

ESSEX SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2000-2005

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks Members comments on the draft Essex Schools Organisation Plan 2000-2005 and highlights the implications for Rochford District.
- 1.2 The Plan is prepared by the Local Education Authority and is intended to fulfil the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 relating to the process of planning and organising school places.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Local Education Authority is required to publish an annual five-year plan indicating how it proposes to meet the need for school places. The 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. However, the plan is not intended to identify changes that are required for named schools, but the School Organisation Committee will take the information included in the plan into account when it considers such issues. A copy of the Plan has been placed in the Members Room.
- 2.2 The plan is divided into three main sections as follows:
 - Analysis of demographic information
 - Statement of policies and principles
 - Conclusions drawn from the demographic data

3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- 3.1 The Plan indicates that population growth will continue at significant levels in most districts to 2006. In the case of Rochford, the forecast is for a 4.5% increase by 2006 (78770), though it should be noted that in the following five-year period to 2011, the population is forecast to decline, to pre-2006 levels (77008 in 2011).
- 3.2 The Plan explains that there are no significant major housing developments proposed in Rochford in the period of the next Local Plan to 2011. To remind members, the draft Replacement Structure Plan proposes a housing allocation of 2,800 dwelling units for the period 1996-2011. However, the modifications to the Plan, which were recently published, propose to increase the allocation for Rochford to 3,050 units. The Plan does not seem to take account of this possible change.

3.3 A profile of the forecast school age population of Essex for the period 2001-2011 is provided in Appendix 1 to this report. Members will note that the forecasts for Rochford show a declining school population across all school age groups.

3.4 The table below shows the change in the number of pupils in Rochford schools over the last five years. It is clear from this table that over the last five years at least, the school population in the district has been steadily increasing, and the report recognises that Rochford is amongst the districts with the largest increase.

Rochford	School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	% difference 1996-2000
	Primary	6443	6658	6827	6973	6964	8.1
	Secondary	4760	4788	4865	4985	5126	7.7

3.5 The following table shows the forecast number of children on the roll for the period to 2005. Over this five year period, the forecast suggests that the primary school role will remain largely unchanged, but the secondary school numbers will increase significantly.

Rochford	School	2000	2005	% difference
	Primary	6964	6933	0.4
	Secondary 11-16	4772	5136	7.6
	Secondary 16-19	354	413	16.7

4 STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

4.1 This section of the Plan has remained largely unaltered from last years' version. A summary of the main points can be found in Appendix 2.

5 CONCLUSIONS FROM DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

5.1 The table below provides a summary of the conclusions reached in respect of primary school provision in Rochford. The commentary in the Plan indicates that the opportunity should be taken in individual circumstances to identify where school places might be reduced. In those schools where there is a projected deficit, the position should be kept under review.

Net capacity of schools		Number on roll		Surplus	
		Actual	Forecast		
2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
7039	7129	6964	6933	75	196

5.2 A similar table for secondary schools is shown below. In respect of the projected deficit, the Plan merely comments that it will be necessary to

keep under review the number of places available. In view of the mobility of students, existing arrangements for co-ordinating a strategic approach to planning school places should be strengthened.

Net capacity of schools		Number on roll		Surplus	
		Actual	Forecast		
2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
5225	5361	5126	5549	99	-188

- 5.3 For Members information, a complete breakdown of the current situation and projections for 2005 are provided in Appendix 3.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR ROCHFORD

- 6.1 The projections of school places for the district to 2005 seem to show that there is a considerable surplus of primary school places available, but that there will be a large deficit in respect of secondary schools. The Plan provides no indication of the arrangements to be put in place to deal with these projected changes.

- 6.2 Looking more closely at the data for individual schools, the Plan indicates that by 2005 there will be deficits at the following schools:

School	Deficit at 2005
Ashingdon	-17
Barling Magna	-4
Canewdon	-19
Plumberow	-89
Grove I	-4
Grove J	-59
Our Lady of Ransom	-2
Rochford	-25
Stambridge	-10
Greensward	-176
King Edmund	-159

- 6.3 It is clear that several primary schools and two secondary schools are projected to have a significant deficit in school places by 2005 and worryingly, the Plan provides no real indication of the way in which this issue will be tackled.
- 6.4 Members will recall giving consideration to the previous version of the School Organisation Plan 1999-2004 at Finance and General Purposes Committee on 21 July 1999 (Minute 320/99). Whilst the Schools Organisation Plan is a strategic document and is not intended to refer in detail to individual schools, it is disappointing to note that the key

issues raised last year by this authority do not seem to have been addressed in the updated version.

- 6.5 The Rochford District Local Plan allocates a site off Little Wheatley Chase for the provision of a new Primary School. However, whilst the County have given no indication that this site might be required in the future, it is apparent that the Park School site is already in the ownership of the education authority, and would certainly be an ideal location for a new Primary School. It is suggested that as part of the Council's response to this consultation document a request be made for clarification that a new Primary school is required in west Rayleigh and that the Park School site will identified for this purpose.
- 6.6 Taking these points into account, it is considered that a response should be sent to the County Council outlining this Council's concerns about the provision of school places in the district over the next five years, particularly given the fact that there may be an increase in the District's housing allocations following the publication of the proposed modifications to the Essex and Southend Structure Plan.

7 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Parish's that include schools with projected deficits at 2005 will have significant concerns regarding the arrangements for education.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS:**

That, subject to additional comments from Members, the comments in the report form the basis of a response to the County Council on the draft Essex School Organisation Plan 2000-2005. (HCPI)

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives

Background Papers:

The Essex School Organisation Plan 2000-2005 February 2000

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on (01702) 318100

School	Gross Capacity		Number of Pupils with statements of SEN	Net capacity		Number on roll	Forecast	Surplus/Deficit		Early years nursery unit	
	Apr-2000	Apr-2005		Apr-2000	Apr-2005			Apr-2000	Apr-2005	Apr-2000	Apr-2005
Ashingdon	324	324	0	324	324	337	341	-13	-17		
Barling Magna	180	180	1	178	178	155	182	23	-4		
Canewdon	146	146	4	138	138	131	157	7	-19	52	26
Gt Wakering	572	572	8	558	558	534	526	22	30		
Holt Farm I	270	270	2	266	266	259	254	7	12		
Holt Farm J	358	358	4	350	350	351	345	-1	5		
St Teresas P	224	224	0	224	224	210	209	14	15		
Westerings P	420	420	4	412	412	435	398	-23	15		
Hockley P	252	282	4	244	274	298	254	-54	20		
Plumberow P	403	403	2	399	399	485	488	-86	-89		
Riverside I	270	270	0	270	270	208	187	62	83		
Riverside J	352	352	3	346	346	266	266	80	80		
St Nicholas P	80	110	0	80	110	96	91	-16	19		
Rayleigh P	420	420	0	420	420	431	411	-11	9	52	26
DownHall P	324	324	2	320	320	290	306	30	15		
Ed. Francis I	180	180	0	180	180	180	167	0	13		
Ed. Francis J	240	240	1	238	238	266	217	-28	21		
Glebe I	210	240	2	206	236	175	213	31	23	26	13
Glebe J	265	265	4	257	257	254	250	3	7		
Grove I	236	236	0	236	236	250	240	-14	-4		
Grove J	258	258	2	254	254	296	313	-42	-59		
Our Lady of R P	408	408	1	406	406	382	408	24	-2		
Wyburns P	270	270	5	260	260	221	203	39	58		
Rochford P&N	175	175	1	173	173	173	198	0	-25	52	26
Doggetts P	238	238	5	228	228	201	226	27	2	52	26
Stambridge P	76	76	1	74	74	80	84	-6	-10		

School	Gross Capacity		Number of students with statement of SEN	Net capacity		Number on Roll			Forecast			Surplus/Deficit	
	Apr 2000	Apr 2005		Apr 2000	Apr 2005	Apr 2000			Apr 2005			Apr 2000	Apr 2005
						11-16	16-19	total	11-16	16-19	Total		
Greensward	1444	1474	7	1423	1453	1237	176	1413	1434	195	1629	10	-176
Fitzwimarc	1365	1365	6	1347	1347	1291	0	1291	1345	0	1345	56	2
Sweyne	1175	1175	26	1097	1097	1035	0	1035	952	0	952	62	145
King Edmund	1382	1488	8	1358	1464	1209	178	1387	1405	218	1623	-29	-159

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APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY - Policies and Principles Relevant to the Provision of School Places

- *The extent to which school performance might be taken into account when considering proposals to add or to remove places* - any proposal for the review of the number of spaces in an individual school or in a group of schools will need to take into account Ofsted inspection reports and other relevant information on the performance of the schools and the quality of education provided. It is recognised that there is a need to raise standards further, with particular attention to low achieving schools. Protocols will be developed for the identification of schools where closure is an option.
- *The desirability of diversity of provision, for example, by gender, religious or denominational conviction* - The diversity of schooling in the County has developed over many years, and the Plan does not propose any major interventions in, for example schools with a religious foundation or where there are separate schools for boys and girls. The Plan does note that any changes to the pattern of grammar school provision will be subject to Regulations that allow for ballots to be initiated by parents or proposals to be put forward by the respective governing body.
- *How provision for students aged 16+ might be delivered between providers in the school and Further Education sectors* - The Plan notes that it is essential that there is a partnership between schools and the FE sector. It is anticipated that the new Lifelong Learning Partnership will contribute to the development of post-16 education. Reviews of post-16 education have been undertaken in a number of districts including Rochford. However, there are no proposals in the Plan to make changes to the existing mix of post-16 provision.
- *Accessibility of different types of SEN (special educational needs) provision, including the balance between mainstream and special schools* - A continuing role is seen for special schools to work with those children whose complex needs cannot be met through early intervention approaches or reinforced school based arrangements. The vision is of those staff in special schools working increasingly flexibly and actively with mainstream schools.
- *The appropriate size of a primary or a secondary school within the context of Essex* - The Audit Commission has concluded that small primary schools (fewer than 90 children) and secondary schools (fewer than 4 forms of entry) are more expensive and in the secondary sector are less likely to be designated by Ofsted as 'meeting with success'. The Plan assumes that small sixth forms will have difficulties in meeting the DfEE proposals for 5 subjects in the sixth forms and then greater specialisation in year 13. Therefore sixth forms must be above 150 pupils. No presumptions are made about the maximum size of schools. The following range provides a guide: infants 180-270 pupils; junior 240-360; and primary 210-420.
- *The appropriate size of class or teaching group (having regard to the duty to secure infant class sizes of no more than 30* - For the primary phase,

additional funds have been made available to implement the Key Stage One Class Size Reduction Initiative which must be implemented by September 2001. Annual updates of the Plan will ensure there are sufficient school places for children on Key Stage 1 in order that these children are not taught in classes with more than 30 with one teacher. The County Council is devoting increasing levels of funds to primary education in recognition of the need for high quality provision. In the secondary phase class sizes will be influenced by a range of factors including curriculum area, age of the students, staff expertise and support.

- *The degree of accessibility to school that pupils of each age group might expect* - A clear priority is that children have the right to attend a school as near as possible to their homes, though in certain circumstances where this is not possible, free transport will be provided. Proposals for the future organisation of school places in rural areas will need to take into account journey length.
- *The response to expressions of parental preference, and in particular the circumstances in which popular schools might expand* - The Plan indicates that there should be a close link between the supply and demand for school places, though there ought to be opportunities for parents to exercise choice. However, there is a tension in meeting parental choice for popular schools. School admission criteria should be clear, fair and objective. Where additional accommodation is required because pupil numbers are growing, relocatable classrooms could be provided, unless permanent accommodation can be justified where growth is likely to be sustained for the foreseeable future.
- *The importance of school provision in relation to the needs of the wider community* - The Plan recognises the importance of schools looking outwards to serve their local communities in order to address the issues of social exclusion.
- *A statement of the Essex Policy on inclusion in mainstream schools of pupils with special educational needs* - The need for high quality special educational provision is recognised and the LEA is committed to working closely with the special schools and specialist provision in mainstream schools to assist them to develop. The justification for separate provision must be that it adds value over and above what is available in mainstream schools.
- *Reduction in the number of surplus spaces* - It is recognised that the removal of surplus places can open up funding opportunities for improvements to buildings and grounds that would otherwise not be available. In order to maintain the continuation of a school in a particular area it might be possible to merge separate infant and junior schools. Schools with a 75% or less occupancy rate should be reviewed with the aim of removing surplus places.

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320. DRAFT ESSEX SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 1999 - 2004

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy & Initiatives seeking Member comments on the draft Essex School Organisation Plan prepared by Essex County Council and intended to cover the period 1999-2004. Comments on the draft plan were required by 31st July 1999.

During detailed debate, Members considered that, at this stage, the County should be appraised of the following views/comments:-

- There is a desire that the opportunity should be taken to address the real needs of children within the District, their abilities and potential, and there is genuine concern that the plan as set out does not really help in this respect. There are few, if any, specific proposals. The plan adopts a 'wait and see/keep under review' approach. There are no proposals as to whether new schools are required, which schools are to be expanded and how, which schools are to be closed, if any, and so on.

- Proposals exclude the schooling relationship with the Southend-on-Sea Borough (in terms of pupil movement between Local Authority areas) and did not deal with a strategy for sixth form provision (there being a perceived drain between Essex and Southend-on-Sea).

- There should be clear indication of the percentage and arrangements for special educational needs children within the District and an indication of future plans in respect of their needs and provision.

- The problems of predicting the availability of places given the operation of parental choice and, in effect, the existence of a market place.

- There is particular concern about the continued use of demountables to address capacity problems. In addition, it is felt that the shape, size and layout of many school sites will not accommodate additional class provision without the loss of other facilities on site.

- In specific areas, such as Ashingdon, Hockley and parts of Rayleigh, schools are already over-subscribed against a background of continuing development over forthcoming years. There is concern that this issues will not be addressed.

- There is concern that proposals do not resolve the position in West Rayleigh, given that a site for future school provision has for many years been allocated in the Local Plan. In addition, there is no further light thrown on the situation regarding Park School and its role in the post 16 education debate.

The Committee concurred with the view of the Chief Executive that a representative from the County Learning Services Directorate should be invited to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Partnership Sub-Committee (Essex Links) on education provision in the District. (HCPI)

RECOMMENDED

(1) That the above views/comments on the Draft Essex School Organisation Plan 1999/2004 be submitted to the County Council.

(2) That a representative from the County Learning Services Directorate be invited to make a presentation on education provision in the District to a future meeting of the Partnership Sub-Committee (Essex Links). (CE)

ESSEX SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2000-2005

To assist Members in considering this item, a copy of Finance and General Purposes Committee Minute 320/99 (the decision made in July 1999 when the 1999-2004 version of the Plan was considered) is appended.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives