

AGENDA ITEM *

Report to the Maidstone Locality Board

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision Kent 2012-2017

Prepared by Zena Cooke, Director of Regeneration and Communities, Maidstone Borough Council
June 2012

1. Background

- 1.1 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision has been published by Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Education Authority for consultation. The Plan sets out how the council will fulfil its statutory obligations and ensure sufficient education provision across the county, including Special Education Needs' provision, Early Year's Education and Post 16 Education. The plan provides information relating to each District within the county.
- 1.2 The plan also includes capital investment plans to ensure that the capital funding requirements for future provision are identified and can be taken into account in KCC's financial planning.

2. Commissioning Plan for Maidstone

- 2.1 The Commissioning Plan uses demographic and other data to establish the likely need in an area. There are currently 47 primary schools with a total of 1736 places available annually in reception year. There are 11 secondary schools, of which 6 are academies and a 7th is converting.
- 2.2 The plan looks at the short, medium and long term requirements for the area based on historic data (from 1990), the current position and the forecast of numbers (to 2026). The plan uses the planned and actual houses numbers from 1995 through to 2026, birth rate data and actual pupil places available. The plan also takes account of the council's Core Strategy and officers from KCC and Maidstone Borough Council meet regularly to ensure the impact of planned housing in the borough is taken into account for the planned education provision.
- 2.3 The plan states there is sufficient primary school capacity throughout the forecast period with the exception of reception year places in 2015 and proposes to further analyse the pressure on places by 2013, commissioning

one-off intakes in up to 3 schools by 2016 if required. The plan also identifies the need for a new two form entry primary school subject to the development of the core strategy and house building, which will be confirmed by 2016, with a further 2 two form entry primary schools in the longer term depending on the core strategy and house building.

- 2.4 The commissioning plan states there is sufficient secondary provision with the possible need for one off additional one form entry admission into one or two schools in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 2.5 Although, the commissioning plan does include education needs, early years and post 16 education, the level of detail and analysis is still to be further developed as this is the first plan to incorporate the full range of education provision.
- 2.6 The plan identifies 620 pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs in Maidstone, approximately 10% of the county total. The plan states that future capacity will be subject to review, including an evaluation of the range of existing provision and that this will be the subject of further consultation.
- 2.7 The plan also identifies the total number of children aged 3 and 4 in Maidstone as 3635, the highest number for any district, again just over 10% of the county total. In addition, Maidstone also has the highest number of 2 year olds in the county, 2028, and there is a capacity issue regarding the number of places available to deliver the government's free entitlement from September 2013. The plan states that a full audit of pre-school providers is to be completed by July 2012.
- 2.8 Kent County Council is currently consulting on the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision and all relevant partner organisations and agencies have been invited to review and respond to the consultation. The full document can be found at (www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision) and responses will need to be sent to (school.consultations@kent.gov.uk). The consultation closes on 19 June 2012. However, late responses from organisations represented at the Maidstone Locality Board will be accepted if received swiftly after the closing date.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Maidstone Locality Board members are asked to note the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision.
- 3.2 Organisations represented at the Maidstone Locality Board are asked to consider responding to the consultation on the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision.