

Additional Questions from 17 January 2024 meeting

Agenda Item & Question	Response
Agenda Item 6 – School Place Planning in West Sussex	
<p>Impact of academisation on planning school places – what lobbying has been undertaken to highlight this to central government?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>There is no prescribed timescale but it is expected that the timescale will be in the region of 3 to 5 years.</p>

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<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>

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<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>

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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.