

## **CABINET**

**30 SEPTEMBER 2014**

### **2014 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2011-16**

Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike O'Brien – Children's Services (Lead Member)
Report from:	Barbara Peacock – Director of Children and Adult Services
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#### **Summary**

This annual summary briefing report updates on the progress made to the revised action plan of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16, highlights areas of emerging need and makes initial recommendations for consideration to ensure that a sufficient supply of good quality school places is maintained.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 Although there is no longer a statutory requirement for local authorities to have a School Organisation Plan, it was decided by Cabinet when approving the School Organisation Plan in November 2011, that having such a strategic plan will enable the Council to establish a framework for school organisation decisions to ensure an appropriate supply of school places linked to school improvement. The proposals, which flow from the updated School Organisation Plan, are consistent with the provisions of the School Organisation Plan Principles, and with the Council Plan Priority of 'Children and young people having the best start in life'.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 In January 2008 Cabinet approved the School Organisation Plan Principles, which contained a set of planning principles to guide decision-making in a clear and consistent way so that the Council complies with its statutory duty to provide school places. The core of these principles ensures that any changes to schools are based upon improving schools and raising standards. In November 2011, the Cabinet approved the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 (SOP).
- 2.2 The SOP included an action plan, which highlighted specific proposals for developing provision in Medway over the lifetime of the plan. These proposals were informed by an analysis of local and national policy and strategy, as well as

the most up-to-date available information and data, which were used to forecast the future need for places in Medway schools.

- 2.3 In July 2013 Cabinet approved a review of the plan. The report outlined the positive progress made against the action plan and highlighted areas of emerging need where additional provision was expected to be required. The action plan was updated to reflect this.
- 2.4 This report highlights progress against the updated action plan and identifies new areas of emerging need based upon the latest annual round of forecasting undertaken in April 2014.

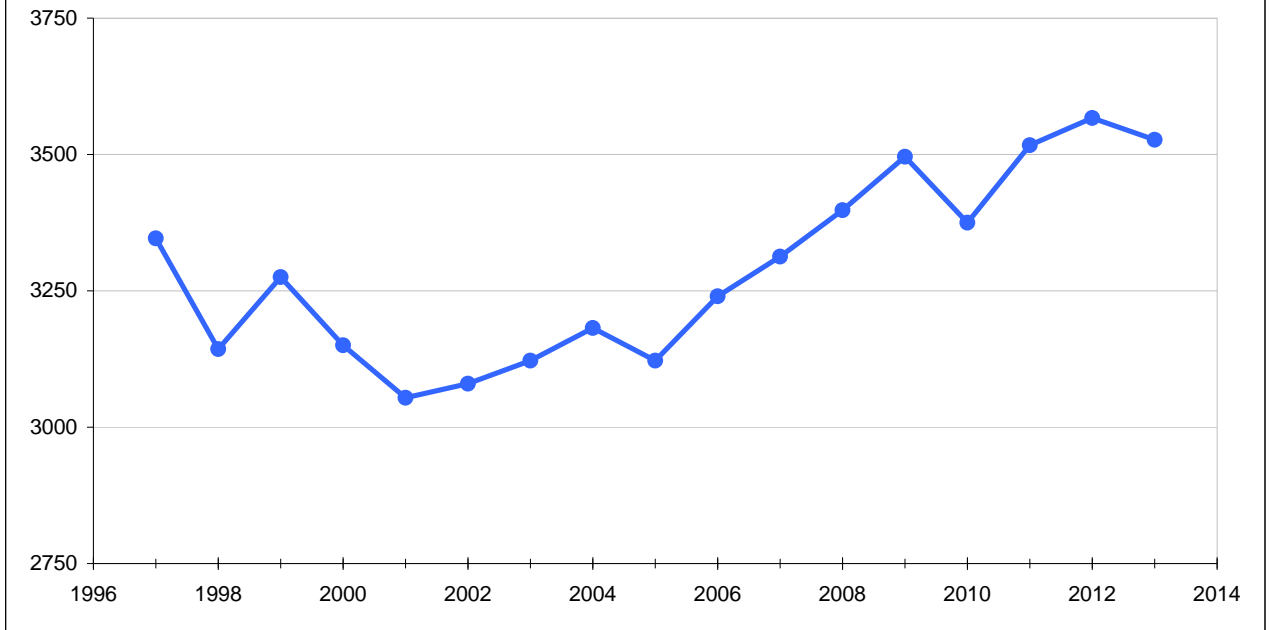
### **3. Achievements against the Action Plan**

- 3.1 Items 1-10 from the original action plan (Appendix 1) in 2011 are either completed or ongoing as part of medium to long-term proposals.
- Items 11 and 12 in the 2013 revised action plan highlighted emerging need in Hoo St Werburgh and Cuxton/Halling and provided solutions. Action to address these items is underway.
  - Item 13 (additional primary places in Gillingham) is now expected to require action by 2016/17 and is discussed in more detail in section 4.3 of this report. However, the option to utilise Thames View Primary School is now one of a number of options being explored.
  - Item 14 (additional places in Chatham and Rochester) is now unlikely to be required during the lifetime of the plan, although forecasts will be carefully monitored every six months to ensure proposals are in place in good time to provide sufficient places should demand dictate.
- 3.2 For the reception intake in September 2014 there were 226 more places available than in September 2012. This is due to the successful expansion programme that has taken place in that time, which includes expansions at Wainscott, Napier Primary, Brompton Westbrook, Saxon Way and Cuxton; the creation of New Horizons Children's Academy; increases in PANs where no additional physical capacity was required as well as schools agreeing to admit over number where capacity allowed.
- 3.3 Excluding the remotest schools on the Hoo Peninsula, there are 126 spare places across the 63 schools that admit reception age children, meaning that without the creation of these additional places there would be a shortage of at least 100 places, with no capacity for any additional in-year casual admission applications received throughout the year.
- 3.4 Forecasts suggest that that numbers of pupils are likely to continue to rise (see section 4) and as a consequence additional capacity will be required in the near future. This report identifies where this is required and offers options for ensuring a sufficiency of available places.

### **4. Advice and analysis**

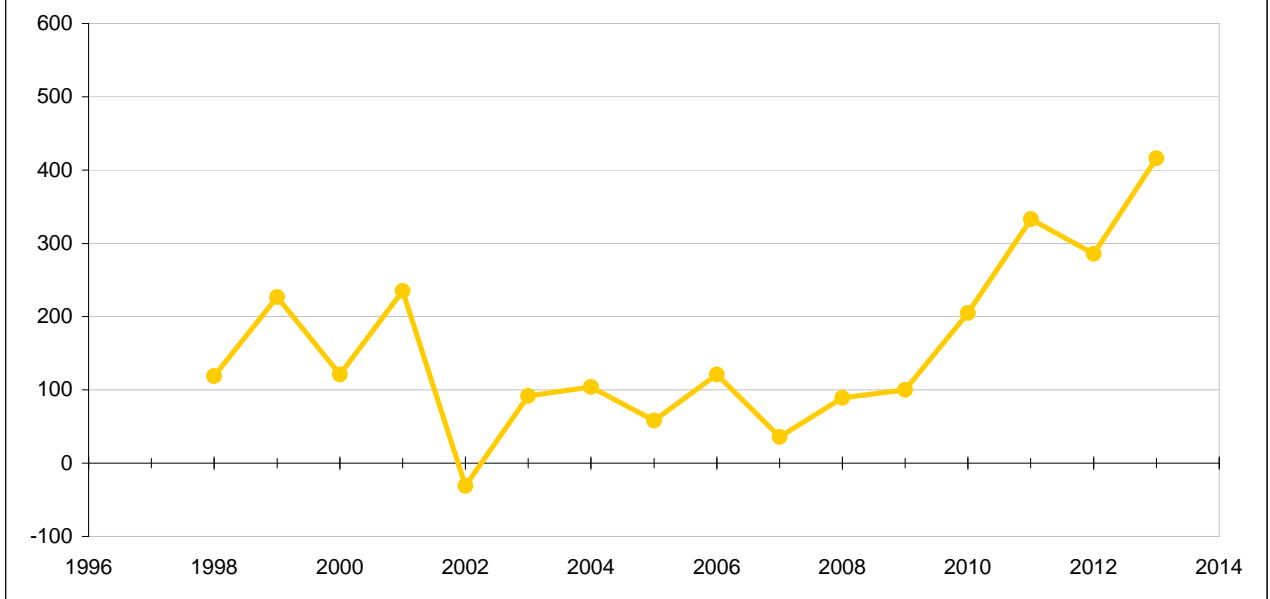
- 4.1 Latest headline data:
- The birth rate in Medway for 1 September 2012 – 31 August 2013 is the second highest since Medway was formed (Fig 1). This means that the three highest years for births have been the last three years.

**(Fig 1) Births in the periods 1 September and 31 August, 1997 - 2013**

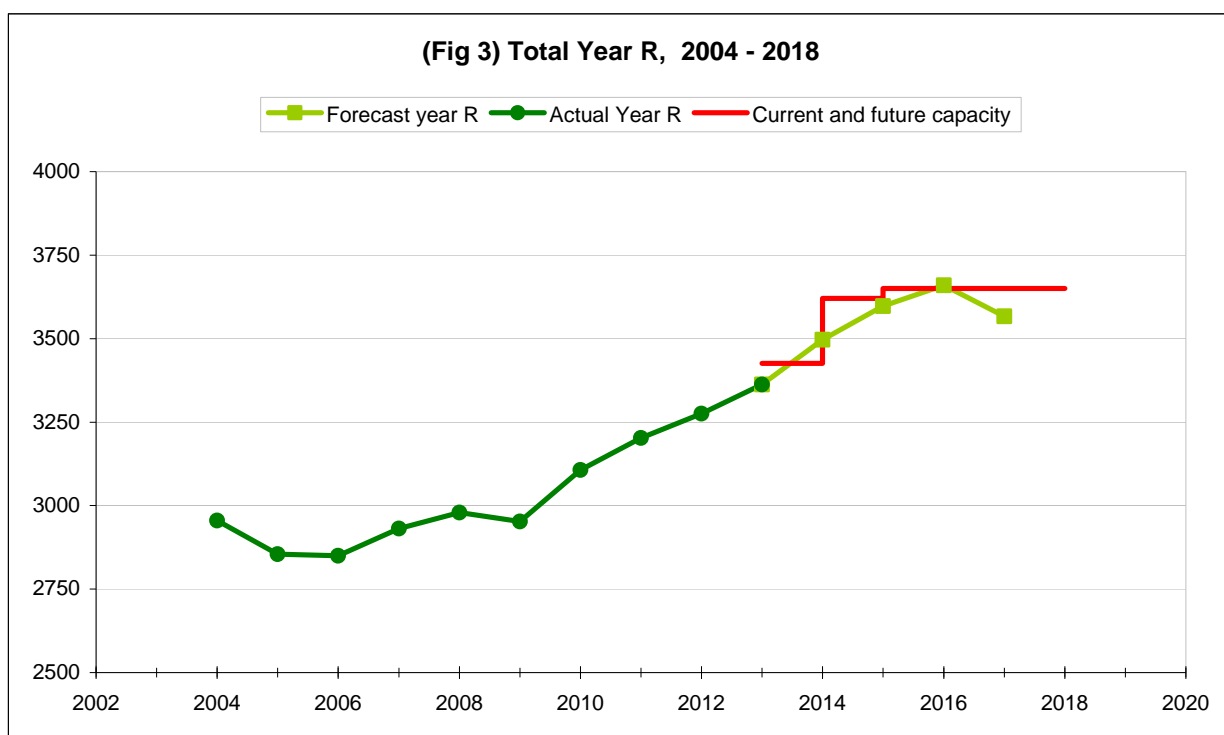


- Weekly monitoring of births from registry office data suggests that births for the academic year 2013/14 are similar to the past two years, indicating no easing in the numbers of children being born in Medway.
- Net inward migration of pre-school age children for the same period shows a gain of 416 (fig 2), the equivalent of a 2FE primary school, but across only 5 age groups. This is the highest on record, meaning that the past four years have been the highest since 2001.

**(Fig 2) Total pre-school age migration in the periods 1 September and 31 August, 1998 - 2013**



- It is expected, therefore, that the demand for reception places will continue to rise.
- The number of reception children at 2014 January Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) was 3,363, the highest on record; forecasts suggest that this number will increase year on year until 2016/17 when it will reach 3,660. At the start of the 2014/15 academic year applications for September are already in excess of 3,480 (forecast 3,497). Forecasts indicate that there will then be a small drop in 2017/18 (fig 3). However, if inward migration continues at similar levels to this year then that figure could rise.



- Overall pupil numbers in primary schools are increasing; currently there are 22,252 pupils in primary schools, the highest it has been since 2004. Officers expect numbers to continue to rise year on year until at least 2018/19 when forecasts indicate that there could be 25,040 pupils on roll, the highest on record.
- The impact of these rises in pupil numbers will be felt in the primary phase initially, but the Council needs to be mindful of the future need for additional secondary places as the larger cohorts currently in primary, and due to start over the coming years, progress into secondary education.

#### 4.2 New Housing Schemes planned

- Significant housing development has taken place in recent years across Medway, which has exacerbated the inward migration effect.
- More developments are underway and planned for the future, which will inevitably lead to further inward migration, in turn leading to increased demand for school places.
- Using approved pupil yield figures, should all planned developments be completed, there could be demand, over time, for 1,230 additional primary places, the equivalent of three 2FE primary schools. This does not include the potential 5,000 home Lodge Hill or the 1,400 dwelling Rochester Riverside developments which are intended to be educationally self sufficient.

- The main school place planning areas affected by proposed housing developments are Strood and Gillingham West.
- The Council will continue to claim contributions from developers where possible to assist with mitigating the impact of these new housing schemes.

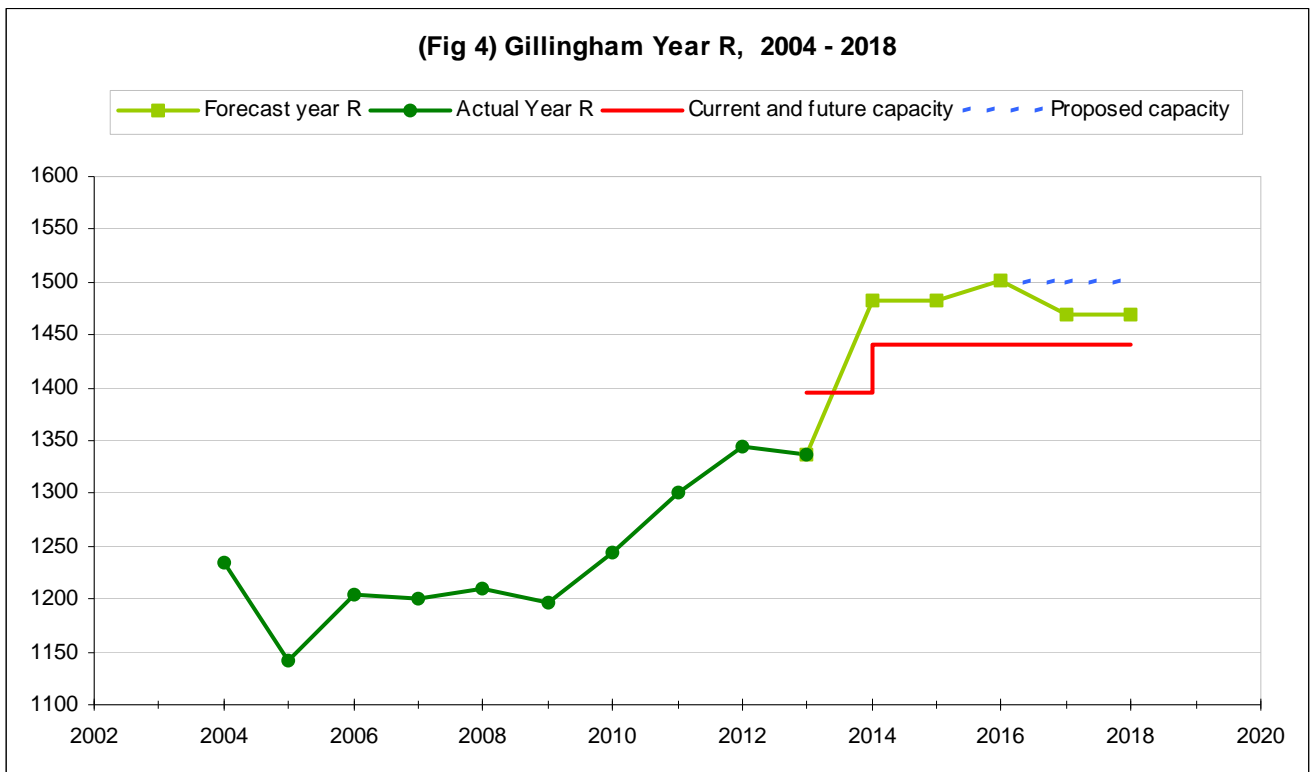
#### 4.3 Emerging primary need

Using the latest birth, migration and housing data, 2014's forecasts have highlighted two areas as likely to require additional capacity to ensure sufficient primary places are available to meet demand. These are Gillingham (fig 4) and Strood (fig 5). Officers have explored a number of options in these areas to address this issue.

In line with national policy, officers will explore options based upon good or outstanding schools expanding. Other principles taken into consideration are the capacity and practicality of the school site to support expansion, the popularity of each school and the geographical location of the school in relation to demand centres.

##### Gillingham

The options for creating the additional places in Gillingham would require the expansion of two schools by 1FE each. Expansion by 2FE overall would provide sufficient spaces to meet expected short-term demand whilst giving some flexibility for future growth.



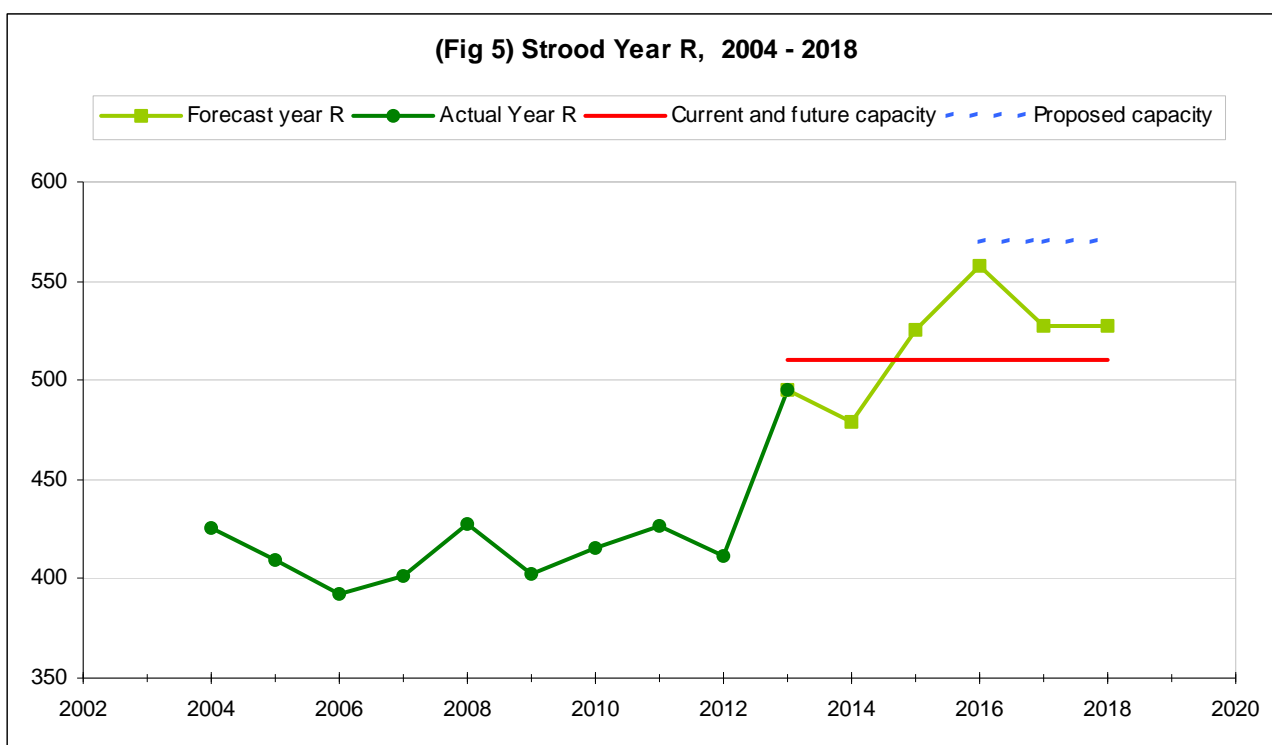
A number of schools in Gillingham and Rainham were considered amongst initial options explored to expand primary capacity by up to 2FE from September 2016. Three schools provide a short list due to their geographical location to meet demand, as well as site size and suitability. Discussions with these schools are ongoing

Cabinet are asked to approve an appraisal of these three options including more detailed feasibility studies as required to ascertain the optimum two.

### Strood

Strood is more complex; schools with available land or space are either away from the areas of demand or are requiring improvement. The opportunity for expanding a current school or establishing a new school on development land is being explored.

The chart below shows that one form of entry would probably be sufficient initially to cater for the majority of demand arising from current forecasts in Strood, however 2FE would give some flexibility by providing spare capacity to allow for additional growth due to those housing projects which are yet to be formally approved and as such do not figure in official forecasts. These include Strood Riverside (500 homes) and Temple Waterfront (620 homes).



Initial options being explored to expand primary capacity by up to 2FE in Strood from September 2016 include;

- Expansion at Elaine Primary Academy, utilising the Elaine Centre buildings, which until recently have been occupied by social services, but are now vacant. These buildings are attached to Elaine Primary Academy. This school is rated as requires improvement by Ofsted but is considered to be on an upward trajectory. The centre would provide for an additional 1FE but it may also support some of the 2nd FE required in Strood, which should provide a cost effective solution and remove the need for an alternative
- Expansion at Bligh Infant and Junior School; however these schools are located away from the centre of expected demand
- A new 2 FE school (academy) on a site to be identified
- An expanded St Nicholas on its present site; however the site is not of sufficient size, topography and location to practically support the expansion of the school to 2FE and creating a 1FE primary school to replace the infant school would not provide additional places

- Temple Mill Primary School identified for future development subject to improvement in standards (currently rated as requires improvement by Ofsted)

Cabinet are asked to approve an appraisal of these options and feasibility studies where required to ascertain the optimum way of providing the required 2FE.

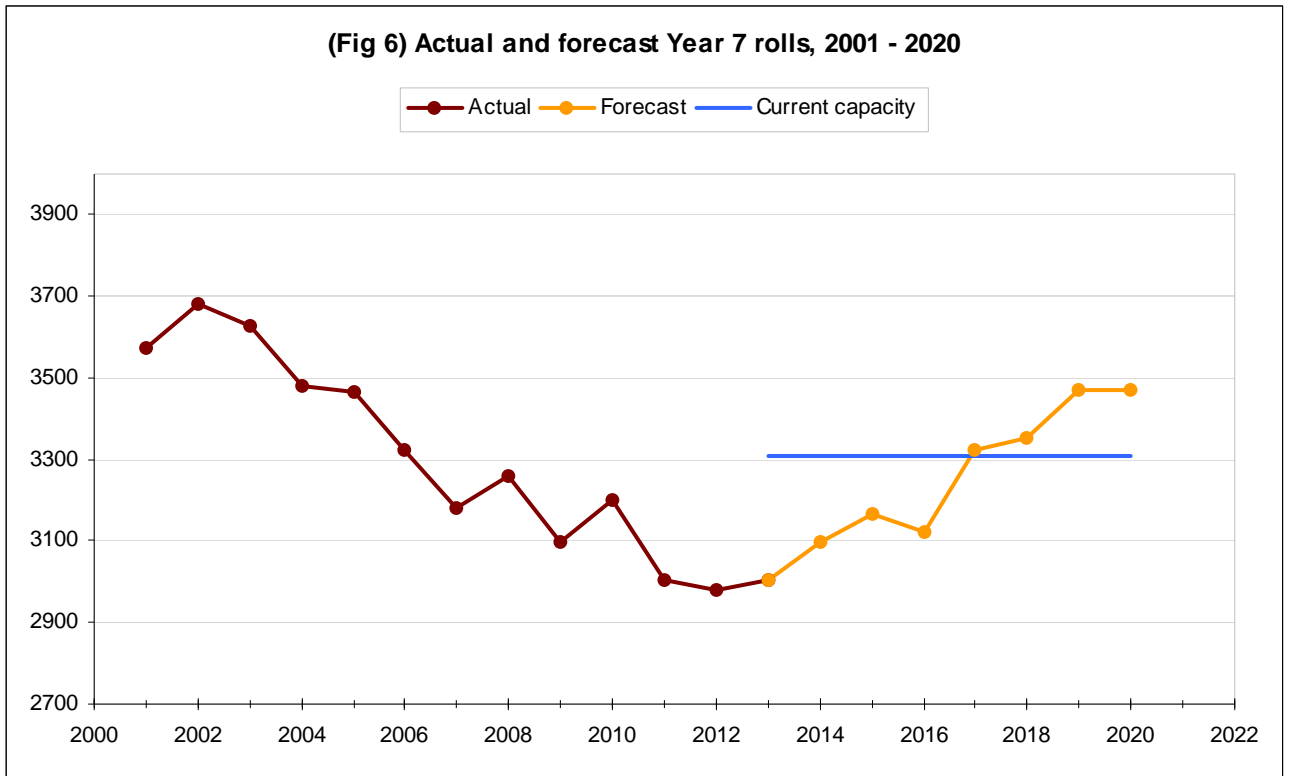
#### 4.4 Expected demand for secondary places

Whilst under the current arrangements there are sufficient spaces available to meet forecast demand in secondary schools over the next 2-3 years, it is expected that demand for year 7 places will be oversubscribed from 2017/18 (fig 6). This will grow year on year until spaces in all year groups in schools are oversubscribed by 2022.

The chart below (fig 6) indicates the current capacity in blue. This takes no account of the proposed reductions in PAN at Robert Napier and Bishop of Rochester to which the Local Authority has submitted an objection to the schools' adjudicator. Nor does it take account of the 30 places capacity per year group at Brompton Academy, which is currently not being utilised.

Officers will investigate the opportunities for expanding good or outstanding secondary schools, however, this will require the cooperation of academies across Medway. Initial and positive discussions are underway with a number of secondary schools regarding potential expansion.

Demand for secondary school places is not only focused upon intakes at year 7; there is also the impact of the Raising of the Participation Age initiative, which means that demand for sixth form places has and will continue to increase. This means that capacity within schools is being squeezed at both ends and this could put pressure sooner upon schools whose capacity is already tight. However, the UTC may mitigate this to some degree.



#### 4.5 Special Educational Needs

Item 5 of the action plan within the School Organisation Plan sets out plans to provide additional specialist SEN provision to address increasing demand. As a result there are projects underway to expand Abbey Court and Danecourt, which will provide an additional 108 places for children with MLD, SLD and PMLD. The Danecourt project and phase one of the project to relocate Abbey Court primary provision are expected to complete in September 2015. Cabinet approved a report on 15 July 2014, outlining the proposals to expand and relocate Rivermead Special School into the premises vacated by Abbey Court at Rainham, which will provide 60 additional primary ASD places. It is also intended to explore the options for providing secondary Hearing Impaired provision, and primary EBD provision.

### 5. Risk management

5.1 There are no risks resulting directly from this report, however the following would be assessed as risks should recommendations from individual proposals flowing from this report not be implemented.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>
The Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places	If insufficient school places are made available to meet demand, the council would be failing to meet its obligations	Implement proposals to provide additional good quality places in the areas of demand



That insufficient funding is available to fund proposals to provide sufficient places	Basic need funding is limited and the extent of the emerging need may mean that unless additional funding can be sourced projects to provide places may not be able to be implemented	Explore options to fund projects including bidding for funding initiatives. Look at cost effective ways to supply places.
That the level of forecast pupils fails to materialise.	Should the expected numbers of pupils fail to materialise then any funding committed could have been better spent elsewhere	Continue to monitor births, migration and housing developments and accuracy of forecasting

## 6. Consultation

- 6.1 No consultation is required for this report; however, any specific proposals that are presented as a result of this report will include consultation as appropriate.
- 6.2 No Diversity Impact Assessment accompanies this report, however, one will be provided for individual proposals brought forward as a result of actions from this report.

## 7 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 18 September 2014 where the Performance, Intelligence and Strategic Planning Manager detailed the suggested amendments to the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 following an annual review. He reported that in September 2014 an additional 226 Reception Year places had been added to Medway primary schools to respond to an increase in growth from birth rates and inward migration and forecasts demonstrated that this rise was expected to continue. Officers were therefore also anticipating an increased demand in secondary school places in the long term and some discussions were already taking place with Medway secondary schools in relation to this.

7.2 Members asked questions and made comments including the following:

- **Housing developments within neighbouring local authorities (LAs).** A Member asked whether forecasts took into account additional houses planned within neighbouring LAs that would impact on school places within Medway. Officers confirmed that they worked with colleagues from Kent County Council to keep each other informed of such developments that could affect school places across the borders so that this information could be built into forecasting.
- **Expansion of places within Hoo Peninsula.** Members welcomed the plans to create an all-through academy on the Hundred of Hoo site but raised concern that a particular developer was claiming to be funding this expansion on the back of a future development and sought clarification as to whether this was the case. Officers confirmed that the expansion was to meet the additional need already existing within the Hoo peninsula area and was not reliant on the possible future development referred to. The Director of Children and Adults undertook to discuss the issue of the developer's claims with the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture.

- **Expansion of good schools.** A Member raised concern that permanent expansion should not be undertaken at schools that had performance issues until there was evidence of sustained improvement and added that ideally, schools considered by Ofsted as 'good' should be expanded initially, where possible. Officers confirmed that this was a view shared with them and temporary accommodation was used to expand schools in the first instance where possible so that a clear trajectory of improved performance could be ensured as well as a sustained demand for places.
- **Relocation of Rivermead.** A Member asked for clarification about the impact on the contract between Medway Norse and Rivermead for SEN Transport when it relocates to the current Abbey Court primary provision site and also whether the school would move in its entirety to the new site. Officers confirmed that the contract was with the school and would move with the school when it relocates. Officers also confirmed that the school would eventually be based across its original site and the new site with the new site being used for primary age pupils and potentially years 7 and 8 and then the older year groups continuing to be based at the current Forge Lane site.

7.3 The committee recommended the 2014 review and update of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 to the Cabinet for approval.

## **8 Financial and legal implications**

- 8.1 All projects approved and undertaken as a result of the 2014 review of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 will be funded through the Children and Adults' Capital Programme. Funding implications for proposed projects will be included in subsequent reports requesting approval for each individual project.
- 8.2 Where appropriate Developer Contributions will be sought from new housing schemes to assist with the provision of school places in areas of demographic growth.
- 8.3 Occasionally, additional funding sources and initiatives become available. Where possible the Council will seek to make use of these opportunities to reduce the demands upon the funding currently available.
- 8.4 It would not be unreasonable to assume that from 2017/18 onwards, Medway could expect further Basic Needs allocations of at least £2.0 million per annum and, at a national level, the Department for Education is likely to offer further opportunities to bid for targeted funds to deliver the basic need for school places, although there is no guarantee that bids will be successful.
- 8.5 Whilst all opportunities for future funding will be explored and every opportunity will be taken to seek cost effective solutions there is a potential shortfall in available funding to provide sufficient school places. As recent press coverage and television have highlighted, Medway's situation is consistent with the national picture with many authorities in similar or worse positions.
- 8.6 The Council has the power under sections 18 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make "prescribed alterations" to a maintained school.

The procedure for making prescribed alterations is set out in 'School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

- 8.7 From 24 January 2014 there is no longer a prescribed 'pre-publication' (informal) consultation period for prescribed alterations, there is however a strong expectation on Local Authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposals prior to publication of the formal proposals as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations. Specific proposals brought forward from this report will be subject to these consultation processes.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 Cabinet is invited to note the positive progress made against the action plan.
- 9.2 Cabinet is requested to approve an appraisal of the options outlined in this report to provide sufficient additional primary accommodation in the areas of Strood and Gillingham, including more detailed feasibility studies as required and to report back to Cabinet on the preferred options in due course.
- 9.3 Cabinet is asked to approve an appraisal of the options for expansion within the secondary sector, including more detailed feasibility studies as required and to report back to Cabinet in due course.

## **10 Suggested reasons for decision**

- 10.1 By approving the recommendations in section 9, the Cabinet are ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duty to ensure sufficient good school places.

### **Lead officer contact**

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### **Background papers**

School Organisation Plan 2011-15/Review of School Organisation Plan 2013  
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=20666>

### **Appendix**

Updated Action Plan 2014



## Appendix 1: School Organisation Plan 2011-16: Consolidated Action Plan for Review July 2014

Item no.	Subject	Action	Due date	Status @July 2014	Updated position/Commentary
1	Approval of School Organisation Plan	Cabinet approval to consult on plan	July 2011	Complete	The School Organisation Plan was presented to Cabinet in July 2011 when approval to consult was given.
		School Organisation Plan Consultation	July to Sept 2011	Complete	Consultation was undertaken, and the outcomes of the consultation period were presented firstly to Overview and Scrutiny and then Cabinet.
		Cabinet to approve plan following consultation	Autumn 2011	Complete	Cabinet approved plan on 1 November 2011
2	Address issue of likely shortfall of places in Gillingham West	Consult on increased PAN for Napier Primary	Nov 2011	Complete	Consultation took place as part of the normal round of admissions consultations to increase the PAN at Napier Primary School from 60 to 90. This will take effect from September 2013 starting from the reception intake.
		Undertake project to complete building works at Woodlands Primary School to allow them to remain at 2 forms of entry	By Sept 2012	Complete	Cabinet approved works to be undertaken, and the building project is now complete.
		Monitor year R applications and offer data, and if necessary increase provision in another school to meet demand	By Sept 14	Complete	Increases in the PANs at Napier (2013) and Saxon Way and Brompton Westbrook (2014) will provide sufficient places to meet demand in the immediate area. Projects to expand the premises at these schools are ongoing
3	Address issue of likely shortfall of places in Chatham and Rochester	Invite expressions of interest from current and new providers for additional provision in the Chatham and Rochester area	Autumn 2011	Complete	New Horizons Children's Academy opens in September 2014, which when full will provide primary education for 630 pupils plus nursery.
4	Increase capacity at Wainscott Primary School	Consult on an increased PAN for Wainscott Primary School	Nov 2011	Complete	Consultation took place and approval was given to increase the PAN at Wainscott with effect from September 2013

		Develop a feasibility study to increase accommodation at Wainscott Primary to accommodate an additional form of entry	Early 2012	Complete	Building project complete
5	Undertake SEN masterplan	Undertake an SEN masterplan	By Sept 2011	Ongoing	An assessment of the SEN estate and future need was undertaken, which produced some forecasting and trend analysis; this information is being used to consider the most effective steps and options required to address the issue of additional demand for SEN provision. This action has resulted in the approval for projects to expand and relocate Abbey Court and the expansion of Danecourt. Proposals to expand and relocate Rivermead are underway.
6	Develop plans for the future use of Chatham South site	We will undertake a feasibility study regarding the future use of the Chatham South buildings and site which will be vacated by Bishop of Rochester Academy in 2012	By Oct 2011	Complete	It was decided that the buildings would best be served to provide accommodation for the new primary academy required to cater for the increased numbers of pupils expected in Chatham (see Action Plan item 3). New school to be known as New Horizons Children's Academy opens in September 2014. (see item 3)
7	Develop new school provision for Lodge Hill and Rochester Riverside developments	We will work with the developer to plan the delivery of additional school provision set out in the Section 106 agreements	2013 onwards	Ongoing	This is an ongoing project, and in line with government policy for new provision to be established as an Academy or Free school we will need to identify appropriate sponsors for any new school provision. This will be undertaken at the appropriate time as the developments progress.
8	Ongoing programme of federations and amalgamations	We will continue to consider opportunities for federation and amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools	Ongoing	Ongoing	Since the plan was approved, Oaklands Infant and Junior Schools have amalgamated, as have Barnsole Infant and Junior Schools (both September 2012). The statutory process has successfully been completed to amalgamate Sherwin Knight Infant and Junior Schools, as well as Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools, both due for implementation in September 2013. Parkwood Infant and Junior Schools were federated in April 2014. A review will be undertaken whenever a head teacher of a separate infant or junior school plans to leave.

9	Ongoing monitoring of surplus places and place pressure	We will continue to monitor pupil numbers and admission applications against school capacity	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing monitoring has highlighted that the pressure on primary places is likely to be more severe than expected in the School Organisation Plan. Appropriate actions are underway to mitigate this, with approval sought from cabinet to take the additional measures needed. We will propose changes in line with the School Organisation Principles to ensure the continued viability of all schools in Medway. It is likely that additional primary phase provision will be required in Medway in future years; including the Hoo village area, Cuxton and Halling area, Gillingham and Chatham/Rochester and opportunities to provide this will be investigated as appropriate.
10	Investigate options for a UTC	We will investigate the opportunities for the establishment of a UTC in Medway	Autumn 2011	Ongoing	A second application was successful and a site identified at Chatham Waters development. To open September 2015
<b>Objectives from 2013 review</b>					
11	Address issue of likely shortfall of primary places in the Hoo St Werburgh Village area	Investigate options for providing additional primary provision in Hoo village, and develop proposals for approval by Cabinet	For September 2015	Ongoing	Approval has been granted for the creation of an all-through academy on the Hundred of Hoo site, which will involve the expansion of the age range of the school to incorporate a primary phase. Initially temporary accommodation will be utilised for September 2015.
12	Address the issue of likely shortfall of places in the Cuxton and Halling planning area	Investigate options for providing additional primary provision in the area, and develop proposals for approval by Cabinet	Initially for September 2015	Ongoing	Temporary accommodation is being installed at Cuxton to ensure that sufficient class space is available to enable the school to admit to a full 2FE school, which will result in additional capacity for 70 children across the primary phase. Forecasts will be monitored to consider if and when further capacity is required in the area.
13	Potential requirement for additional need in Gillingham over and above that already approved by Cabinet.	Highlight suitable options for providing additional places if required	As required	Monitoring of places will be ongoing to ensure a sufficiency of good quality places	Forecasting in 2014 has highlighted a likely deficit of places from 2016. See Action 15

14	Potential requirement for additional need in Chatham/Rochester over and above that already approved by Cabinet	Highlight suitable options for providing additional places if required	As required	Monitoring of places will be ongoing to ensure a sufficiency of good quality places	Monitoring of forecasts based upon the latest available data indicate that the establishment of New Horizons will ensure that sufficient primary spaces are available in the short term. Ongoing monitoring and twice yearly forecasting rounds will enable officers to react as required to ensure a sufficiency of supply. This action will be revisited in the review of 2015
<b>New objectives 2014</b>					
15	Additional primary provision required for Gillingham area	The establishment of 2 forms of entry	September 2016	Ongoing	Two schools preferred for 1 FE expansion each; Woodlands Academy and St Thomas of Canterbury. The latter will also help with redressing the shortage of Catholic faith places which are consistently oversubscribed
16	Additional primary provision in Strood for 2016	The phased establishment of 2 FE	Initially September 2016	Ongoing	Options for providing the additional provision being explored. A new school (Academy). Is the preferred option subject to land availability.
17	To ensure a sufficiency of secondary school places	Explore options for providing additional secondary places	September 2017	Ongoing	Officers will seek opportunities in discussion with Medway's secondary schools to ensure appropriate provision is available to meet expected demand from September 2017.