



## SCHOOLS FORUM

### PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES IN LEICESTERSHIRE

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

**26 November 2013**

<b>Content Applicable to;</b>		<b>School Phase;</b>	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	✓	Pre School	
Academies	✓	Foundation Stage	✓
PVI Settings		Primary	✓
Special Schools / Academies	✓	Secondary	✓
Local Authority	✓	Post 16	✓
		High Needs	✓

### **Purpose of Report**

<b>Content Requires;</b>		<b>By;</b>	
Noting	✓	Maintained Primary School Members	✓
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	✓
		Maintained Special School Members	✓
		Academy Members	✓
		All Schools Forum	✓

1. To provide the Schools Forum with an overview of the current position regarding the provision of Primary and Secondary School places in Leicestershire, and seek comment on the challenges ahead.

### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the Schools Forum are asked to;
  - (a) Note the statutory obligations placed on the Local Authority (LA) for the provision of additional school places arising from legislative change of the Academies Act 2010 and the Education Act 2011.
  - (b) In the context of the above, to note the key areas for action in relation to the planning of school places, as highlighted in paragraphs 31 to 35 of the attached report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **Introduction**

3. The educational system in Leicestershire is now undergoing substantial organisational change. The changes brought about by new legislation and those at a local level have a significant impact on how the LA enacts its statutory duty to ensure a good supply of high quality places are provided, with greater emphasis on the consideration of school location, status, performance and parental preferences to identify suitable solutions.

Whilst the change underway has capacity to raise standards, if not carefully managed between the LA, the DfE /EFA, academies and maintained schools, it could serve to de-stabilise the educational system, to the point where there is either a significant shortfall of places or over supply makes the viability/ sustainability of some schools a critical issue. The challenge going forward is therefore to have the right number of places available, at the time they are required, in locations where they are needed, and in the right schools.

It is important that members of the Schools Forum understand the challenges ahead, so that they are able to make an effective contribution and support schools through change as this begins to take effect.

## **Background**

4. Since the introduction of the Academies Act 2010, 95% of secondary schools and over 35% of primary schools have become academies, or will soon do so. Many academies have subsequently sought age range changes, with sixteen schools (11 Secondary/ 5 Primary) so far having received DfE approval.

In addition, by next year there will be 3 Studio Schools in Leicestershire, and FE Colleges will be entitled to admit students from the age of 14.

5. Longer term six of the seven District Councils have set out proposals to develop Sustainable Urban Expansions (SUE's), most of which have outline planning consent. In all cases they will provide for new schools, or extensions to existing schools where appropriate, but in the short term (the first few years after commencing building), will raise transitional issues putting pressure on existing schools. There is still considerable uncertainty about start dates and the scale of each development.
6. Coupled to the above structural changes, demographics indicate a growth in primary pupil numbers, with the effects of increased births and the movement of families starting to cause significant pressure in certain areas, particularly Braunstone and Hinckley Town. In contrast there remain a large number of surplus places in some secondary schools', this position is impacted by those schools seeking a change of age range, which has the effect of reducing admission numbers whilst making more 11-16 places available generally.
7. Appendix 1 presents the report presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2013.

### **Resource Implications**

8. The resource implications are set out in paragraphs 35 to 38 of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny report in Appendix 1.
9. It should be noted that since the consideration of the report by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the last meeting of the Schools Forum on 18 September 2013, the LA has reached agreement with the DfE/EFA to implement changes to enable a measured and targeted approach for schools making, or impacted by, age range changes.

### **Equal Opportunity Issues**

10. The underlying purpose of developing new school places should be to improve standards for all children and young people, and to offer greater choice and diversity of educational provision.

### **Background Papers**

- Academies Act 2010 and Education Act 2011
- Reports to CYPS Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 October 2011, 11 June 2012
- Report to Cabinet 12 June 2012
- Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 9 September 2013 (attached)
- Academy, Free Schools and Studio schools guidance, and guidance relating to the establishment of new schools on Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### **Officers to Contact**

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