

Divisions Affected - All

EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28 March 2025

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Report by Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - i. Acknowledge and support the proposed updates to the Sustainable Schools Strategy as set out in School Place Planning Report 1.
 - ii. Acknowledge the progress made and planned towards the delivery of additional education provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as set out in School Place Planning Report 2.

Executive Summary

2. These reports are presented to update Scrutiny on two key issues relating to school place planning and delivery.

REPORT 1: Sustainable Schools Strategy – 2025 update

3. In 2020, Education Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Management of Changing Rolls in Oxfordshire *Schools: A Strategy for Sustainability*, which set the basis for work by the local authority to address issues relating to school sustainability.

School Place Planning Report 1:

- i. provides data on how pupil numbers are changing in mainstream primary and secondary schools in Oxfordshire
- ii. outlines the existing Sustainable Schools Strategy, as originally considered by Education Scrutiny in 2020;
- iii. reviews the first five years of operation under the Sustainable Schools Strategy;
- iv. provides data on how pupil numbers are changing in mainstream primary and secondary schools in Oxfordshire;
- v. proposes an updated Sustainable Schools Strategy, setting out clear principles and priorities to be used when considering changes in school capacity.

REPORT 2: Special Education Sufficiency Planning

4. The Oxfordshire SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy 2022/23-2026/27 sets out Oxfordshire County Council's planning framework for the delivery of additional school-based capacity to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

School Place Planning Report 2:

- i. outlines the delivery of new specialist provision since the July 2023 Ofsted;
- ii. outlines the forward plan of delivery of additional SEND capacity;
- iii. defines principles for prioritising future SEND provision;
- iv. considers ongoing sufficiency challenges.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

5. The activity covered in the reports supports the Strategic Priorities in the County Council's Corporate Plan, in particular:
 - i. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire through ensuring equitable access to educational provision;
 - ii. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential, specifically through increasing activity that supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to have their needs met in mainstream school settings and delivering our special school capacity expansion programme.
6. Report 2 considers work in support of the Council's SEND Sufficiency Strategy, as well as the SEND Transformation Programme (Theme 1: Right Support, Right Time) and Oxfordshire's commitment to supporting early intervention.

Financial Implications

7. The Reports have no new or additional revenue or capital implications for the council, but cover activity intended to ensure that the council's resources are targeted most effectively.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

8. The Reports have no new or additional legal implications for the council.

Comments checked by:

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Staff Implications

9. The Reports have no new or additional staffing implications for the council.

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Equality & Inclusion Implications

10. The activity covered in Report 1 has a positive equalities impact by supporting the viability of our small rural schools.
11. The activity covered in Report 2 has a positive equalities impact by improving the access for children with SEND to the right support at the right time through delivery of additional SEND provision.

Sustainability Implications

12. If children and young people are enabled to attend suitable local education provision school, then both transportation costs and the impact on the local climate or school transport are reduced.

Risk Management

13. The Reports have no new or additional risk management implications for the council.

LISA LYONS
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Other Documents: Report 1: the current Sustainable Schools Strategy is available at
https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s49729/ESC_FEB0520R03%20-%20Changing%20Rolls.pdf
Report 2: The Oxfordshire SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy is available at

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/special-educational-needs/SENDsufficiencystategy.pdf>

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