
SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2012-17

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To examine the development of the School Organisation Plan 2012-17 which provides a clear framework for school organisation and how this is achieved.

Summary

2. School Organisation Plans provide an overview of current and future pupil places to support the planning of the future pattern and provision of school places across the Local Authority.
3. Pupil Place Planning is a critical aspect of the Local Authority's statutory duty to assess the local need for school places to ensure that every child that is resident within the Borough can be provided with a place in a state funded school. Local Authorities need to show that they have robust procedures and systems for forecasting pupil numbers and taking account of changes in local circumstances to ensure there will be the right number of schools in the right places for the number of pupils expected in the future.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members:-
 - (a) Note the contents of this report and the current ongoing work in drawing up a School Organisation Plan 2012 -17.
 - (b) Understand how the Local Authority keeps the provision of school places under review as the school population fluctuates, how pupil forecasting is carried out and how the authority proposes to create additional school places above birth rate to take account of parental preference and net inward migration.

**Murray Rose
Director of People**

Background Papers

Draft School Organisation Plan 2012 - 17

Rachel Jones: Ext 2026

S17 Crime and Disorder	No recommendations from this report.
Health and Well Being	Provide enough school places for every child needing a school place in the Borough including additional places to take account of parental preference.
Carbon Impact	Provision of a school organisation plan will have no carbon impact.
Diversity	Provide additional school places to allow for parental preference when selecting a school place.
Wards Affected	All wards.
Groups Affected	Children and young people aged 5 to 16 in full time Education. Parents/carers of children due to start in full time education and selecting school places.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision because the provision of additional school places affects all schools in the Borough.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The School Organisation Plan is consistent with Aspiring Darlington: providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	An up to date school organisation plan will ensure the provision of school places for all pupils residing in the Borough now and in the future.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The draft School Organisation Plan gives information about the number, types and sizes of schools in the Borough of Darlington. It records the number of places available in those schools and it includes forecasts of pupil numbers over the next five years.
6. Since 2008 a need has been identified across the Borough for the expansion of primary schools to meet an increasing demand for additional school places. Significant investment through the Government's Primary Capital Programme has seen the recent expansion of West Park Academy (previously known as Alderman Leach Primary School) and Harrowgate Hill Primary School to meet demand created through new housing developments and an increasing population moving into the town from out of the borough. In addition, in February 2012 Cabinet approved the identification of Mowden Infant and Junior school for expansion to meet a demand for school places in the area.
7. In addition, in 2011 the Local Authority's 2011/12 admission arrangements were challenged by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The challenge centred on the unsuccessful applications from parents in rural locations. To deal with the challenge, various schools were named by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator as schools to take any children that do not gain a place at their nearest local school in the rural area: these included Mowden to take children from the Teesdale approaches and Heathfield to take the children from the Middleton St George area.
8. Pupil projections are produced for Darlington Borough Council by Tees Valley Unlimited (previously Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit). Pupil projections for the coming years continue to show a high level of need for primary school places and by 2015 the number of pupils on roll is projected to be more than the number of school places available across the Borough.
9. There is however a more urgent need for primary school places in Reception classes as there are only just enough places currently for the number of new children applying to our primary schools each year, but the limit on availability places a restriction on the level of parental choice available.
10. In our secondary schools, there are projected to be enough places to meet demand for the period covered by this current plan. Future School Organisation Plans will include, where necessary, proposals to deal with any possible shortfall of places in our secondary schools.
11. The draft plan highlights the need for additional primary school places and prioritises the areas where those places should be provided. The SOP does NOT provide a mechanism for schools to deal with any other issues such as condition as the various sources of funding (Basic Need, Section 106) to be utilised during the course of this plan limit funding to the provision of additional school places in areas of need of additional school places.
12. The School Organisation Plan will be reviewed annually against the priorities and will be re-issued if any significant changes such as a change in central government policy or different sources of funding become available.

Outcome of Consultation

13. Consultation on the School Organisation Plan started in July at the Annual Head Teacher's Conference where agreement was reached on the need for the provision of enough school places in the Borough to meet current and future demand, especially in the areas of need identified in the Plan. A copy of the draft School Organisation Plan 2012 -17 presented to Headteachers at the meeting in July is attached.

What Happens Next

14. Following the Headteachers' meeting in July an updated draft Plan will be presented to Headteachers at their meeting in September. This draft will invite partners (such as schools, the Diocesan Boards of Education, neighbouring local authorities, parents, etc) to submit proposals to the Local Authority for the provision of additional school places in the identified areas of need across the whole of the Borough of Darlington.