

**Education and Children's Services
Scrutiny Committee
6 September 2016**

**Covering Report:
School Infrastructure and Capacity Planning**

Summary and Objectives

1. The objective of this scrutiny is for the committee to understand, and make any recommendations in relation to, the mechanisms for capacity planning and new infrastructure for Suffolk schools, with some emphasis on Early Years provision.

Scrutiny Focus

2. Key focus areas for this scrutiny include the following:
 - i) 'Early Years' provision, including case studies
 - ii) 'Place Planning': Key pressure areas, Admission hot spots, Updated review of the Education and Learning Infrastructure Plan (ELIP) [*The committee previously looked at this in March 2015*], District / Borough planning, in particular for 'Early Years', Impact of Free schools.

How this relates to County Council priorities

3. This scrutiny is linked to the County Council's corporate priorities as indicated below:

The County Council's Corporate Priorities	Link to this scrutiny
Raising educational attainment and skill levels	✓
Supporting the LEPs to increase economic growth	✓
Maintaining roads and developing Suffolk's infrastructure	
Supporting those most vulnerable in our communities	✓
Empowering local communities	✓

4. Having considered the evidence, the Committee may wish to:
 - i) make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, and/or the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Services;
 - ii) agree topics which could benefit from more detailed scrutiny at a future meeting, seek to influence partner organisations, or request further information.

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Background

5. At an informal workshop on 26/4/16 committee members had indicated the need to look at the priority schools building programme, forward planning in light of the number of oversubscribed primary schools this year, and noted that the Education & Learning Infrastructure Plan (ELIP) went to [Cabinet on 22/3/16](#).
6. At an informal workshop on 13/7/16 committee members were keen to understand the strategy and the 'End Game', the use of old middle school sites, how the rate of new housing and residential developments is factored into capacity planning, closeness of working with the Districts and Boroughs, the local authority's lack of any direct powers to make early learning happen, that Academies do not have obligations to increase capacity, and that there is perceived to be a lot of time and effort and 'hoops to jump through' regarding Early Years provision.
7. CYP Officers held a Councillors' briefing event on the 'New School Process' on 6/7/16
8. The Regional Schools Commissioner, Dr Tim Coulson, has kindly provided some written input for consideration at the Committee meeting (see Evidence Set 5, below).
9. The committee previously scrutinised ELIP / small schools in [March 2015](#). Key recommendations from that meeting, and their subsequent status, is as follows:
 - seek to establish a 'Joint Strategic Growth Board' for Suffolk ... to oversee a joint planning process ... considering the needs and plans for education, housing, transport and skills in Suffolk. *Status: There is now a 'Growth Group' that is part of the Devolution work. Sue Roper is the SCC lead. Gavin Bultitude attends to ensure that schools place planning is part of this.*
 - enable more frequent SCC officer input into the District and Borough planning committee discussions about the education funding needs that should be included in S.106 developer contribution agreements. *Status: ongoing.*
 - inform stakeholders and Councillors whom to contact with any additional intelligence or updated information regarding the Education Learning and Infrastructure Plan (ELIP). *Status: Currently on version 2 of the Plan. Have invited Borough and District council & Diocesan authorities to join the Board steering it. We are exploring with Borough & District councils how best to involve councillors.*
 - include additional detail within the ELIP about High Needs Provision.... *Status: This will be covered in version 2 of the Plan.*
 - provide more demographic data about the types of people and families moving into and out of Suffolk, the patterns of variability, and impact on the ELIP. *Status: This will be covered in ver.2 of the Plan. We will do what is reasonably possible.*
10. In addition to the written information, the committee will have an opportunity to hear from representatives of A1 Fun Club (Early Years) and the New Schools Network.

Main Body of Evidence (attached)

- (i) Evidence Set 1 - (3 pg) – Early Years Case Study – A1 Fun Club
- (ii) Evidence Set 2 – (4 pg) - Place Planning and the effect of Free Schools
- (iii) Evidence Set 3 – (11 pg) The 'New School Process' – presentation to Councillors on 6 July 2015.
- (iv) Evidence Set 4 – (26 pg) - Education & Learning Infrastructure Plan (ELIP), v2.1, accessible online at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/education-and-learning-infrastructure-plan/>
- (v) Evidence Set 5 – (3 pg) - Regional School Commissioner written submission.