

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Date of meeting: 30 October 2024

Subject: Portsmouth School Place Planning Strategy 2024-2029

Report by: Alison Critchley, Head of Sufficiency and Resources

Cabinet Member: Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update Members on the key issues affecting school place planning in Portsmouth and to agree the attached strategy for addressing the seven key priority areas.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education agree the Portsmouth School Place Planning Strategy for 2024-2029 (attached).

3. Background

- 3.1 The purpose of the Portsmouth School Place Planning Strategy for 2024-29 is to set out Portsmouth's overall approach to ensuring the supply of sufficient high quality mainstream and specialist places over the period 2024 - 2029.
- 3.2 It provides a framework for local authority maintained schools, academies, and multi-academy trusts (MATs) working within Portsmouth to plan for and take decisions in respect of individual school changes.
- 3.3 The document builds on and replaces the School Organisation Policy 2019-24, the Primary School Place Strategy 2019-24, the Secondary School Place Strategy 2019-24, and the Special Provision and Alternative Provision Place Strategy 2019-2024.
- 3.4 The plan identifies seven key issues that the local authority will need to navigate with schools over the next planning period as follows:

- 3.4.1 Providing additional places for secondary aged pupils to accommodate the larger year groups that will be moving through secondary schools in this period, with the largest cohort now expected to join Year 7 in September 2027.
- 3.4.2 Securing sufficient suitable places for the growing number of children with SEND, including those with EHCPs, in mainstream schools, special schools and inclusion centres. Over the period to 2029 we expect the number of Portsmouth children of compulsory school age with EHCPs to increase from 1325 in January 2024 to 1887 in January 2029.
- 3.4.3 Managing the anticipated reduction in the number of children entering infant and primary schools in a way that does not threaten the viability of any individual school. Based on the 2024 forecast we expect the number of children starting Reception to drop from 2191 in September 2024 to 1904 in September 2028.
- 3.4.4 Being ready to respond to continued volatility in pupil numbers. This can be affected by a wide range of factors from recruitment of staff to local health services to changes in government policy to international events resulting in significant immigration.
- 3.4.5 Supporting and encouraging the amalgamation of Infant and Junior schools as the opportunities arise.
- 3.4.6 Being ready for a likely significant increase in pupil numbers in the period from 2030 to 2040 due to substantial planned residential development in the City over the next 5-15 years.
- 3.4.7 Securing an alternative site for the Bay Campus of the Harbour School (at Tipner) which will be needed for the Tipner regeneration project to go ahead.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The government has provided some funding to deliver additional mainstream and specialist places within the city. However, both the council and individual schools are working within the context of very limited funding for capital works.
- 4.2 It is therefore particularly important that decisions about investment are taken within the context of an overall strategic plan. This document provides a framework within which decisions about individual capital projects can be taken.

5. Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 Completed.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Education Act 1996, Section 14, requires a local authority to secure sufficient primary and secondary schools in their area, sufficient being in relation to number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education and requiring the LA to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school and includes practical instruction and training appropriate to pupils' different needs. A local authority must exercise its functions under this section with a view to security diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice.
- 6.2 The Council has additional general duties under s.13 and 13A of the Education Act 1996 to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of its community by securing that efficient primary and secondary education and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area and that its education functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential
- 6.3 A local authority is also required under the Children and Families Act 2014 to keep under review its educational, training and social care provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities and to consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet need.
- 6.4 The recommendation contained in this report is being sought with the intention of furthering the above duties and are in compliance with the legislation. The recommendation sought is within the Cabinet Member's powers, as set out in Part 2 Section 3 of the Council's constitution.

7. Director of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The capital budget allocation and capital budget monitoring is governed by the Council's financial rules.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education: