

# Report to Cabinet

**23 March 2021**

<b>Subject:</b>	School Organisation Plan 2021-2026
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Children & Education, Councillor Simms
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Children and Education, Michael Jarrett
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rachel Hill, Project Officer, School Organisation and Development, Education Support Services rachel_hill@sandwell.gov.uk

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the School Organisation Plan 2021–2026, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved as a basis of consultation in accordance with the statutory obligation placed upon the council under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and a further report be submitted at the end of the consultation period to seek approval to publish.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Paragraph 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that every local education authority shall prepare a school organisation plan for their area and shall prepare further such plans at such times as may be prescribed.
- 2.2 A School Organisation Plan is a statement which sets out how the authority propose to exercise their functions during the prescribed period with a view to securing the provision of primary education, and secondary education suitable to the requirements of pupils of



compulsory school age that will meet the needs of the population of their area.

- 2.3 The proposed 'School Organisation Plan 2021–26', attached as Appendix 1, sets out the current contextual basis of educational provision across the six towns, with the projected demand and supply of school places during the next 5 years. The plan will be used to inform future decisions on the supply of school places across the Borough.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b></p> <p>The recommendation in this report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future, Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.</p>
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## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Local Authorities are charged with the duty (under the Education Act 1996) to ensure there are sufficient school places to accommodate the children and young people who reside in the borough and to ensure these places are of good quality with sufficient capacity to promote parental preference and diversity.
- 4.2 The aim of the School Organisation Plan is to help the Council and the wider community understand the need for school place planning and to establish future demand. It will provide the basis against which school reorganisation will be planned. The plan itself is not intended to identify individual schools for change, but to consider the future need for school places throughout the Borough. Individual school changes will be submitted via a cabinet report and capital appraisal should capital investment be needed to provide or reduce capacity for places.



- 4.3 This Plan sets out the framework within which the Council will consider the organisation of school places over the next five years. The Plan includes detailed demographic information and identifies a number of other issues that may have a significant impact on the need for school places.
- 4.4 The Plan is a working document and will be updated when required by a change in demographic information, yearly admissions and other influencing factors.
- 4.5 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) initial screening has been undertaken.

## 5 Consultation (Customers and other Stakeholders)

- 5.1 Further to recommendation 1.1 a copy of the draft plan will be sent to the below for consultation;
- the governing body of each school maintained by the authority;
  - each authority which is adjacent to the authority in question;
  - the Diocesan Board of Education for any diocese of the Church of England any part of which is comprised in the authority's area; and
  - the bishop of any Roman Catholic Church diocese any part of which is comprised in the authority's area; and
  - depositing a copy in such public libraries in the area of the authority as they consider appropriate.

Consultation period will be for 8 weeks from 25 April 2022. A further report will be submitted within July which will include responses to the consultation.



## 6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 This is a requirement placed on the council by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. There is no other option available.
- 6.2 For at least the last 12 years, the Authority has responded to an unprecedented and significant growth in the birth rate, inward migration and retention levels. Pupil place planning and capital investment has responded to the challenges the growth has presented to the school sector. However, as the birth rate has started to ease, but the level of inward migration continues to fluctuate, there is now a need to plan for future provision. The option to do nothing, does not bode well for future place planning.

## 6 Implications

<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p>Financial implications: There are no financial implications with regards the plan. The plan will identify the need for places. Separate reports and financial implications will be submitted for required projects to increase or decrease pupil admission numbers.</p> <p>Staffing implications: No staffing implications</p> <p>Land implications: No land implications.</p> <p>Building implications: No Building implications.</p>
<p><b>Legal and Governance:</b></p>	<p>School Standards Framework Act 1998 paragraph 26 School Organisation Plans;</p> <p>(1) Every local education authority shall prepare a school organisation plan for their area and shall prepare further such plans at such times as may be prescribed.</p> <p>(2) A school organisation plan is a statement which sets out—</p> <p>(a) how the authority propose to exercise their functions during the prescribed period with a view to securing the provision of primary education, and</p>



	<p>secondary education suitable to the requirements of pupils of compulsory school age, that will meet the needs of the population of their area during that period; and</p> <p>(ab) how the authority propose to exercise their powers during the prescribed period with a view to securing the provision of secondary education suitable to the requirements of pupils over compulsory school age during that period;</p> <p>(b) any facilities which the authority expect to be available outside their area for providing education of a kind referred to in paragraph (a) or (ab).</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with – to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation, financial, environmental and reputation risks. This has identified that there are no significant risks that need to be reported. The children and education directorate risk register includes the risk of the council failing in its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, the risk is currently assessed as amber. This report's recommendations will assist in the mitigation of the directorate risk.</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) initial screening has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>This will be a positive impact for children and young people as it ensures there is sufficient places at good and outstanding schools.</p>
<b>Social Value</b>	<p>Ensuring every child has access to a school place, and that parents / carers continue to be able to indicate their individual preferences for school places.</p>



## 7. Appendices

7.1 School Organisation Plan 2021-2026

## 8. Background Papers

