



COUNCIL CABINET
5 April 2005

Report of the Director of Education

Education Commission School Place Planning reviews – Response to the Commission’s Recommendation

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To agree that proposals for a place planning strategy for primary schools should be brought to the Council Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2005.
- 1.2 To agree that proposals for secondary school place planning should be integrated into an updated vision for the ‘Building Schools for the Future’ programme, to be developed for consultation during the second half of 2005.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Cabinet has received two reports from the Education Commission on school place planning. On 13 Jan 2004, Cabinet referred the report on primary school place planning to the Director of Education, to contribute to the preparation of a school place planning strategy. On 20 July 2004, Cabinet agreed to ask the Director of Education to report back to a future meeting setting out a timetabled action plan on how the recommendations of the secondary review could be taken into account in future school place planning.
- 2.2 It was reported to the Education Commission on 21 February 2005 that a school place planning strategy was needed that:
 - Builds on the recommendations from the Education Commission topic review
 - Takes account of the developments within the PFI project
 - Links to the new regime of capital allocation – in particular Derby’s reduced capital allocations for the next few years and the likely place within the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme
 - Takes account of a changed DfES position on surplus places, shortly to be announced, which links to changed expectations and priorities for
 - Extended schools
 - Integrated children’s services
 - Meeting parental preference
- 2.3 It was further reported that work on a strategy for primary schools had been delayed because of national and local developments in the above factors. It is clear that there is a fundamental change in the approach of the government to place planning. This is evidenced, amongst other things, by

the development of the national programme for extended schools and integrated services and by the abolition of the existing BVPIs for 'surplus places'. We understand that new DfES guidance on surplus places is to be published imminently – and Derby officers have been able to contribute to this during the development process.

2.4 Work on secondary place planning is inevitably tightly linked to the Government programme for Building Schools for the Future. The Council submitted an 'expression of interest' in BSF at the end of 2003. This submission contained many of the principles later endorsed in the recommendations of the Education Commission. At the time, the Government indicated that all local authorities would have a broad indication of when their schools would benefit from the programme by March 2004. Unfortunately, this time scale has repeatedly slipped. The latest indication from the DfES is that Derby could be included in Waves 4 to 6 of this programme, meaning an earliest possible start date of 2007/8. However, more specific information about timing is now unlikely to be available before 2006. This programme will allow for possible adjustments to school size, and possibly the relocation of one. We shall also potentially be able to progress the inclusion agenda by securing co-location of special and secondary schools.

The Commission's original review reports contained a total of 33 recommendations (although there was some overlap and duplication between the primary and secondary reports). It was reported to the Commission meeting on 21 February that these recommendations would largely be included in future reports to Council Cabinet seeking to establish a formal place planning strategy for primary and secondary sectors (the detailed response to each recommendation that was given to the Commission can be found in the paper considered at the meeting, via the Committee Information Website at <http://193.130.64.11/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=3090>). It was further reported that some recommendations had already been implemented, as they did not require Cabinet approval. Finally, it was indicated that two recommendations could not be recommended to Cabinet:

- To establish a 'pyramid' model, in which pupils from identified junior schools feed into a secondary school, regardless of address of residence. The Education Service view, supported by consultation with head teachers, is that such a system would distort the pattern of admission to primary schooling, and would transfer competition for places to an earlier age.
- To further investigate the possibility of popular schools retaining places for pupils who move into their areas. This cannot be pursued as it remains unlawful.

2.5 All the recommendations from the Education Commission that require Council Cabinet approval can best be brought forward as part of two strategic reports. The first of these, in relation to primary places, will be prepared as soon as the new DfES guidance is published. Significant work on data and priorities in line with existing policy and the recommendations of the Education Commission has already been undertaken. After

appropriate consultation with schools, it is intended that the strategy will be brought to Council Cabinet in July 2005. The second report, on secondary place planning, would be developed as further preparatory consultation continues through 2005 on the Building Schools for the Future programme. Timing of Council Cabinet consideration of this depends on the decisions of the DfES, but it is likely to be needed in the first half of 2006. If there are further delays to BSF announcements or the time scale for implementation in Derby, then it might be necessary for Cabinet to make strategic decisions on secondary places in advance of the BSF strategy. In any event, the work of the Education Commission will be taken into account in making recommendations to Cabinet.

For more information contact:	Simon Longley 01332 716891 e-mail simon.longley@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	None