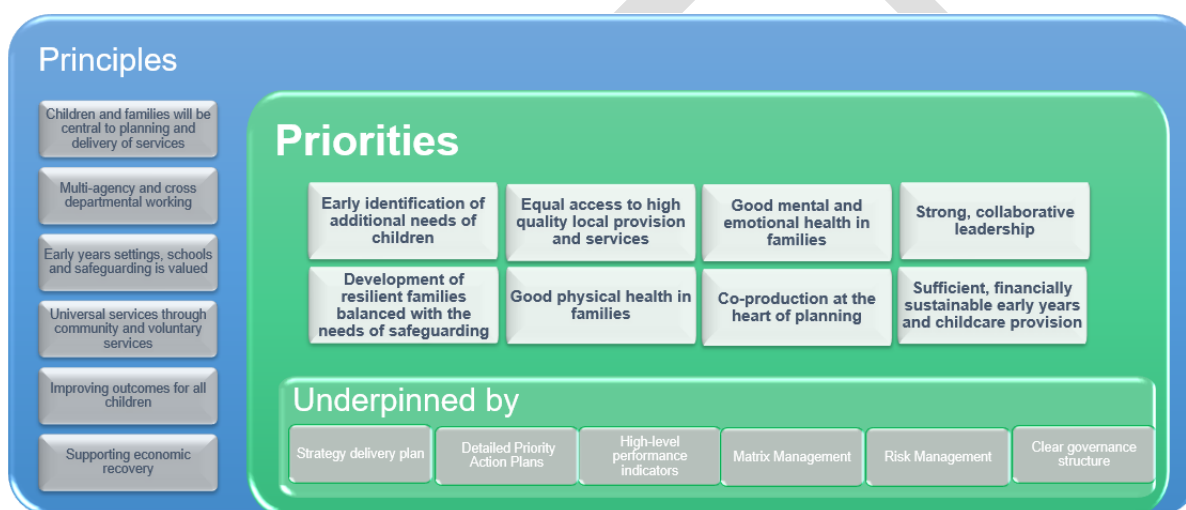
Priorities

Our strategy provides a framework for service delivery within the context of statutory duties (namely but not exclusively the Childcare Act 2006) to reduce the risk of legal challenge, ensure the best use of public funds and directly contribute to the local authorities' strategic priorities for children and young people.

Listening to parents, carers, partners and providers the strategy sets out eight priorities. The priorities seek to improve the wellbeing of young children and reduce inequalities to ensure the best start for all children and support positive choices for families.

- Facilitate the early identification of additional needs so that children and their families benefit from an inclusive, tailored support service with timely intervention, including effective transitions processes.
- Families are supported early by services to be resilient, building on strengths and encouraging self-help so that children are cared for and kept safe whilst balancing the need for safeguarding.

- All children and their families will have equal access to high quality provision and services which are local, where barriers to that access are removed, diversity is celebrated, and children are enabled to reach their full potential.
- Families are enabled to promote good physical health for themselves and their children from conception and beyond so that inequalities are reduced and those with health needs are understood and well supported.
- Families are enabled to promote good mental and emotional health for themselves and their children from conception and beyond so that inequalities are reduced and those with emotional and mental health needs are well supported.
- Participation from parents, carers, children, and their community ensure that co-production is as the heart of planning so that services are fully accessible and meet the needs of their users.
- The strategy is underpinned by a strong, collaborative leadership systems to ensure ongoing focus and commitment to delivering cost effective, invest to save services for children and families.
- There is sufficient, financially sustainable early years and childcare provision across the county to meet the needs of families and support is available for the sector to maintain a highly qualified workforce with desirable career pathways.



Principles, Wider Impact and Better Value

The priorities will be driven within this ethos:

- Children and families will be held central in the planning and delivery of the strategy and services. An active effort to include all children and families will be paramount throughout. Considerations will be given to ensure reach, engagement and empowerment of children and families across West Sussex.
- Service positioning, accountability and coordination should reflect the equal importance of early years. Multi-agency and cross departmental working must be embedded and a culture of working within the services must celebrate and build on family strengths, encourage self-help, and peer support, as well as balance the need for safeguarding.
- The profile and importance of early years settings, schools and safeguarding (including our early education and childcare providers) should be improved to reflect the value placed on it by the council.
- An invest-to-save agenda will balance the need for universal services (many of which can be supported by voluntary services engagement and a community development approach) alongside the provision of more targeted interventions.
- Improving outcomes for all children in the early years and focus on narrowing the attainment gap.

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- Supporting economic recovery through sustainable provision and services which enables families to work.

“It is easier to build a strong child than it is to repair a broken adult.” – Frederick Douglass

To meet the aims and objectives within the strategy, as well as linking and contributing to other plans within West Sussex County Council and Wider Partners, delivery will need to be underpinned by:

- A strategy delivery plan which links activity to council and partner strategies and priorities, so everyone knows how their role fits with the bigger picture and legislation. The delivery plan will identify key leads to drive the collaboration and action forward. Key performance indicators will be identified.
- Regular reporting via a dashboard on high-level performance indicators. Partners will work to provide data and case studies where applicable for partners to illustrate progress.
- Clear matrix between managers to ensure that roles are led by central strategy, consistent and are delivered coherently in communities.
- Awareness of the risks that may impact on progress.
- A clear governance structure that governance for oversees the implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy. Further details can be found in Appendix C

“The period from pregnancy to age three is the most critical, when the brain grows faster than at any other time; 80% of a baby’s brain is formed by this age.... This is a window of opportunity to lay a foundation of health and wellbeing whose benefits last a lifetime and carry into the next generation.” (Nurturing care for early childhood development, World Health Organisation 2018).

Parent & Carer Voice

WSCC undertook a large survey of parents and carers of children aged 0-14 (up to 18 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)) to understand their current and future childcare needs. Over 93% of respondents were in support of the priorities identified in the strategy.

Over 90% of families with children under 5 felt their child’s setting had a positive impact on their child’s development. 83% could access all the formal childcare they required. Those who could not was reported to be in the main due to cost, not availability of places.

They identified that the main challenges for families in West Sussex are:

- Affordability of childcare.
- Availability of childcare places for children with SEND, with high quality experienced staff who can meet the needs of the child.
- The flexibility of childcare providers to meet the changing needs of families.
- Availability of wrap around care for school age children.

Partner Voice

West Sussex County Council, NHS and Public Health teams provide services all over the county for children in the early years, those accessing childcare and their families. There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise in their delivery.

Services are delivered by discreet teams including midwifery, health visitors, family hubs, Portage, SEND and inclusion, Family Nurse Partnership, early help teams, early years staff, social care, Virtual School, voluntary agencies, and providers of early years education and childcare.

This can be confusing staff, childcare providers, and parents strongly supported and were committed to the development of an Early Years & Childcare Strategy to develop a system-wide approach.

Main responses to what should be addressed in the delivery of the strategy included:

- Support for children and their families with additional needs. This included timely access to expert advice, guidance, and support networks as well as access to medical equipment and training that supports children with SEND to attend provision.
- Mental health featured highly, including access to support for families and training for service providers.
- Investment in developing a sustainable and high-quality sector, with knowledgeable staff and fair funding rates making the career path attractive and recognising the challenges in recruitment and retention.
- Appropriate support and information for expectant and new parents so information is received early, this is when we can make a difference.
- Simplified and joined up pathways to support families to navigate services.
- There was concern that a lot of services for the earliest years have been cut and that in some cases they do not happen early enough.
- Flexible and affordable childcare was at the top of parental priorities.

“There is a phenomenal amount of expertise, knowledge and experience within the existing services and across agencies.” It highlighted that there should be greater connection between early years and council and strategic plans, with clear accountability and comprehensive datasets to support a sustainable framework” West Sussex’s Local Government Association Early Years Peer Review 2023

National Context and Legal Framework

Local authorities are facing several challenges, resources have been under pressure for some time. This needs to be carefully balanced with the need for local authorities to comply with their statutory duties and legal requirements as set out in the delivery framework in The Childcare Act (2006):

- the early years outcomes duties require the provision of early years services and joint working between agencies to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and narrow the gap.
- the sufficiency duties require local authorities to ensure sufficient early education and childcare for the early year’s entitlements at two, three and four, and that they enable parents to take part in employment and employment-related activities (childcare for children aged 0-14, or 18 for children with a disability).
- the information duties require local authorities to ensure information for both childcare providers and families to meet their other childcare duties.

“Science tells us that a child’s experiences from conception through their first five years will go on to shape their next 50.” – Jason Knauft, CEO of the Royal Foundation, December 2020

The expansion of the early years entitlement and wraparound childcare will add additional pressure to local authorities and the services supporting and providing this entitlement. A range of statutory guidance exists to support local authorities in delivering on these entitlements. From April 2024, existing childcare support will be expanded in phases, and by September 2025, working parents with children aged 9 months old to when they start school will be eligible for 30 hours childcare support. It is hoped that this will make it easier for parents with childcare responsibilities to move into or take on more paid work.

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The Children and Families Act (2014) placed additional responsibilities on local authorities to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and build on legislation set out in The Equalities Act (2010) and was strengthened by the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Subsequent guidance had further developed the requirement of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Of course, these are also underpinned by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992) that set out civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that children everywhere are entitled to.

COVID-19 has impacted on the experiences of families and children. This inevitably varies between families but has a lasting impact on the access to services and support received as well as the opportunities to socialise and develop language. We are committed to using this strategy to ensure the best support for potentially widening inequalities which may have resulted from the pandemic.

The West Sussex Approach

[Our Council Plan 2021](#) to 2025 has four priorities all of which, the Early Years and Childcare Strategy contributes to. has four priorities all of which, the Early Years and Childcare Strategy contributes to.

1. **Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations** – there is an emphasis on health, well-being, safety and resilience for both families and providers through joint working with children's services.
2. **A sustainable and prosperous economy** – central to the early year and childcare is a focus on workforce development and financial sustainability of childcare providers. The expansion of funded entitlements and wraparound childcare sit within the strategy and will support families in returning to work.
3. **Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential** – accessible, continuous and high-quality provision for all children including those with additional needs and vulnerabilities and their families are available at the earliest opportunity, leading to improved outcomes before children start school.
4. **Making the best use of resources** – the strategy will support This through a partnership approach and joint commissioning where possible to avoid duplication between organisations and create clear pathways for families from birth onwards

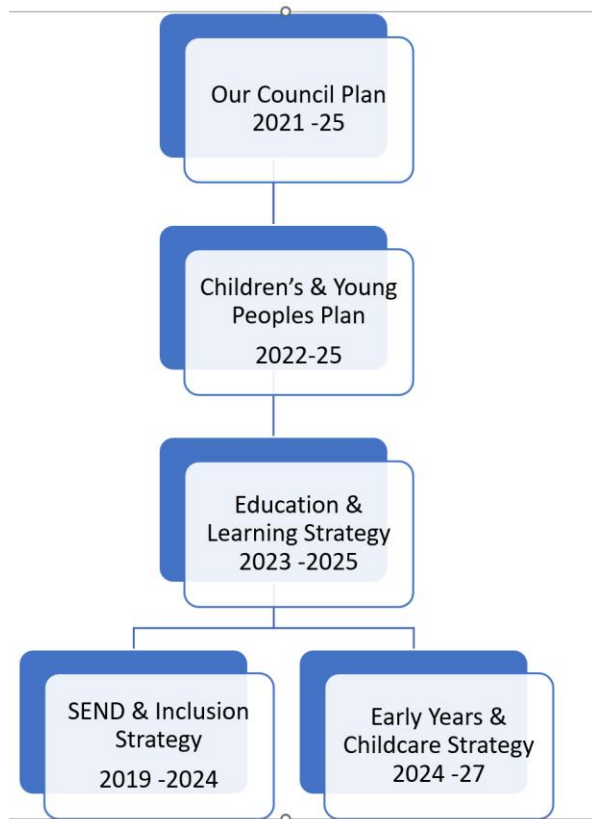
The council's Children and Young People's Plan 2022 to 2025 focuses on improving outcomes for children, young people and families and sets out the Children First Partnership's shared priorities and framework.

Central threads are protection; inclusivity, co-production, challenging inequalities; and a commitment to building strong partnerships. Two priorities are to:

- 1 work with early years settings (amongst others) to close the disadvantage gap for children by targeting the most vulnerable
2. improve emotional health and wellbeing by providing early years settings with resources to respond confidently to children with these issues.

Stakeholders in West Sussex take a Children First approach to ensure we work with children, young people, families, communities, our partners and schools in a restorative, strength-based way. The Children First Partnership has been established as a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board and will take forward the Children and Young People's Plan as well as provide the strategic oversight needed across all organisations working to improve children's outcomes in West Sussex.

The [Education & Learning Strategy 2023-25](#) sets out key themes and the steps that need to be taken to enable every learner to secure the skills, knowledge, and confidence to achieve their ambitions. It recognises improving child outcomes in the early years is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders and partners through direct delivery. The Education & Learning Strategy 23-25 identifies a workstream to work collaboratively with the Early Years sector to improve outcomes for young children including early language, reading, and personal, social and emotional development.



The council's plans align with those developed by Sussex Health and Care for children and their families and the priorities in this strategy complement the [Sussex Health and Care 5 strategic priorities](#) for children and young people.

Our Strategy in Action

- We will ensure that early years and childcare fits seamlessly with partners' agendas.
- We will both simplify and amplify links to other strategies and workstreams to avoid duplication and ensure a joined-up approach to implementation.
- We will retain the positive elements of our current work.
- We will ensure that any actions we take will be sustainable.
- We will be guided by evidence, drawing on the knowledge of partners to agree what we are trying to achieve towards population outcomes.
-

"The 1,001 days from pregnancy to the age of two set the foundations for an individual's cognitive, emotional and physical development. There is a well-established and growing international consensus on the importance of this age range; it is part of the World Health Organisation's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative, and in England, both the NHS Long Term Plan and Public Health England's 2016 guidance on "giving every child the best start in life". The Best Start for Life, The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report, HM Government 2021

Next Steps

The strategy provides the foundation for an evolving and continual improvement journey towards providing the best start for children in West Sussex. It sets out a set of principles, priorities, actions, and outcomes to support delivery of services across the council and external service providers. Our main actions are summarised below.

- Design and structure a joint service offer from pre-birth to five years, to ensure improved coordination, simple and continuous pathways for families, the effective use of resources and the avoidance of duplication.
- Ensure that service agendas align and complement each other.
- Maintain an open dialogue and feedback cycle with all stakeholders to support service improvements.
- Ensure that the profile of early years and childcare remains central to decision making.
- Deliver on our statutory duties to expand the funded entitlement across West Sussex.

West Sussex Context



Population

West Sussex is a county on the south coast of England. West Sussex is deemed to be an affluent county but has significant pockets of deprivation, bringing issues of isolation for families and difficulties around business sustainability in these areas for the childcare sector for the sector. The 2021 census reported that the population of West Sussex was 882,700. At the time:

- 5.0% of the population were aged between 0 and 4 years old
- 5.6% were aged between 5 and 9 years old
- 5.8% were aged between 10 and 14 years old
- 5.1% were aged between 15 and 19 years old

Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2021

In 2021 the live birth rates in West Sussex was marginally lower than the South East Region and England (calculated as the annual number of live births per 1,000 population). There were 8,515 live births in the county, with the higher proportions in the north of the county.

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Area	Live births	
Adur	600	7%
Arun	1,375	16%
Chichester	1,032	12%
Crawley	1,525	18%
Horsham	1,444	17%
Mid Sussex	1,557	18%
Worthing	982	12%
West Sussex	8,515	
South East	94,292	
England	595,948	

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) **2021**.

West Sussex remained less ethnically diverse than the South East and England in 2021, with 84.2% of the population identifying as the majority White British ethnicity, compared to 73.5% in England

Ethnic minority populations in West Sussex were generally younger than the majority White British population. The proportion of under 16s in the broad Mixed or multiple ethnicities group (45.8%) was nearly three-times greater than in the majority White British ethnic population (16.8%). Asian or Asian British and Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic groups also included a higher proportion of under 16s than the majority ethnic group.

Table 3. Proportion (%) of total ethnic populations by age and sex in West Sussex in Census 2021. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Source: Census 2021.

Ethnic grouping	0 to 15 years		16 to 64 years		65+ years		Total (all ages)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Asian or Asian British	11.0	12.0	36.3	32.8	4.3	3.6	51.6	48.4
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	11.5	12.2	34.1	36.9	3.2	2.1	48.8	51.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	22.5	23.3	26.3	24.0	2.2	1.7	51.0	49.0
Other ethnic group	9.2	9.6	35.4	37.3	4.5	4.2	49.0	51.0
White: British	8.2	8.6	29.1	28.6	14.0	11.5	51.3	48.7
White: Other White	6.8	7.2	42.4	35.5	5.2	2.9	54.4	45.6

0-15 to be broken down further

Source: [Census 2021: Ethnicity, language and religion Public Health Briefing August 2023](#)

Early Years and Childcare Provision

There is a total of 406 early years group settings in West Sussex, 96.4% of these providers have been inspected by Ofsted and are currently rated as Good or Outstanding.

There is a total of 936 childminders, 574 are currently offer government funded provision. Of the providers that offer government funded early years provision, 97.7% are currently rated Met, Good or Outstanding. Those not delivering funded places, 96.2% are rated Met, Good or Outstanding.

'Out of school' provision is offered by 246 providers - 63 for Breakfast Clubs, 153 for 'out of school' provision and 82 Holiday Schemes. Some providers offer a range of childcare and the figures include early years settings that also provide wraparound care. 108 of these providers have received an Ofsted inspection with 96% rated Met, Good or Outstanding.

Graphs below copied as picture and copied Excel chart – Graphics to decide on best presentation.

EY Group Provision Ofsted Outcomes - Percentages (of those with an Ofsted rating)							
	Adur and Worthing	Arun	Chichester	Crawley	Horsham	Mid Sussex	West Sussex
Outstanding	11.5	7.1	18.9	12.2	19.0	12.5	13.9
Good	86.5	88.1	79.2	79.6	77.8	86.1	82.8
RI	1.9	2.4	1.9	6.1	3.2	0.0	2.4
Inadequate	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.4	0.9

Percentage - with an Ofsted rating	All Childminders						
	AW	Arun	Chi	Craw	Hors	MS	WS
Outstanding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.1
Good	31.0	32.8	39.8	31.1	31.3	31.1	32.1
Met	5.0	9.2	0.0	2.7	6.0	3.2	4.6
Not Met	50.0	50.4	50.6	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.1
Requires Improvement	3.5	6.1	3.6	7.4	6.6	4.7	5.4
Inadequate	10.5	1.5	6.0	8.1	6.0	11.1	7.7

Row Labels	Count of Breakfast Club	Count of Out of School Childcare	Count of Holiday Scheme
Adur and Worthing	14	29	16
Good	3	3	1
Met	2	11	5
(blank)	9	15	10
Arun	9	20	11
Good	4	5	1
Met	1	4	1
Outstanding			1
(blank)	4	11	8
Chichester	9	21	19
Good	1	1	2
Met	1	4	7
Not Met (with Actions)			1
Outstanding	1	1	1
(blank)	6	15	7
Not Met			1
Crawley	7	15	8
Good	3	2	

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	Met		5	1
	Outstanding			2
	(blank)	4	8	5
Horsham		15	35	15
	Good	6	8	4
	Met	8	13	4
	Outstanding	1	1	
	#N/A			1
	(blank)		13	6
Mid Sussex		9	33	13
	Good	4	5	1
	Met	2	11	4
	Not Met (with Actions)		1	1
	Outstanding		1	
	(blank)	3	15	7
Grand Total		63	153	82

Source: Ofsted January 2024

Childcare Sufficiency

The total average number of daily Early Years and Childcare places across the county in March 2023 was 34,950 this decreased from between March 2022 when there were 36,063 places. This is a 3.1% decrease overall, across all provider types.

Despite this decrease, data shows that across the county, there is currently sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision, in most areas, to meet the needs of the families needing or wanting it. West Sussex carries out sufficiency monitoring at District and Boroughs level to maintain levels. The monitoring includes an action plan for how each area will address the potential gaps in childcare provision. Changes to the level of housing development coming forward, the impact of the childcare expansion and the take up of places across the county may change this need and therefore the requirement for provision.

Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)

WSCC has a statutory duty to ensure that there is access to free high quality early education for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year-olds whose parents would like to take up a place for their child. From September 2024, this is expanding to eligible working families of 9 month olds.

Nationally, an average of 74% eligible 2-year-olds benefited from a funded place in 2023, with take up being considerably higher in West Sussex at 87%.

98% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds benefited from a universal funded place in 2023 in West Sussex, with around half of these taking up an extended 30 hours place.

Following the Spring Budget announcements in March 2023, EYFE will be extending, with most working families with children under the age of 5 entitled to 30 hours of childcare support by September 2025.

Public Health

Public Health data and intelligence focuses on monitoring key influences and milestones of development in infant and young children's lives. The national data reveals some West Sussex children have greater needs than in other parts of the country. The most recently published data is from the year 2022-2023.

Although many early years children will achieve their expected milestones for development, there is a larger than average proportion in West Sussex who have not met milestones for communication skills, gross or fine motor skills, problem solving and personal and social skills by the time of their 2-2.1/2 -year developmental check.

In 2021/22, 15.3% of children under the age of 16 were living in relative low-income families in West Sussex, equating to around 23,700 children. Crawley has the highest proportion of children living in relative low-income families compared to other districts in the County, at 21.9% (around 5,500 children), and significantly exceeds the county (15.3%) and national (19.9%) average.

The proportion of children aged 0-4 years attending Accident & Emergency and experiencing hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-4 years are significantly worse in West Sussex when compared to the National and Regional figures for 2022-2023.

MMR uptake in West Sussex remains below the national target of 95%, whilst higher than the England average,

Nearly one in five (19.8%) children aged 4-5 years old in year R of primary school in West Sussex, have been measured as either overweight or obese. This is lower than the national average of 21.3% but the recent trend suggests no improvement.

Children in relative low income families (under 16s) 2021/22

Proportion - %

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	–	2,087,494	19.9	19.9	20.0
West Sussex	–	23,732	15.3	15.0	15.5
Crawley	–	5,480	21.9	21.2	22.7
Arun	–	4,808	19.0	18.3	19.7
Adur	–	1,898	16.4	15.4	17.3
Worthing	–	3,017	15.9	15.2	16.7
Chichester	–	3,002	15.5	14.8	16.3
Horsham	–	2,830	10.8	10.3	11.4
Mid Sussex	–	2,697	9.2	8.8	9.7

Will look to use Maps of deprivation rather than this

Source: [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://publichealthprofiles.org.uk/)

Source: [Children in low income families: local area statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics)

Childrens Social Care

West Sussex under 5 population (2021 mid-year estimates): 54,035 of this population:

- 964 (1.78%) are known to social services as a Child in Need (from the 31 March 2023 Census Data)
- 142 (0.26%) are Children we Care For (from the 31 March 2023 903 Statutory return)

Special Education Needs and Disabilities

As of December 2023 West Sussex has 2024 children known to the county with identified SEN & D needs.

- 3.4% of these children are eligible for school start and have delayed or deferred entry to school.
- 40 children who are accessing Early Years Funded Entitlement hours are in settings in receipt of Disability Access Funding 30% of which are eligible for school.
- There are currently 1204 children in the SEND Under 5 process
- There are 95 children in Early Years provision who have an EHCP, 17 of these are eligible for school.

Educational Outcomes

The Good Level of Development (GLD) is defined by the children attaining the expected level in 12 of the 17 early learning goals in the DFE [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)

In 2023 **67.5%** West Sussex children attained the GLD. This is just above the national figure of 67.2%. However, measures in individual areas of learning remain in line with or above national averages, with writing having the lowest outcomes in West Sussex.

- **42.3%** of children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving a GLD compared to 51.6% nationally.
- **75.1%** of **girls** and **60.0%** of **boys** achieved the GLD.
- **19.2%** of children identified as having **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** support achieved the GLD which is just below the national figure of 19.8%.
- The lowest proportion of pupils attaining the GLD was in Crawley with **61.4%**. In **Mid Sussex 33.1%** of disadvantaged children achieved the GLD.

Source: ['1 Headline measures by characteristics' from 'Early years foundation stage profile results', Permanent data table – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)



Right from the Start

Early Years and Childcare Strategy Consultation

December 2023

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

In September 2022, West Sussex commissioned a Local Government Association peer review to support the development of an Early Years and Childcare Strategy, placing the youngest children and their families at the heart of decision making.

Central government also announced an expansion of the funded entitlement for early years and childcare in April 2023.

This is good opportunity to support local changes, to ensure a strategic framework that supports the Council's legal functions and embeds efficient and enhanced service delivery and improved outcomes for children and families.

Research shows that development from conception to age 2 lays the foundation for our physical, emotional, social, educational, and economic futures. The coordination of services through an agreed local strategy, to enable a universal and targeted framework of support from pre-birth to aged five, is critical for improving the outcomes of children, families, communities, and society. In short, there is no better stage in a child's life in which to invest, if we are committed to long-term change.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The early years has been in the spotlight for several years but more recently with a renewed focus from both the government and Ofsted. Both the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have exacerbated the challenges faced by families, and by those providing services nationally. An increase in the number of young children requiring additional support, along with resource pressures, is creating a perfect storm, to potentially widen the gap between our least advantaged children and their peers. Whilst the pandemic may have magnified these issues, it is important to acknowledge the impact this had on families and children. Although it should be noted that some of the issues were starting to increase before COVID.

West Sussex County Council and the Integrated Care Board are on an exciting journey together to further develop services within Early Years and Childcare. The Engagement and consultation between 2021 and 2023 aimed to get feedback on the challenges within the system and the priorities that the West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy needs to address.

To ensure alignment views were obtained from the following stakeholders:

- Parents.
- Carers.
- Early Years and Childcare providers.
- West Sussex employees who deliver services for children and their families.
- All services outside of the council that deliver services for children and their families.
- Anyone who has an interest in services for children and their families.

1.3 Summary of key responses

The main themes raised by respondents are as follows:

- Over 90% of respondents agreed that the priorities identified were the right ones.
- Investment in the early years remains a challenge and will need some review.
- Equal access to high-quality provision and services will be required to ensure that all children have the best start in life.
- Ease of access to information and pathways can be confusing, therefore a joined up and simplified offer should be available.
- Review and reinstate universal services at all levels e.g., health visiting, pre and peri natal.
- Access to information to enable both parents and providers to effectively support children with additional needs.
- Close, collaborative working between services will be required to ensure services are continual and simple to navigate.

1.4 Next steps and key actions

- Explore further opportunities to obtain the views and opinions of the wider county demographic.
- Use the findings of the survey to draft the early years and childcare strategy and engage with multi-agency service leads from across the county.
- Develop two-way dialogue, to agree and secure shared priorities across strategic plans.
- Agree the lines of accountability and reporting, with terms of reference based on the Childcare Act and clear links to wider plans and operational delivery could help create a sustainable framework.
- Identify resource to write and lead the overarching Early Years and Childcare Strategy and lead relationships with service leads at a strategic level.
- Identify leads for and create multi agency working party groups to develop and implement actions to progress towards each priority.
- Development of a comprehensive dataset to understand the early years and childcare needs of children and families across West Sussex and enable performance management across the Childcare Act aims.
- Manage childcare sufficiency, and market development to achieve progress towards the government plans to expand funded entitlements to early years and childcare.
- Ensure that all statutory functions and requirements are met and ensure effective budgeting to meet the duty.

2. Consultation

2.1 Methodology

To ensure that the voices of all stakeholders were reflected in the strategy and to help shape the actions we should take to effect change, the early years and childcare team gathered the views of any person who had an interest in early years and childcare.

In September 2022, engagement of stakeholders began through the Local Government Association peer review. This consisted of three focus groups led by a peer reviewer, which focused on,

1. Parents
2. Providers
3. Local authority teams

A parental survey focusing on childcare needs was conducted in April 2023. Through the summer of 2023, informal reviews took place at the local Family Hub events. The questions and summary can be found in Appendix A.

West Sussex County Council employed an external consultant to conduct engagement sessions with senior and council leaders as well as wider internal and external teams. She was to write a draft strategy. The outcomes and views from these engagement sessions have been incorporated into the draft strategy and formed the eight priorities which were consulted on in the public survey.

A public consultation survey about the strategy and draft priorities were launched via the YourVoice platform on 18 September 2023 and ran for 4 weeks, closing on 20 October 2023. The questions of which can be found in Appendix B.

Publicity included:

- Inclusion in the Your Voice Residents' ePanel eNewsletter (circulation around 6,000).
- Direct mailing from the Director of Children Young People and Learning to teams and strategic leads or organisations external to the local authority and council.
- Weekly communications to schools, providers, and parents.
- Publication on the approved social media channels.
- The appropriate modifications were offered, although none were taken up.

Finally, an engagement event with strategic leads and senior managers took place on 8 November 2023.

2.2 Key Themes Arising

Respondents felt that the following themes should be included in the strategy.

- Investment in the early years.
- Access to high quality provision and education.
- Early identification and support for children with additional needs including SEND.
- Ability to access services that support family development when they are needed.
- More effective multi-agency working.
- Sustainability.

Investment in early years.

"If we put enough into early years now all services including police and the NHS will see a reduction in issues. Research has proved that the first 5 years of a child's life is vital to their development for the rest of their lives, and we need to prioritise that. We need to prioritise the services that deliver that support."

There was a feeling that leadership is not enough without the resources and investment and that true collaboration would be needed early enough to make a difference. However, there was a will expressed through the survey to be part of the change.

Access to high quality provision and education.

"Good Early Years education is vital but should come secondary to the importance of ensuring a positive 1001 days of a child's life - levelling this up before children access early years education should be the main priority."

Children first, growing happy, independent, and skilled children was the overwhelming theme that came from the consultation. A need for investment in and development of high-quality, knowledgeable staff who understand child development.

Respondents felt that central to the strategy would be ensuring there is alignment in understanding of child development between settings, schools, and services, so that they are ready for the child rather than the other way round.

Other themes focussed on relationships. Engaging and supporting parents in the importance of home learning was crucial to parents. Effective transitions and information sharing between settings, school and other services will be key to success. A focus on the changing needs of the child will also require a focus so that our learning environments reflect the changing world in which our children are growing up.

Early identification and support for children with additional needs including SEND.

"Inclusive childcare available to all meet the needs of all children so they can reach their full potential".

There was by far the most comments linked to this theme. All respondents identified the earliest identification and intervention is the most successful and that to support their children effectively, families would need expert advice, guidance, and access to support networks, in a timely manner.

Some respondents felt that high-quality universal services would impact on all children and remove labels that can pose barriers in the future.

Mental health and wellbeing featured highly in this theme with access to support and training for parents and providers to separate the impact of trauma from that of an additional need.

Fair funding rates for providers who support children in the early years with additional needs was a key topic. Providers also highlighted that access to specialist training and equipment to support pupils with complex medical and learning needs is prohibitive. Waiting times for referrals were a concern for parents.

Ability to access services that support family development when they are needed.

"I am concerned that services have been massively reduced for the very early years. There are no longer those services in place that support the normal transition to parenthood and give confidence to new mums and dads that they are doing the right thing."

"Services now only seem to exist once a problem has been identified. Early help is not early it is too late!"

"Clearer help and pathways. Especially for babies and young children for things like health questions and guidance on learning at home, not delivered online, face to face helps me."

"I think there needs to be an emphasis on building trust with families by collaborating with them, empowering, and supporting them, in a way that works for them so that change is more sustainable."

Parental comments related to equality and ease of accessing services . It was felt that for a the strategy to made a difference early enough there should be a review and focus on both universal and taregted services. A number of respondednts cited services for expectant and new parents as being key, for example accessing health visitors and mental health advice.

Simplified and joined up pathways to information from services will be crucial to the success of the strategy.

Respondents also expressed the need to keep the voice of children, parents and families central to the strategy, and building reciprocal trust.

More effective multi-agency working.

"Families need information from the beginning of their parenting journey. The information needs to be widespread, and services need to collaborate to ensure each individual team can get someone to the right place for support or guidance."

"With a continuing reduction in services for families, information sharing with voluntary/charitable organisations would seem even more important."

"There is much talk of 'joined up' working, but little happens in practice."

Working closely with voluntary and charitable organisations as well as with other agencies and internal partners was seen as key to the success of this strategy.

Ensuring families get the support they need through strong processes and systems, with consistent information, advice and guidance being readily available.

Sustainability

"Recruitment and retention of qualified Early Years practitioners Ensuring that the funding entitlement is enough to allow settings to provide high quality early years care and education - the sector is desperately under-funded. Increasing ratios is not the answer - this actually decreases the quality of care and education and leads to loss of staff through stress."

"I don't think access to quality childcare is an issue - there is lots of good quality childcare available, however not everyone can 'access' these as the costs are prohibitive."

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"Nursery and school budgets are too low and restricted for children with special educational needs and therefore only the most severe are receiving support, other children are forced to struggle on mainstream classes/schools there isn't the provision to help them all."

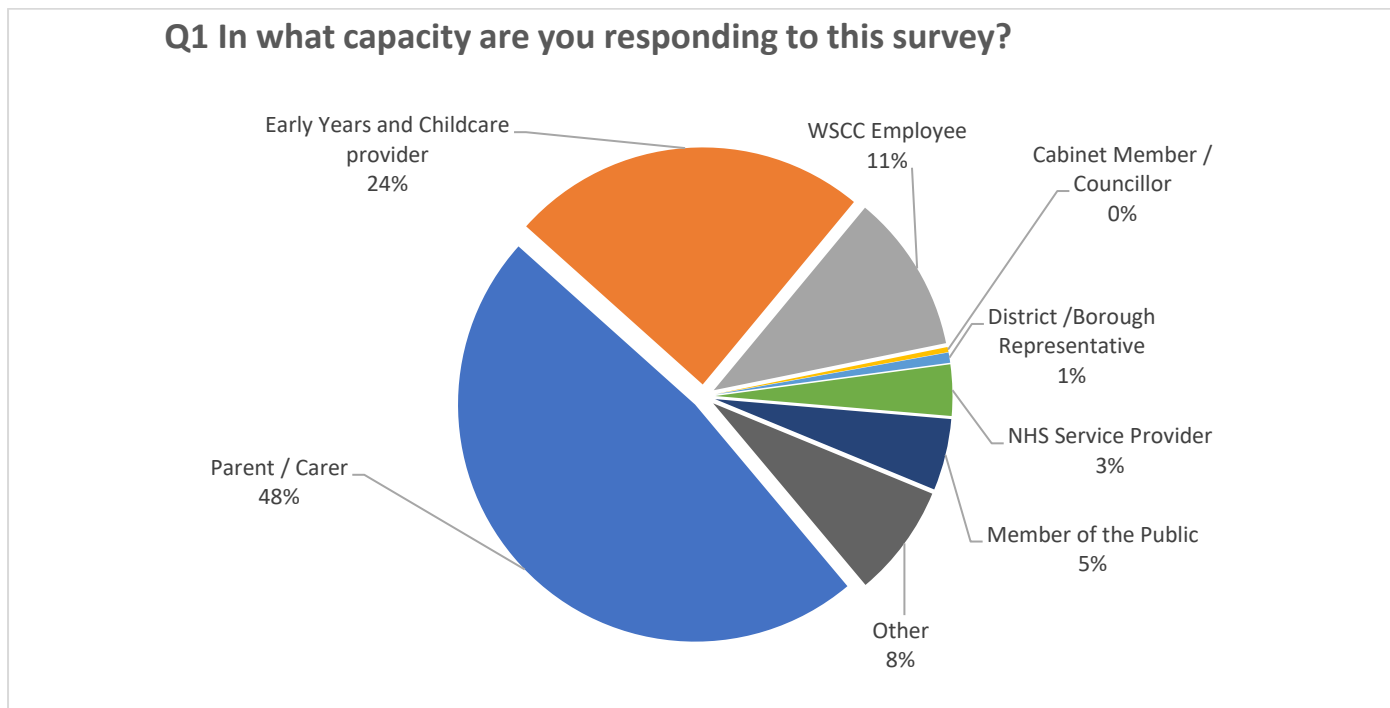
"Alongside high-quality early education, themes from the consultation included the need for support for the early years and childcare sector, including schools, to be financially sustainable. The current recruitment and retention crisis in the sector, along with staff not receiving a fair salary will be key challenges to consider within the strategy."

Parent comments related to the need for affordable, flexible childcare.

3. YourVoice Responses

287 people participated in the survey from the 773 people who visited the page. Direct email, referral and social media were the top sources of traffic for this survey.

48% (137 respondents) of the stakeholders were parent or carers, followed by 24% (70 respondents) were Early Years and Childcare providers. A combined 15% (44 respondents) worked within the profession either at a council or with the NHS.



3.1 Headline Views

90% (258 respondents) agreed that there should be a multi-agency early years and childcare strategy. Of those that did not, their main responses were:

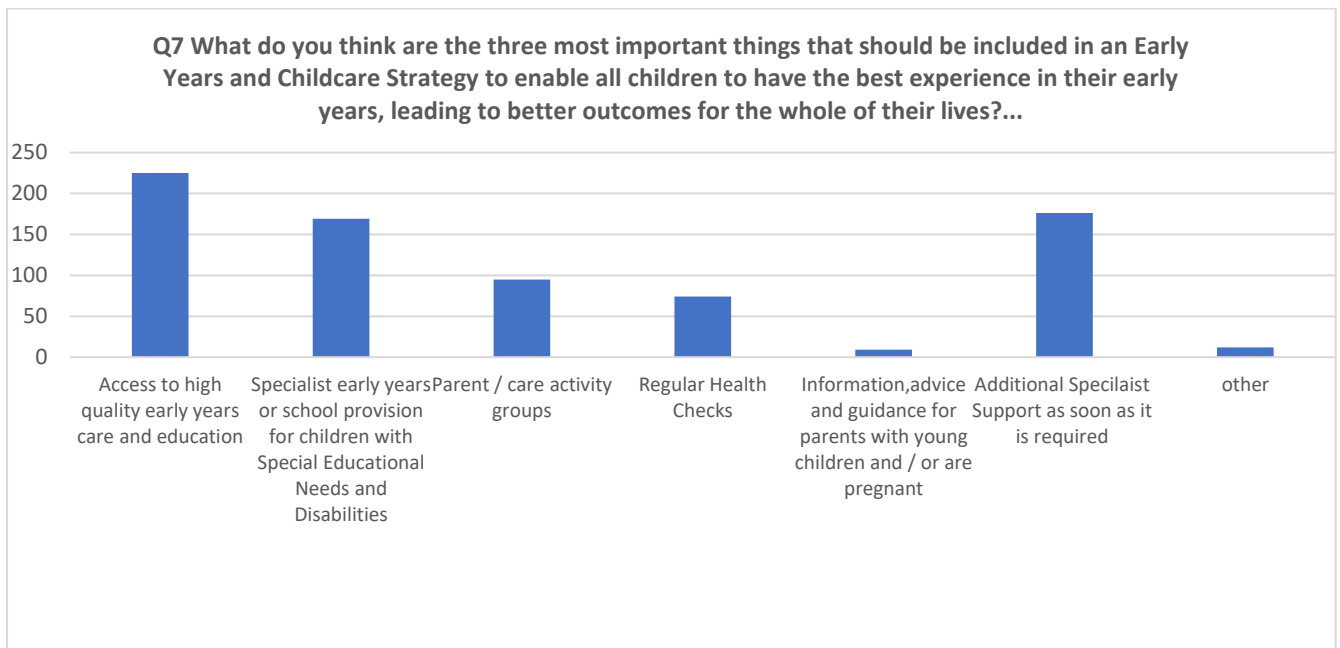
- Unsure of what this meant.
- 'Will it add value and make a difference?'
- Concerns over unnecessary bureaucracy and limiting innovative working.
- Concerns that unnecessary protocols and too many agencies can distort learning.
- 'Multi agency screams that things won't be done properly, and I would question that my child's needs won't be met.'

22% (64 respondents) felt they had strategies in place that included elements of early years and childcare. Most respondents cited the EYFS statutory framework, but other strategies of note included:

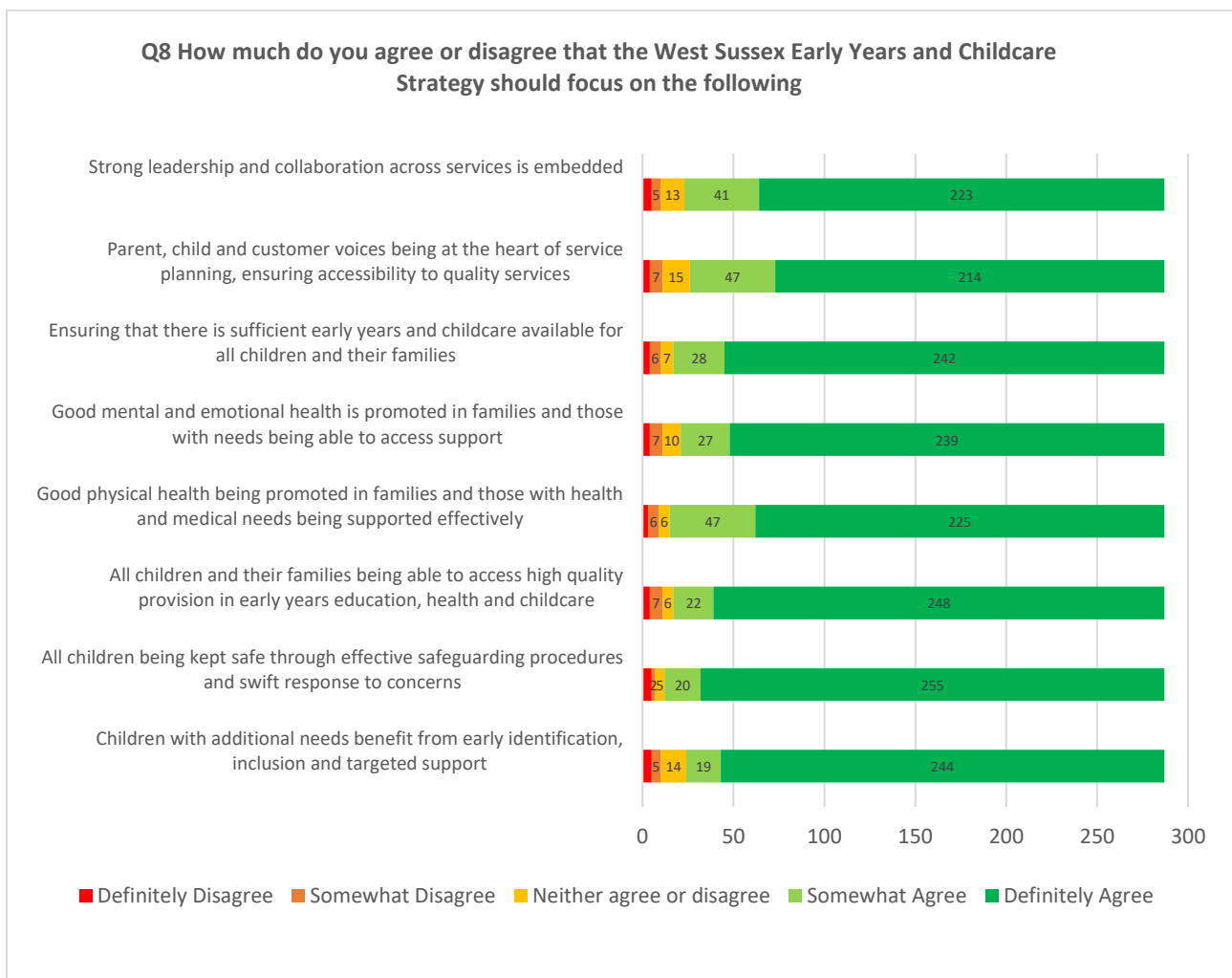
- Education and Learning Strategy
- Early years and childcare training
- Nurturing Minds
- Birth to Thrive

78% (225 respondents) of stakeholders felt that most important area was 'access to high quality early years and education', this was followed by 61% (176 stakeholders) stating that 'additional specialist support as soon as it is required' was important, finally 58% (169 respondents) felt that specialist early years of schools provision for children with SEND was important.

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The survey asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed on areas of focus for the strategy. Over 90% respondents agreed with all of the statements but there were some differences in the strength of their agreement. The chart breaks down respondent’s answers:



3.2 Respondent Summary and Demographics

Gender/Sex

	No. in Survey	Percentage in Survey	West Sussex
Prefer not to say	2	0.7%	
Female	254	90.7%	51.4%
Male	24	8.6%	48.6%

Age

	No. in Survey	Percentage in Survey	West Sussex
25-34 years	50	17.6%	11.5%
35-44 years	109	38.4%	12.4%
45-54 years	57	20.1%	13.6%
55-64 years	44	15.5%	13.3%
65-74 years	18	6.3%	11.5%
75-84 years	6	2.1%	7.8%

Ethnicity

	No. in Survey	Percentage in Survey	West Sussex
White British	251	88.4%	91.0%*
White Other	15	5.3%	-
Black	4	1.4%	1.3%
Asian	3	1.1%	4.3%
Mixed	3	1.1%	2.4%
Prefer not to say	6	2.1%	

*West Sussex result is White British and White other combined

Disability

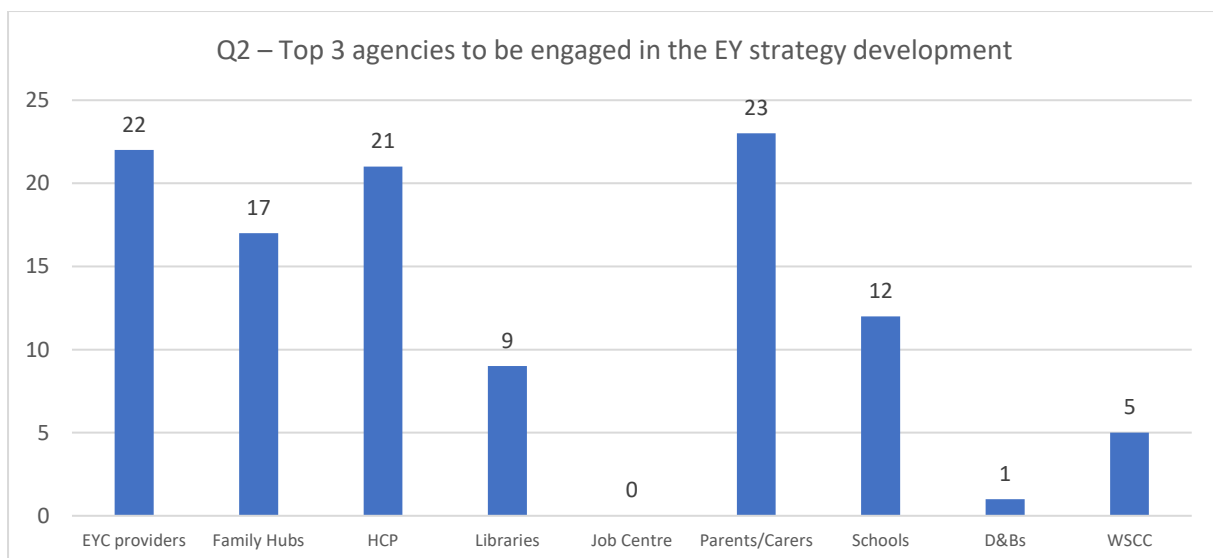
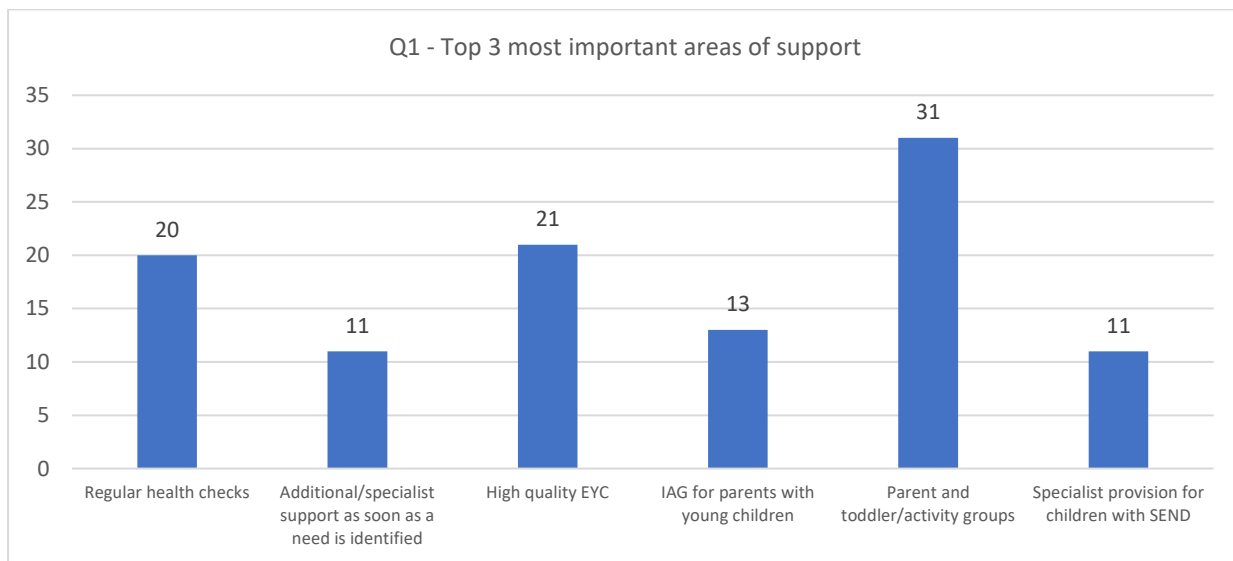
	No. in Survey	Percentage in Survey	West Sussex
Prefer not to say	10	3.5%	
No	247	87.6%	83.1%
Yes	25	8.9%	16.9%

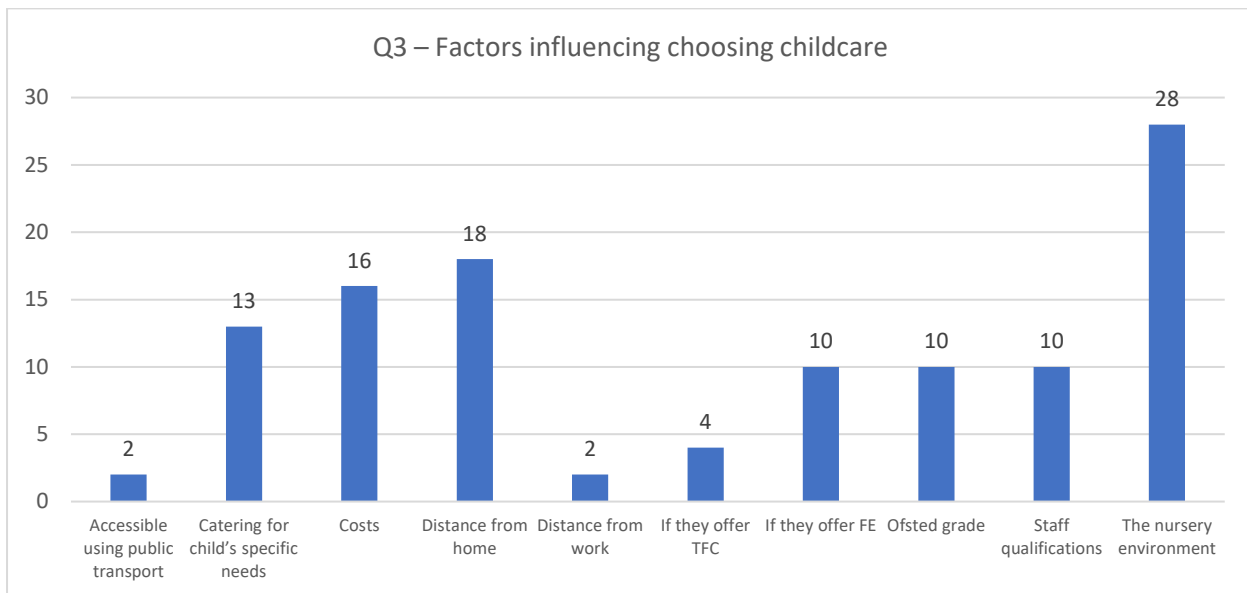
4. Children and Family Hub Survey Questions

4.1 Parent Responses

38 parents completed the questionnaire. The three areas of support that were most important to them were Parent and toddler activity groups: High quality Early Years and Childcare and regular health checks. They felt that parents and carers; Early Years and childcare providers and health care professions needed to be engaged in strategy development. The factors that influence childcare provision for them were the nursery environment, followed by distance, cost and extent it catered for specific needs. Some also added the staff attitude; how their child behaved and how they were when visiting and availability – as it can be hard to find spaces.

Seven parents expressed an interest in taking part in the development of the strategy.





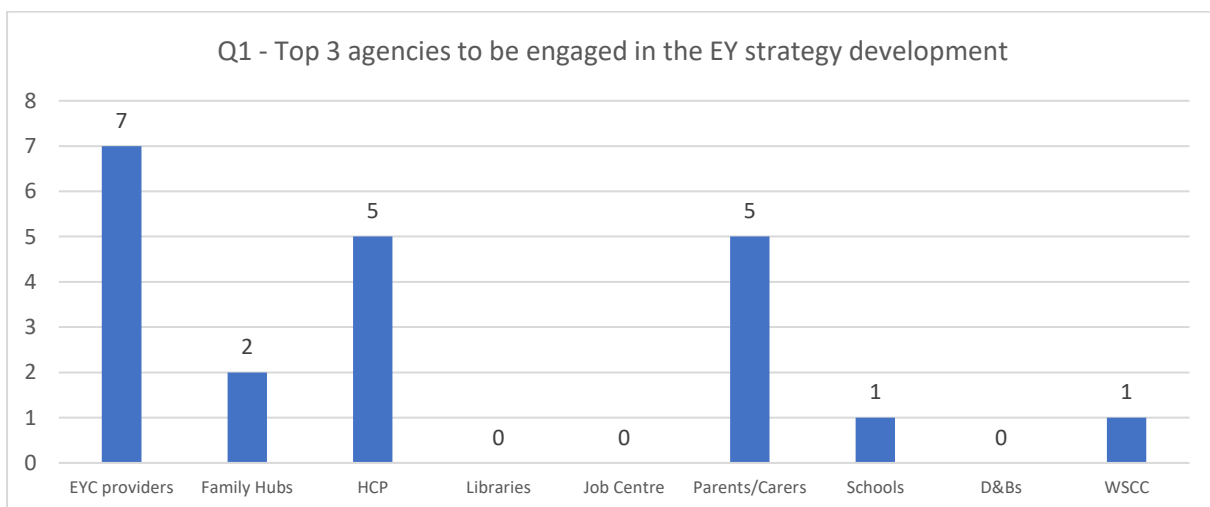
4.2 Practitioner responses

Eight practitioners responded to the questionnaire. They commented those Early Years and Childcare provider (including nannies); health care professionals and parent / carers needed to be engaged in the development of a strategy. Regular health checks: high quality Early years and Childcare and information, advice and guidance were the most critical areas of support to them.

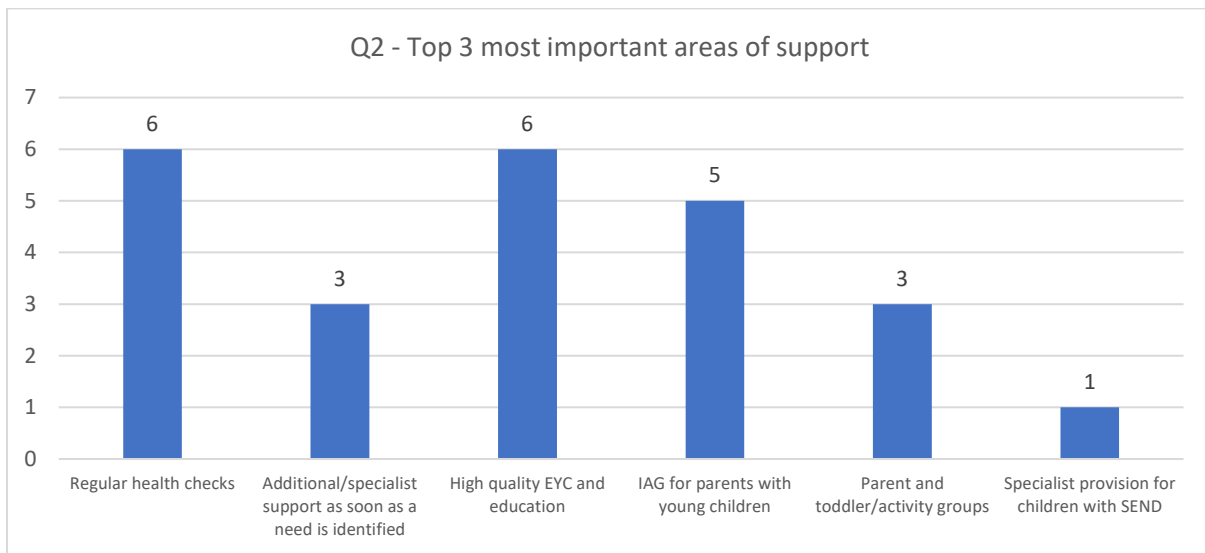
Five Practitioners responded to a question about what support was most beneficial from partners, and told us:

- Open communication between services and opportunities for children and practitioners.
- Open communication. Workshops to support them in helping their children. Funding. Supportive environment.
- Information and support groups, someone to be able to ask questions too, and guidance.
- More parent/carer and toddler groups to encourage learning and development.
- Family Centres, support groups.

One practitioner expressed an interest in being involved in the development of the strategy.



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Appendix A

YourVoice Survey Questions

Questions marked with (*) required a response.

1. In what capacity are you responding to this survey? *
2. Do you think that there should be a multi-agency Early Years and Childcare Strategy in West Sussex? *
3. If you answered 'No' or 'Unsure', please could you provide additional information.
4. Does your current role/service impact on children and their families? *
5. Does your service currently have a strategy in place that includes elements of Early Years and Childcare? *
6. If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the name of the strategy/strategies.
7. What do you think are the three most important things that should be included in an Early Years and Childcare Strategy to enable all children to have the best experience in their early years, leading to better outcomes for the whole of their lives? (Please select three) *
 - i. Access to high quality early years care and education
 - ii. Specialist early years or school provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities
 - iii. Parent/carer and child activity groups
 - iv. Regular health checks
 - v. Information, advice, and guidance for parents with young children and/or are pregnant
 - vi. Additional specialist support as soon as it is required
 - vii. Other (please specify)
8. How much do you agree or disagree that the West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy should focus on the following:
 - i. Children with additional needs benefitting from early identification, inclusion and targeted support
 - ii. All children being kept safe through effective safeguarding procedures and swift response to concerns
 - iii. All children and their families being able to access high quality provision in early years education, health and childcare
 - iv. Good physical health being promoted in families and those with health and medical needs being supported effectively
 - v. Good mental and emotional health is promoted in families and those with needs being able to access support
 - vi. Ensuring that there is sufficient early years and childcare available for all children and their families
 - vii. Parent, child, and customer voices being at the heart of service planning, ensuring accessibility to quality services
 - viii. Strong leadership and collaboration across services is embedded
9. If you selected somewhat disagree/definitely disagree for any of the above statement, please provide additional information.

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10. Are there any other priority areas that you think we may have missed and would benefit from being included in the Strategy? *
11. If you would like to receive updates regarding the Early Years and Childcare strategy and be kept informed of any other upcoming consultations related to Early Years and Childcare, please provide your name and email. We will only use your contact details for this purpose.

Parent Questions

- 1) What do you think are the most important areas of support to enable the best start for your child?

Please tick the top 3 that you think are the most important:

I most need access to:

- Regular health checks
 - Additional/specialist support as soon as a need is identified
 - High quality early years care and education I.e. day nursery, pre-school, childminder
 - Information, advice, and guidance for parents with young children
 - Parent and toddler/activity groups
 - Specialist early years or school provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Other – please add
- 2) Who do you think needs to be engaged with the support to families and children in their early years to secure the best outcomes for them?
Please tick the top 3 that you think are the most important to be involved:
 - Early years settings and childminders
 - Family Hubs (previously Children and Family Centres)
 - Healthy Child Programme – Health Visitors and School Nursing Team
 - Libraries
 - Job Centre
 - Parents/Carers
 - Schools
 - District/Borough Council
 - West Sussex County Council
 - Other – please add
 - 3) When choosing early years education and childcare provision (day nursery, pre-school, childminder) for your child, what are the three most important things to you?
 - Accessible using public transport
 - Being able to cater for your child's specific needs
 - Costs
 - Distance from home
 - Distance from work
 - If they offer Tax-Free Childcare
 - If they offer Free Entitlement for 2, 3- and 4 Year Olds
 - Ofsted grade
 - Staff qualifications
 - The nursery environment
 - Other – please add
 - 4) Would you be interested in working with us to develop the early years strategy?
Yes/No If yes, please add your name and an email address .

Practitioner Questions

- 1) Who do you think needs to be engaged with the strategy to support the best outcomes for children in their early years? Please tick the top 3 that you think are the most crucial to be involved:
 - Early years settings and childminders
 - Family Hubs (previously Children and Family Centres)
 - Healthy Child Programme – Health Visitors and School Nursing Team
 - Libraries
 - Job Centre
 - Parents/Carers
 - Schools
 - District/Borough Council
 - West Sussex County Council
 - Other – please add

- 2) What do you think are the most important things that should be included in an early years strategy to enable all children to have the best experience in their early years, leading to better outcomes for the whole of their lives?
Please tick the top 3 that you think are the most important:
 - Families most need access to:
 - Regular health checks
 - Additional/specialist support as soon as a need is identified
 - High quality early years care and education I.e. day nursery, pre-school, childminder
 - Information, advice, and guidance for parents with young children
 - Parent and toddler/activity groups
 - Specialist early years or school provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Other – please add

- 3) What support do you need from partners to enable you to provide the best for children in your setting?

- 4) Would you be interested in working with us to develop the early years strategy?
Yes/No If yes, please add your name and an email address

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Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Updated Work Programme

Topic/Issue	Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source	Timing/ Approach
Forthcoming Committee Meetings		
Annual Meeting	Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Business Planning Group membership.	12 June 2024
Family Safeguarding Model	Performance Monitoring - To assess the impact and performance of the Family Safeguarding Model since its implementation in February 2022.	12 June 2024
Performance and Resources Report – Q4 2023-24	Performance Monitoring - To assess the performance and finance position relating to Children and Young People's Services (to be done quarterly).	12 June 2024
SEND Improvement Plan – EHCP timeliness	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress on EHCP timeliness as part of the SEND Improvement Plan. The item will also include any broader responses to the Area SEND Inspection outcome. <i>(Source: CYPSSC 15 November 2023)</i>	12 June 2024
Performance and Resources Report – Q1 2024-25	Performance Monitoring - To assess the performance and finance position relating to Children and Young People's Services (to be done quarterly).	11 September 2024
SEND Improvement Plan – Focus tbc	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress of the SEND Improvement Plan (a particular area of focus of the plan to be identified). <i>(Source: CYPSSC 14 November 2023)</i>	11 September 2024
Performance and Resources Report – Q2 2024-25	Performance Monitoring - To assess the performance and finance position relating to Children and Young People's Services (to be done quarterly).	20 November 2024
SEND Improvement Plan – Focus tbc	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress of the SEND Improvement Plan (a particular area of focus of the plan to be identified). <i>(Source: CYPSSC 13 September 2023)</i>	20 November 2024

Topic/Issue	Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source	Timing/ Approach
Adult Learning	Performance Monitoring – To assess the County Council’s approach to Adult Learning including the Adult Community Education provision and Lifelong learning (0-25 Years) (<i>Source: CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024</i>)	20 November 2024
SEND Improvement Plan – Focus tbc	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress of the SEND Improvement Plan (a particular area of focus of the plan to be identified). (<i>Source: CYPSSC 13 September 2023</i>)	15 January 2025
Performance and Resources Report – Q3 2024-25	Performance Monitoring - To assess the performance and finance position relating to Children and Young People’s Services (to be done quarterly).	26 February 2025
SEND Improvement Plan – Focus tbc	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress of the SEND Improvement Plan (a particular area of focus of the plan to be identified). (<i>Source: CYPSSC 13 September 2023</i>)	26 February 2025
Items for timetabling		
Child and Adolescent Multi-Disciplinary Psychological service (CHAMPS)	Performance Monitoring – To scrutinise the progress and impact of the service for children and young people since the service was insourced in December 2023. (<i>Source: CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024</i>)	End 2024/early 2025
Review of Fostering Service	Performance Monitoring – To assess the impact of the Fostering Service Redesign to increase local placements including the impact of Mockingbird, support for foster carers and the recruitment and retention initiatives. (<i>Source: CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024</i>)	Timing to be confirmed
Children not in structured education	Policy Development – To assess the County Council’s approach to the support for children not in structured education, including children missing from school and home educated	End of 2024/early 2025
Business Planning Group – items for BPG to consider for Scrutiny (including those raised by Committee Members under ‘Items for Future Scrutiny’).		
Lessons Learnt from inquests	Policy Development – To scrutinise the lessons learnt and action plans following recent inquests, including if services are configured appropriately and if response to actions are sufficient to address	BPG to consider short written briefing on lessons learnt to date for

Topic/Issue	Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source	Timing/ Approach
	any identified issues. This could include a focus on transitions. <i>(Source: CYPSSC 28 September 2022)</i>	consideration at BPG on 3 May.
Education Transformation Programme	Policy Development – To assess the delivery and progress of the Education Transformation Programme in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people <i>(Source: CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024)</i>	BPG to receive an update on 3 May to assess and consider any areas for scrutiny.
Sufficiency of SEND School Places	Performance Monitoring – To assess the progress and delivery of increasing SEND school places as part of the SEND Improvement Programme <i>(Source: CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024)</i>	BPG to consider for scrutiny at meeting on 3 May.
SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019 - 2024	Policy Development – To scrutinise the development of a new strategy for post 2024. <i>(Source: CYPSSC 12 July 2022)</i>	BPG to be updated on progress of the development of a new Strategy to determine the right time for scrutiny to add value.
Business Planning Group – to monitor		
Review of Early Help	Performance Monitoring – To scrutinise the continued impact and performance of the Early Help service, with a focus on how pre-school children and those not in school requiring Early Help support are identified (last updated received by Committee in June 2023). <i>(Source: CYPSSC 7 June 2023 & BPG 8 September 2023)</i>	BPG to continue to monitor.
Continuous Practice Improvement update	Performance Monitoring – To scrutinise the delivery of the continuous improvement against the Key Performance Indicators identified <i>(Source: CYPSSC 13 September 2023)</i>	BPG to receive update on KPI performance at next BPG (3 May 2024) to identify any potential areas for scrutiny.
Sufficiency of Placements for Children we Care For (High Cost Placements)	Policy Development - To assess the mix and numbers for placements and the policies the County Council is working to; and whether the right strategies are in place to provide the best outcomes for children we care for.	BPG to receive update at BPG on 3 May 2024 to consider if any areas for adding to the work programme.
CYPSSC Task and Finish Groups		

Topic/Issue	Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source	Timing/ Approach
Educational Attainment	Performance Monitoring – To scrutinise the impact of the action being taken to improve attainment levels at Key Stage 2 and for disadvantaged children (performance measures 27 and 29 in Council Plan). (Source: CYPSSC 7 June 2023, CYPSSC BPG 9 February 2024))	Spring 2024. Terms of reference and timing to be developed.

Scrutiny Business Planning Checklist

Priorities	<p>Is the topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a corporate or service priority? In what way? • an area where performance, outcomes or budget are a concern? How? • one that matters to residents? Why? • key decision preview, policy development or performance?
What is being scrutinised and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should the scrutiny focus be? What key lines of enquiry should be covered? • Where can the committee add value, what impact can scrutiny have? • What is the desired outcome from scrutiny?
When and how to scrutinise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When can the committee have most influence? (Is the committee getting involved at the right time, or the earliest opportunity?) • What is the best approach - committee, TFG, one-off small group, informal briefing or written update? • What research, visits or other activities could complement the scrutiny? • Would scrutiny benefit from external witnesses or evidence?
Is the work programme focused and achievable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have priorities changed – should any work be brought forward, stopped or put back? • Can there be fewer items for more in-depth consideration? • Is there a balance between policy development, performance monitoring and key decision preview? • Has sufficient capacity been retained for future work?

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Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The County Council must give at least 28 days' notice of all key decisions to be taken by councillors or officers. The Plan describes these proposals and the month in which the decisions are to be taken over a four-month period. Decisions are categorised according to [cabinet member](#) portfolios.

The most important decisions will be taken by the Cabinet sitting in public. The meetings are also available to watch online via our [webcasting website](#). The [schedule of monthly Cabinet meetings](#) is available on the website.

The Forward Plan is updated regularly and key decisions can be taken on any day in the month if they are not taken at Cabinet meetings. The [Plan](#) is available on the website. [Published decisions](#) are also available via the website.

A key decision is one which:

- Involves expenditure or savings of £500,000 or more (except treasury management); and/or
- Will have a significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions in terms of how services are provided.

The following information is provided for each entry in the Forward Plan:

Decision	A summary of the proposal.
Decision By	Who will take the decision - if the Cabinet, it will be taken at a Cabinet meeting in public.
Date added	The date the proposed decision was added to the Forward Plan.
Month	The decision will be taken on any working day in the month stated. If a Cabinet decision, it will be taken at the Cabinet meeting scheduled in that month.
Consultation/ Representations	How views and representations about the proposal will be considered or the proposal scrutinised, including dates of scrutiny committee meetings.
Background Documents	The documents containing more information about the proposal and how to obtain them (via links on the website version of the Forward Plan). Hard copies are available on request from the decision contact.
Lead officer (report author)	The contact details of the decision report author.
Contact	Who in Democratic Services you can contact about the entry.

Finance, assets, performance and risk management

Each month the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property reviews the Council's budget position and may take adjustment decisions. A similar monthly review of Council property and assets is carried out and may lead to decisions about them. These are noted in the Forward Plan as 'rolling decisions'.

Each month the Cabinet will consider the Council's performance against its planned outcomes and in connection with a register of corporate risk. Areas of particular significance may be considered at the scheduled Cabinet meetings.

Significant proposals for the management of the Council's budget and spending plans will be dealt with at a scheduled Cabinet meeting and shown in the Plan as strategic budget options.

For questions contact Katherine De La Mora on 033 022 22535, email katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk.

Published: 19 February 2024

Forward Plan Summary

Summary of all forthcoming executive decisions in Cabinet Member portfolio order

Decision Maker	Subject Matter	Date
Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)	Commissioning of College Alternative Provision for Key Stage 4 Learners	February 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Allocation of Capital Funding to create increased provision for girls' changing at St Andrew's CE High School, Worthing	February 2024
Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)	Allocation of funding to create bulge classes for secondary pupils in East Grinstead	February 2024
Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)	Allocation of S106 funding to enable expansion of St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley	February 2024
Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)	Allocation of S106 Funding for Replacement of Modular Teaching Accommodation at St Augustine's CE Primary School, Haywards Heath	February 2024
Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)	Extension of the Dynamic Purchasing System for Independent Alternative Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	February 2024
Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)	Award of Adult Learning Community Learning Grant funded Programmes	February 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Additional budget allocation for delivery of the new Secondary School at Brookleigh, Burgess Hill	March 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 -2026	March 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and Expansion of St Anthony's School - Publication of Statutory Notices	March 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Worthing High School - Allocation of Funding for Expansion of the Special Support Centre	March 2024
Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)	Award of contract for delivery of a Special Support Centre at Maidenbower Infants School, Crawley	April 2024
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)	Additional budget allocation for the replacement of modular teaching accommodation at Slinfold CE Primary School	April 2024
Assistant Director (Communities) (Emily King)	Contingency Accommodation Arrangements (Rolling Entry)	Between February 2024 and December 2024

Children and Young People, Learning and Skills

Children and Young People Portfolio

None

Learning and Skills Portfolio

Commissioning of College Alternative Provision for Key Stage 4 Learners	
<p>The County Council currently commissions the Chichester College Group to deliver education provision for Key Stage 4 pupils aged 14-16, whose educational and developmental needs are deemed to be better suited and supported through a more vocationally based curriculum.</p> <p>The package of provision, procured in 2021 (decision OKD11(21/22) refers), is known as 'Freshstart' and is delivered across selected campuses constituting the Chichester College Group (CCG).</p> <p>Building on the success of the service to date, it is proposed to continue to commission CCG to offer this provision for a further year. The Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) will be asked to approve the award of a contract to the Chichester College Group for the continuation of the provision of services under the 'Freshstart' programme.</p>	
Decision by	Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)
Date added	10 August 2023
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	<p>West Sussex schools with a current Key Stage 4 provision</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Director of Children, Young People and Learning, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p>
Background documents (via website)	
Lead officer (report author)	Andrew Jenkins
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Allocation of Capital Funding to create increased provision for girls' changing at St Andrew's CE High School, Worthing

In October 2020, following a public consultation, the proposal to alter St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to a co-educational school from September 2021 entry was confirmed ([Decision ES08\(20/21\)](#) refers).

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Following the change in 2021, the number of girls attending St Andrew's CE High School is increasing and therefore a further increase to changing provision is required to ensure adequate provision for girls. As St Andrew's CE High School is a Voluntary Aided School and the County Council do not own the freehold of the building, it has been agreed that the project can be delivered as a school managed project. The Governing Body has appointed consultants who are currently undertaking the design work for the proposed scheme.

Following detailed design and associated cost estimates the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills will be asked to approve the budget required and the passporting of funds to St Andrew's CE High School to deliver the extension to girls' changing facilities.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacquie Russell)
Date added	28 July 2023
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	School Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 0330 022 22553

Allocation of funding to create bulge classes for secondary pupils in East Grinstead

Following a review of pupil projections for starting secondary school in East Grinstead, it is necessary to create provision for a bulge class in both September 2024 and 2025 to deliver additional places to accommodate the growing number of secondary pupils.

Viability studies are currently being undertaken at the two secondary schools in the town – Imberhorne and Sackville to assess which school should be expanded to accommodate the bulge classes.

Following completion of the viability studies, and on determining which school should be expanded, funds will be sought in line with the cost estimate to enable the works to be taken forward. The monies for the project will be allocated from S106 funds which have been received to fund additional capacity for secondary aged pupils in East Grinstead.

The Assistant Director (Property and Assets) will be asked to approve the budget required for the project to create provision for the bulge classes.

Decision by	Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)
Date added	1 November 2023

Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	None currently identified Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Allocation of S106 funding to enable expansion of St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley

St Wilfrid's Catholic School in Crawley is currently a 5 form entry (5FE) 11-16 Secondary School. The school has grown in recent years to meet the demand for places, taking bulge classes of 30 pupils in each of the last three years. This has led to the requirement for additional accommodation to enable the school to become a 6FE 11-16 Secondary School in all year groups.

It is proposed that a new teaching block incorporating 6 classrooms, office space, toilets and storage is provided. The intention is to fund the expansion project using received Section 106 funds which must be spent on additional secondary educational infrastructure and/or equipment in Crawley.

It is intended that the expansion is delivered as a school managed project. Therefore, following detailed design and associated cost estimates provided by the school, the Assistant Director (Property and Assets) will be asked to approve the allocation of the S106 funds to the school to enable the project to proceed.

Decision by	Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)
Date added	12 August 2022
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Assistant Director (Property and Assets) via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	
Lead officer (report author)	Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Allocation of S106 Funding for Replacement of Modular Teaching Accommodation at St Augustine's CE Primary School, Haywards Heath

St Augustine's CE Primary School, located in Scaynes Hill, close to Haywards Heath, is a four class Primary School with a broad range of buildings including a single modular unit which was installed on the site in excess of 30 years ago. The building has significant suitability and condition issues and requires replacement with new teaching accommodation meeting current Building Regulations and Department for Education Building Bulletins standards.

The Assistant Director (Property and Assets) will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding from Section 106 contributions and the launch of a procurement exercise to enable a project to be undertaken to replace the modular classroom with new purpose built classroom.

Decision by	Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)
Date added	1 December 2023
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	School Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Extension of the Dynamic Purchasing System for Independent Alternative Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The County Council has a statutory obligation to provide suitable education for all pupils including those who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education in a school setting, (predominantly children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)). This is termed Alternative Provision.

This is commissioned using the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Independent Alternative Provision (IAP), which enables the efficient sourcing of IAP services from a range of qualified providers. The DPS was established in 2021 ([decision OKD16 \(21/22\)](#) refers) for a maximum period of four years and six months.

The initial term of the DPS expires in February 2024 and the original contract allows for a further 2 year extension. Over the initial term the DPS has proved important in enabling the County Council to source much needed IAP placements that meet the education needs of pupils.

Agreement will be sought from the Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) to extend the DPS for a further 2 years from 1st March 2024.

Decision by	Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)
Date added	7 December 2023
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	No consultees currently identified. Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Charlotte Smith Tel: 033 022 2754
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Award of Adult Learning Community Learning Grant funded Programmes

Adult learning is a non-statutory provision, externally funded via the Department for Education through the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The County Council receive a total £3.1m Adult Education Budget each year from the ESFA which funds the provision of learning for adults to obtain skills or qualifications and/or enhance their wellbeing and/or improve their life skills/personal development.

In March 2023 the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the launch of a procurement and the commencement of an expression of interest process to secure a range of providers to deliver the adult skills and community learning programme (decision [LS10\(22/23\)](#) refers).

In August 2023 approval was granted for the award of contracts to deliver the adult skills provision (decision [OKD11 \(23/24\)](#) refers).

Expressions of interest are now being sought from providers to bid for funding from the Community Learning Grant element of the budget. The process will secure Grant Funding Agreements with multiple providers to deliver community focussed programmes which engage with and support the most vulnerable and disengaged residents.

On conclusion of the process the Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) will be asked to award the contracts to the successful providers for an initial period up to 31 July 2025.

Decision by	Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) (Steve Nyakatawa)
Date added	18 October 2023
Month	February 2024
Consultation/ Representations	No consultees currently identified.

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	Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Andrew Bishop Tel: 033 022 25399
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Additional budget allocation for delivery of the new Secondary School at Brookleigh, Burgess Hill

In July 2022, the then Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills approved funding for the delivery of a new Secondary School at Brookleigh (formerly known as Northern Arc) in Burgess Hill, to provide 900 pupil places to the Burgess Hill area and include a Special Support Centre ([LS04\(22/23\)](#) refers).

Since then, inflationary and other pressures have increased the total estimated cost of the project and additional funds are now required for this project to be completed. Approval will therefore be sought for an additional budget allocation to enable the delivery of the Bedelands Academy Secondary School project.

Should the proposal be ready in time for inclusion in the Quarter 3 Performance and Resources Report at the Cabinet meeting on 12 March approval for the budget uplift will be sought as part of that report. If not, approval will be sought via a decision by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacquie Russell)
Date added	26 January 2024
Month	March 2024
Consultation/ Representations	None currently identified. Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Lydia Schilbach Tel: 033022 25832
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 2253

Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024 -2026

The County Council have a range of statutory duties related to early years and childcare services which include the provision of sufficient childcare places to meet the needs of families in West Sussex. This includes planning to deliver the Department for Education’s plans to expand the early years entitlement by increasing access to free childcare which will commence in a phased approach from April 2024.

The Council is therefore developing ‘Right from the Start’, which is the Early Years and Childcare Strategy to support changes locally. These include improved collaborative working, delivering on the expansion of childcare as well as ensuring a strategic framework for maintaining efficient and high-quality provision and increased outcomes. The Strategy will set out the vision for providing support for children and their families from pre-birth to aged five for early education entitlements, and from birth to 14 where families access wraparound childcare provision.

The Cabinet Member for Children Young People, Learning and Skills will be asked to approve adoption of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)
Date added	2 January 2024
Month	March 2024
Consultation/ Representations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and Carers • YourVoice Public Survey undertaken during autumn 2023 • Partner organisations • Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee – 28 February 2024 <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision-maker, via the report author, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p>
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Helen Gillespie Tel: 033 022 29312
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and Expansion of St Anthony’s School - Publication of Statutory Notices

St Anthony’s School in Chichester is a Special School for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning difficulties. There is a need to expand St Anthony’s to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council’s [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2019-2024](#).

Sharing a site with St Anthony’s School is Jessie Younghusband Primary School which is a 4-11 Primary School providing up to 210 places. It is proposed to relocate Jessie Younghusband from the current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School

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(210 places) which is being built on the housing development west of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights. This would provide the opportunity to expand St Anthony's into the vacant Jessie Younghusband site.

In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills approved the launch of a public consultation, in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, to seek views on the proposals. ([decision CYPLS05\(23/24\)](#) refers). The consultation is open until 31 January 2024 and views and comments are invited from interested parties to assist in further shaping the proposals.

Following the conclusion of the consultation the feedback received will be reviewed; should it be determined that any of the proposals should proceed, the appropriate method for formalising the changes will be undertaken.

For the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and expansion of St Anthony's School this would mean progressing the publication of statutory notices, in accordance with [DfE guidance for making prescribed alterations to maintained schools](#). Therefore, following a review of the consultation feedback, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills would be asked to consider whether to proceed with approving the publication of statutory notices for the relocation of Jessie Younghusband and expansion of St Anthony's school. As part of this proposal the Cabinet Member would also be asked to consider delegating authority to the Interim Assistant Director (Education and Skills) to determine the outcome following conclusion of the statutory notice period.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacquie Russell)
Date added	26 January 2024
Month	March 2024
Consultation/ Representations	Schools & Governing Bodies Parents and carers Dioceses Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee – 28 February 2024 Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Graham Olway Tel: 033 022 23029
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Worthing High School - Allocation of Funding for Expansion of the Special Support Centre

There is a need to increase provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through the creation of additional places in Specialist Support Centres that are attached to mainstream schools and academies. This will assist with the aim of enabling children to attend school locally.

In October 2020 the then Cabinet Member for Education and Skills agreed that work was progressed to explore the options for expanding existing Special Support Centres (SSC) or creating new SSCs. One of these proposals was for the expansion of the SSC at Worthing High School to create additional places and the redesignation of the SSC from Additional Learning Needs to Social Communication Needs ([Decision reference ES09 \(20/21\)](#)).

Since that time options appraisals and design work has been undertaken and costed in relation to providing suitable and sufficient accommodation for an expanded SSC at Worthing High School.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding from the Capital Programme to enable the project to expand the Special Support Centre at Worthing High School to progress.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacque Russell)
Date added	26 January 2024
Month	March 2024
Consultation/ Representations	Staff Governors Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Award of contract for delivery of a Special Support Centre at Maidenbower Infants School, Crawley

There is a need to increase provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through the creation of additional places in Specialist Support Centres (SSC) that are attached to mainstream schools and academies. This will assist with the aim of enabling children to attend school locally.

During 2022 the then Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the allocation of capital funding for creation of a new 12 place SSC at Maidenbower Infants School in

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Crawley and delegated authority to launch a procurement for the necessary works ([decision LS07\(22/23\)](#) refers).

Following completion of the procurement process the Assistant Director (Property and Assets) will be asked to approve the award of the construction contract to the preferred provider for the construction phase, of the project to provide a Special Support Centre at Maidenbower Infants School.

Decision by	Assistant Director (Property and Assets) (Andrew Edwards)
Date added	7 December 2023
Month	April 2024
Consultation/ Representations	Maidenbower Infants School Maidenbower Junior School Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Katerina Evans-Makrakis Tel: 07597 526870
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

Additional budget allocation for the replacement of modular teaching accommodation at Slinfold CE Primary School

Slinfold CE Primary School is a 140 place Primary School for 4–11-year-olds, incorporating five classrooms and a pre-school on site. Two of the five classrooms are in 30-year-old modular classrooms which have significant suitability and condition issues due to the age of the buildings and are nearing the end of their life.

In December 2021, the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the allocation of £1.158m to replace the modular classrooms with a two class extension and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the contract ([Decision LS12 \(21/22\)](#) refers).

Since that time there have been programme delays due to the identification of Great Crested Newts as well as inflationary pressures. Additional funds are therefore required to complete the project.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills will be asked to approve the additional budget allocation to enable the delivery of the project at Slinfold CE Primary school.

Decision by	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills (Cllr Jacquie Russell)
Date added	25 October 2023
Month	April 2024

Consultation/ Representations	No consultees currently identified. Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the decision maker, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.
Background documents (via website)	None
Lead officer (report author)	Lydia Schilbach Tel: 033022 25832
Contact	Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553

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