

## **ESSEX SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2007-2012**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' comments on the draft Essex School Organisation Plan 2007-2012 and highlights the implications for Rochford District.
- 1.2 The Plan is prepared by the Local Education Authority and is intended to provide a framework within which discussions regarding the provision of school places can take place. Since May 2007, the responsibility for deciding on the majority of statutory proposals for providing school places falls to the Local Authority. The Plan also provides important information on school provision that can be used to inform the preparation of Development Plan Documents. A copy of the plan has been placed in the Members' Library.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The School Organisation Plan provides statistical data and a summary of policy statements and principles as a context for the conclusions regarding the future need for school places across the county. The Plan outlines how the Local Authority will, in meeting its duty to secure sufficient school places, seek to promote high standards; secure diversity in the provision of schools; increase opportunities for parental choice; increase collaboration between schools; and encourage greater community cohesion.
- 2.2 The plan is divided into three main sections, as follows:-
- Analysis of demographic information
  - Statement of policies and principles
  - Management of supply of school places

### **3 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Plan indicates that population growth will continue in most districts, except for Castle Point and Maldon, in the period from 2001 to 2011; the increase in Rochford is forecast to be 1.4% from 78,400 to 79,500.
- 3.2 As well as taking into account the number of births in each district and how this will affect the future requirements for school places, the Plan also considers proposed housing increases as detailed in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy – the East of England Plan, though only through to 2012.
- 3.3 For Essex as a whole, taking into account the development of new housing, the Plan forecasts a slight increase in the number of pupils from 193,791 to 194,301. However, the picture varies across the county and for Rochford the forecasts indicate that, with new housing, the number of primary pupils will

drop by 9.8% from 6,620 to 5,973 in 2012, and for secondary schools there will be a drop of 2% from 5,694 to 5,578 pupils.

- 3.4 In principle then, taking account of new housing to be built in the period to 2012, there will be sufficient school places available in the district. However, this district-wide figure masks variations across the district and these variations are considered in section 5 of the report.

#### **4 POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 This section of the Plan outlines the policies and principles to be taken into account when considering the need for a change in the balance of school places. The issues to be taken into consideration are: school performance; increasing diversity; early years and childcare provision; enhanced learning opportunities for 14-16; post-16 provision; special educational needs; contribution of schools to social and community cohesion; collaborative working; travel to school; school size; admission arrangements; and capital investment.

#### **5 MANAGING THE SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES**

- 5.1 Capacity figures for primary and secondary schools in the Plan have been calculated using the 'net capacity assessment method', which allows capacities to be set at levels to suit reasonable admission arrangements and the organisation of schools.
- 5.2 In summary, the situation for the schools in Rochford is provided at appendix one to this report. The analysis suggests that three primary schools (Rayleigh, St Nicholas' Church of England, and Rochford) will have a deficit of pupils when the provision of new housing is taken into account, though this deficit is relatively small set against the overall surplus for primary schools across the district.
- 5.3 In relation to secondary schools, there is also an overall surplus, but this masks a deficit at King Edmund School and a minimal surplus at Sweyne.

#### **6 IMPLICATIONS FOR ROCHFORD**

- 6.1 It is important that a detailed assessment is made of the impact that new housing will have on the provision of school places, not just to 2012, but to 2021 and beyond.
- 6.2 At the moment, the indications are that in relation to the provision of primary school places in Rayleigh, there is some pressure on places at Key Stage 2, mainly due to movement in from London Boroughs.
- 6.3 In relation to secondary schools, the Plan indicates the situation needs to be kept under careful review in light of the fine balance between pupil numbers and places, once housing is included in the forecasts.

- 6.4 In response to these issues, it is proposed that a more detailed analysis of the School Organisation Plan be carried out to help inform the preparation of the Rochford Core Strategy, and that this 'background evidence paper' be reported to Members for approval later in the year. Once approved, the document can be added to the evidence base that will support the policies in the final version of the Core Strategy.

## **7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) That the contents of the School Organisation Plan be noted.
- (2) A Core Strategy 'background evidence paper' be prepared and reported to Members for approval at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

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### **Background Papers:-**

School Organisation Plan 2007-2012, Essex County Council, September 2007.

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