

**CABINET**  
**13 DECEMBER 2018****'GOOD EDUCATION PLACES FOR ALL WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN' – SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2019-24**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr M J Hart

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Children, Families and Communities

**Recommendation**

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) approves the publication of "Good education places for all Worcestershire children" – Worcestershire County Council's School Organisation Plan 2019-24 (the Plan) as the strategic plan for education place planning;**
  - (b) notes that the Plan will be revised annually to include the updated sufficiency reports and to take into account any implications for the Plan; and**
  - (c) notes that the Plan will return to Cabinet in 2019 to seek approval to the updated sufficiency reports and any other changes.**

**Background**

2. In 2010 it ceased to be a statutory responsibility for the Council to produce a strategic School Organisation Plan and Worcestershire, along with many other councils, stopped producing a formal strategic plan, but rather focused on policies and procedures. Since this time the landscape of education provision planning has changed with academies, the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner, school-led organisational changes, and large-scale housing growth.

**Shaping Worcestershire's Future 2017-22**

3. Worcestershire's Corporate Plan: Shaping Worcestershire's Future 2017-22 states that "We will continue to play an essential role in managing and coordinating the school system across the county and ensuring education provision remains fit for purpose."
4. The Corporate Plan, as part of the vision and objectives for children and families, identifies clear priorities for place planning to:

- Provide adequate capacity by creating the right number of good or better school places to enable parental preference
- Support successful schools to expand in an appropriate form, to meet housing and demographic growth.

5. Given this changing landscape and the Council's statutory role in provision planning, most councils have now recognised the need for this type of strategic document to lay out how they will manage provision planning at a time of change and rising demographic growth at secondary school level. This view is supported by the Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team.

### **Great Educational Outcomes for Worcestershire Children**

6. In August 2017 Jo Davidson, former Director of Children's Services for Herefordshire, was commissioned to review Education and Skills within Children, Families and Communities. The report that was produced was called "Great Educational Outcomes for Worcestershire Children – Review of Education arrangements in Worcestershire."

7. The review recognised the strategic role the Council has in terms of provision planning and the need for longer term plans that take into account factors such as population change and housing developments.

8. As part of section 10, Performance, capacity and skills, the report recognised that the Council "*has a small established place planning function for the full range of place planning and school organisation arrangements.*" It also recognised that "*...the Council is facing significant activity in relation to place planning and realisation, which require significant amounts of officer time to develop, negotiate and deliver.*"

9. The review recognised the need for a strategic plan not least because provision planning in Worcestershire was complicated by the split in responsibilities between County Council and District Councils. The report recommended that the provision planning process needed to be owned by Cabinet "*as lack of provision of good school places will affect the economic and housing growth plans.*"

### **School Organisation Plan 2019-24**

10. In the light of the above review, the Interim Assistant Director – Education and Skills, requested the production of a School Organisation Plan as a strategic document covering all areas of the Council's role in provision planning and school organisation (see Appendix 1 - "Good education places for all Worcestershire children" – Worcestershire County Council's School Organisation Plan 2019-24). The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills requested that it be considered formally by Cabinet to ensure ownership by Cabinet.

11. The Plan is primarily a gathering together of disparate documents and policies already used to support provision planning, rather than a new strategic policy. Its aim is to support, schools, providers, developers, and other key professionals by providing a strategic direction for the Council 2019-24 in respect of provision planning and providing easy access to key documents.

12. Given that the Plan is a bringing together of existing policies and practices and not a new strategic direction it is not necessary to consult on this Plan.

13. Under the Education Act 2011, the Council has a statutory requirement to ensure a sufficiency of education places to meet the needs of the population in the area. To ensure we can meet that statutory requirement we undertake four annual sufficiency assessments for:

- Early Years (including private, voluntary and independent providers)
- Mainstream Schools (including academies and free schools)
- SEND (including academies)
- Post -16 (including sixth forms and colleges).

14. Hyperlinks to each of these reports will now be included in the Plan to make it easier for people to access them and to underpin the strategic plan. Hyperlinks to all these reports are also included as background papers to this report.

15. One of the key aims of the Plan is to bring these reports together for this first time and provide a complete overview of education provision in Worcestershire.

16. It is recommended that Cabinet notes that the sufficiency forecasts for the four areas will be updated annually throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

17. It is further recommended that approval for the update to the Plan be sought from Cabinet in 2019 so that it is fully aware of the implications resulting from the sufficiency forecasts.

18. The Plan will also provide information and links to:

- The Council's vision and principles for this area
- Our statutory duty
- Roles and responsibilities of partners
- Current context in Worcestershire
- Housing growth and s106/Community Infrastructure Levy
- School organisation changes
- Monitoring and future challenges.

19. The Plan will be published digitally on the County Council website at [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20585/school\\_organisation\\_and\\_provision\\_planning](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20585/school_organisation_and_provision_planning) and will contain links to other relevant documents. Schools will be notified of its publication by email.

20. Given the identified need for a strategic plan for education provision planning, it is recommended that Cabinet approves the publication of this Plan.

## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

21. The Council has a range of statutory duties in respect of provision planning, these are laid out in the Plan (see Appendix 1) which include ensuring a sufficiency of school places and carrying out annual sufficiency updates.

22. There are no financial or HR implications from this report.

### **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

23. There are no privacy implications from this report.

24. There are no direct public health impacts from this report. However, a good education does have implications for public health. Through skills-based education, children learn specifically about health matters. A good general education also develops critical thinking and choice making that provides children and young people with the skills necessary to making healthy choices.

25. Good educational attainment is a strong indicator of good health outcomes throughout life and so this Plan has impact in delivering the corporate priority on improving the health and well-being of our residents.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

26. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

### **Supporting Information**

- Appendix 1 - "Good education places for all Worcestershire children" – Worcestershire County Council's School Organisation Plan 2019-24 (electronic only)
- Appendix 2 – Equality Relevance Screening (electronic only)

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

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#### Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following are the background papers relating to this report:

Great Educational Outcomes for Worcestershire Children – Review of Education arrangements in Worcestershire - Jo Davidson – August 2017

Early Years Sufficiency Report – [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency)

Mainstream Sufficiency Report – [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/mainstreamsufficiency](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/mainstreamsufficiency)

SEND Sufficiency Report – [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDSufficiency](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDSufficiency)

Post-16 Sufficiency Report – [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/Post16sufficiency](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/Post16sufficiency)