

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 5/23

Date: 13 September 2023

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide a summary of the 2023 Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy.

Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy

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The School Place Planning Strategy is produced every five years, to guide decision making on the provision of school places for mainstream and SEND pupils. The current strategy covers 2022 to 2027.

This annual review provides an update on the progress made during the lifetime of the strategy. It identifies areas of demand and makes recommendations to ensure that appropriate levels of good quality school places are available through to 2027. It sets out detailed financial requirements for Cabinet and Council to approve to be added to the capital programme.

The annual review will be presented to Cabinet on 26 September and this briefing along with the annual review is presented to Overview and Scrutiny for consideration. Any questions can be sent in writing to Paul Clarke (paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk). Meetings can also be arranged to discuss further if required.

Areas of particular concern this year are the sudden increase in inward migration between January and July (covered in paragraph 8.8), which has drastically reduced the number of free primary places in Gillingham and Chatham. This also has affected secondary age pupil numbers and may require additional capacity above the bulge classes and expansions listed in paragraph 9.6.

Actions agreed since the last annual review at primary level include funding for St Nicholas Infants to become a primary school, and Hundred of Hoo Primary phase

to expand to two forms of entry. For secondary, expansions have been agreed at Victory Academy, Greenacre Academy, Hundred of Hoo Secondary phase, and Robert Napier. This is in addition to ten bulge classes over the next seven years to meet increasing secondary demand. In SEND, resourced provisions have been agreed at four secondary schools and one primary, as well as expansions at Inspire, Rivermead, Danecourt, and the Rowans.

The overall capital programme for mainstream and SEND provision are set out in the report.

The appendices attached to the annual review set out the forecasts for mainstream and SEND, as well as the DfE scorecard and an update on progress for the capital programme.

The recommended proposals in this report are to:

- commence a feasibility study at Riverside Primary School to explore the demand from housing in the Rainham area.
- approve a project to provide additional dining capacity at Leigh Academy Rainham due to bulge classes and a new resourced provision.
- provide additional funding to the Wayfield Primary School project to cover increasing construction costs.
- provide additional funding to the Maundene Primary School project to cover increasing construction costs.
- provide funding to cover the retention payment for the project at Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School.
- The removal of the Howard School resourced provision from the SEND programme with funding diverted to other projects where costs are escalating. The Howard School would be added to future programmes as funding becomes available.

Accompanying this briefing are.

- The Cabinet report for the 2023 Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy
- Appendix 1 Mainstream Forecast data.
- Appendix 2 SEND forecast data.
- Appendix 3 Update to progress on the capital programme.
- Appendix 4 DfE scorecards.