

SCHOOL SUFFICIENCY INVESTMENT PLAN

Report of Director of Education, Work, and Skills

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council has an enduring statutory responsibility to commission sufficient high quality school places. This document is the third annual revision of our plan and sets out how we will carry out our responsibility, in line with the commitments made in the Borough Plan and School Strategy to ensure there are sufficient places in good and improving local inclusive schools at the heart of the community that children and families want to go to. This means having the right number and type of school places, in the right place, at the right time to meet demand.
- 1.2 The Council aspires to secure an education and skills system that provides a safe, accessible, secure and stimulating learning environment, which is sustainable and provides value for money, is fit for current and future needs, reduces environmental impact, and supports Stockport children and young people from 2 years to 25 years to achieve their true potential.
- 1.3 The stark reality however is that there continues to be a significant shortfall in government funding, limiting our ability to address challenges and realise the ambitions we have for our school estate. There exists a constant tension throughout this report between what we should do and what we are able to do within the layered and constrained environment we find ourselves in. This tension places significant pressure on our ageing school estate, our school partners, and the Council's cash limit and Dedicated School's Grant budget.
- 1.4 This document, alongside the Borough Plan, the Schools Strategy, the Children and Young People's Strategy, and other associated strategic documents provides a framework on which a school place plan can be devised for short, medium, and longer-term sufficiency.
- 1.5 Over the next twelve months continued work towards the Council's strategic growth priorities in areas such social infrastructure in the town centre and the Council's Work and Skills plan will be reflected in this plan forming a 0-25 years education and training provision investment plan which also benefits occupational entry into the skills system for residents up to 64 years.

2. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Effective school place planning is integral to the Council's enduring statutory responsibilities.
- 2.2 Stockport Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places and childcare for its children. There are aspects of the Borough and Economic plan which rely on the successes of our education and skills system, whilst they

may not be statutory, we view them as such. Therefore we expand our duty to include:

- Ensuring sufficient childcare and early years provision is available as far as reasonably practicable;
- Ensuring there is pre-16 school provision of sufficient nature, type and quantity is available to meet the needs of all Stockport children;
- Ensuring sufficient post-16 education, skills and training provision is available for all Stockport children;
- Giving priority at all ages to meet the needs of children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils who have been looked after, excluded from education or who come from a low income family up to 19yrs (in some cases 25yrs);
- Support all maintained nurseries, schools and Post-16 education, skill, and training provision to function as high-quality, viable and financially efficient services; and
- Ensuring fair access to educational opportunity and promote diversity and parental choice.

2.3 In addition to setting out how Stockport intends to provide a sufficiency of school places, this strategy also intends to support Stockport's key education and employment objectives as defined below (CYP Strategy and Borough Plan);

- An increase in the percentage of children and young people in Stockport attending 'good' and 'outstanding' provision;
- An increase in attainment at Foundation Stage and progress at Key Stage 2 and 4, so that they are in line with statistical neighbour's data and exceed that of national;
- Close the gaps in attainment and progress for pupils from a deprived background, looked after children, children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), and those who speak English as an additional language, so that they are in line with, or exceed national data;
- Ensuring that students can access a range of suitable post 16 provision to suit their needs and that success rates, match or exceed national data;
- Ensuring that Stockport provides 'local places for local children' across all parts of Stockport and that this strategy accounts for; sufficiency, suitability, standards and parental preference issues;
- Reducing the need for children and young people in Stockport to access 'Home to School' transport services;
- Reducing the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions, in line with Stockport's statistical neighbours;
- Increase school attendance and post 16 retention rates;
- Increase education, employment and training for all 16-25 year olds including those with SEND.
- Work together to look at the goods and services we buy to keep the Stockport £ in Stockport and explore opportunities for increased social value, inclusion and corporate social responsibility.

3. STOCKPORT CONTEXT

- 3.1 Stockport is proud of the quality of education provided by its diverse and high-performing system of schools, colleges, and early years' settings. Stockport is committed to ensuring its residents have access to good local schools which offer a rich and varied learning experience.
- 3.2 Residents have a good choice of schools with high standards; 86% of Stockport schools are rated Good or Outstanding. Furthermore, over 95% of residents have secured a school place at one of their first 3 preferences.
- 3.3 Stockport faces significant challenges in the future due to;
- contrasting pressures created by shrinking 0-4yrs and 5-9yrs populations and a bulge of pupils moving through Key Stage 2, 3, and 4;
 - anticipated pupil demand to bubble and shift around the Borough through housing development;
 - Home office contingency accommodation placing acute pressures on surrounding localities;
 - acute condition issues within an ageing school estate, and;
 - in line with other local authorities nationally, a growing cohort of children with specialised and complex needs;
 - Outline of national policy which casts doubt of the reliability and longevity of future government funding.
- 3.4 Funding for capital investment to maintain and grow the school estate remains constrained by the priorities and focus of Government and as such relies on the Council to better seek economies of scale where possible. Funding pressures means greater focus to maximise the benefits from our investment plans. This includes social value, recognising the importance of social, environmental and economic well-being across our communities by developing our educational establishments.
- 3.5 The LA/Schools receive a series of grants from central government relating to capital funding to support maintenance/development and improvement to the school estate in line with both schools and LA strategic plans / core responsibilities (i.e. ensure sufficient school places across the borough).

The funding streams and narrative are as follows:

- Basic Need Funding: Calculated annually based on the capacity of schools in the Borough versus the number of pupils the authority expects to be in each year group/each school/each planning area.
- School Condition Allocation: Calculated annually based on pupil numbers in the Spring census. Pupils are weighted according to early years, primary, secondary and sixth form and paid between £115 - £146 per weighted pupil. The Council is only funded for maintained schools, academies receive their own allocation.

- School Rebuilding Programme: Government programme funding and delivering the rebuild of 100 schools nationally. Decisions are made based on centrally held data on condition and Government priorities.
- Special Provision Fund Capital Allocations: Government grant intended to improve special provision for children and young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans. Allocations are calculated based on demographic growth and local building costs.
- High Needs Provision Capital Allocation: Government grant intended to support the provision for children and young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans and those pupils requiring alternative provision. Calculated based on local growth in demographic compared with national growth and funding proportioned across all LAs
- Developer Contributions: the LA can seek or secure developer contributions where it is felt necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms (owing to a perceived or demonstrable impact on infrastructure). The LA as yet has not adopted a formal policy on seeking developer contributions however one is proposed through a supplementary planning document which may go before Cabinet in the Summer of 2024.

4. LOCAL CONTEXT THROUGH THREE LENSES:

ONE: SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

4.1 Forecasts

4.2 Stockport is forecasted to face contrasting pressures in primary and secondary.

4.3 In 2023 the 0-4 years age range population reached its lowest point in a decade. The 0-4 years population is expected to flatten off in 2024 and remains relatively flat for the next 8-10 years. This forecast includes some assumptions about housing development however the nature, size and location of development outlined in the developing local plan will further influence these forecasts.

4.4 This fall in population size entering Key Stage 1 is contrasted by extraordinary numbers of pupils in Key Stage 2. This gives primary schools a small amount of grace to plan for and adapt.

4.5 This reduction in the 0–4-year population will place further pressure on primary schools who are already facing financial pressures. Small, 1 form of entry primary schools are particularly vulnerable however larger schools are not immune. Typically, a 1 form entry primary school only needs a small drop in pupil numbers of around 2-3 pupils before that school struggles to fund the basics required to teach a class. Given the ongoing challenges we face regarding children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the ability of schools to provide a level of support or differentiation is critical to the emerging infrastructure plans discussed later in this report.

4.6 Fundamentally any school that is popular and consistently oversubscribed is unlikely to feel these additional pressures however those schools considered less popular in a locality have and will continue to see small drops in pupil numbers.

- 4.7 Within secondary, high numbers of pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to transition into Year 7. Year groups across Key Stage 3 and 4 have limited surplus capacity.
- 4.8 We know from longer termed forecasts and the low pupil numbers moving through Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2 that the extraordinary bulge of pupils entering year 7 will not last and will reduce sharply in 5 years' time.
- 4.9 This short-term pressure of places in secondary phase is acute and time limited. Basic need funding is not sufficient to consider formal and large scale expansion projects, nor would that be the best use of financial resources. As discussed in previous investment plans, flexible, time limited 'bulges' in secondary school capacities are most appropriate and have been negotiated at strategically selected schools.
- 4.10 Additional places have been negotiated at:
- 150 places at Marple Hall School
 - 75 places at Priestnall School
 - 75 places at Kingsway School
 - 150 places at Bramhall High School
 - 20 places at St James' High
- 4.11 In addition to the above bulges a 100 additional permanent places have been created at Stockport School.
- 4.12 In the Autumn of 2023 it was confirmed that Bramhall High School site contained reinforced, aerated, autoclaved concrete and since that time there have been a series of mitigations put in place to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for the pupils attending the school. Because of this, Bramhall High School is no longer able to provide the additional school places. Negotiations are ongoing with Secondary school heads to secure alternative places at other schools in the Borough. This is a significant setback and we are working hard to ensure we have sufficiency of places for September 2024.
- 4.13 The continued supply of places up to 2028 in secondary phase will require extensive consideration and negotiation alongside our school leaders. As such £2m allocated to Bramhall High School to fund additional mainstream places will be reallocated to support this process.

TWO: CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND CONDITION

4.14 The effects of poor or irregular maintenance

- 4.15 Poor or irregular maintenance of school buildings can result in:
- disruption of education;
 - closure or partial closure of your buildings;
 - invalidation of insurance;

- poor value for money;
- unnecessary expenditure to rectify problems which could have been avoided;
- shorter building life;
- risks to the health, safety and welfare of building users;
- legal claims;
- non-compliance with regulations.

4.16 **Stockport's capital investment responsibilities**

4.17 Stockport has direct capital investment responsibility for 76 schools from nursery to secondary, of which at least two-thirds are over 50 years old and in many cases are reaching end of life.

4.18 Most schools have been refurbished to some degree during their lifetime and many of these refurbishments are also nearing end of life. The priority over the last few years is that investment has been focused on work needed to maintain the schools in daily operation, such as roofs and heating systems and electrical infrastructure.

4.19 Our school estate has a predicted £105m backlog maintenance requirement and could be as high as £200m if the replacement or repaired estate is to provide a modern learning environment and meet contemporary expectations over DDA, new building regulations and rising building indices since the assessments were made. This is putting severe pressure on our schools and can act as a barrier to achieving the best learning experience and outcomes for our children and young people across Stockport.

4.20 As part of our Climate Action Now strategy we are putting climate change at the heart of everything we do. The quality, design and use of our school buildings across Stockport must be improved to address the challenges we face.

4.21 Maintenance, repair and replacement relating to the fabric of and utilities in school buildings also opens up opportunities to assess the energy efficiency of schools allowing us to make decisions that will contribute to the Council's climate action ambitions.

4.22 The Capital Programme, which includes the planned spending on education infrastructure over the next year, is published annually in the Asset Management Plan (Appendix 1) and should be read in junction with this report.

4.23 **Capital Plan delivery**

4.24 Stockport has a professional in-house Infrastructure Delivery Team. The team assist with development of school expansions and new schools by undertaking viability studies and then overseeing the delivery of the capital projects through to completion. Through the work of this team school building projects are delivered to a high standard and at good value, ensuring the best outcome from the investment of public funds.

- 4.25 The Council is currently delivering £7.9m of maintenance and £5.7M Basic Need investment projects in 23/24 financial year.
- 4.26 Stockport uses a mixture of funding sources to finance additional school places. Funding sources available include Basic Need grant from central government; Section 106 contributions from developers; Free School funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and contributions from schools. New school places must be funded through these means as Stockport has no other grants or funds dedicated to providing school places.
- 4.27 Opportunities to access other forms of investment, such as the School Rebuilding Programme and Public Service Decarbonisation Scheme are necessary supplements for the school estate to be maintained.
- 4.28 In the past 12 months, Stockport has secured agreement from the DfE to rebuild four of its schools, Thorn Grove Primary School and Moorfield Primary School on account of condition need, and St Thomas' CE Primary and Bramhall High School on account of the recent discovery and mitigation of reinforced aerated autoclaved concrete. The four schools combined account for £14.6m of condition risk.

THREE: EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT AND INCLUSION

4.29 Effectiveness, and excellence underpinning self-sustained inclusion

4.30 This plan relies on the successful implementation of the Schools Strategy having a strong emphasis on quality practice and best provision, focussing on early prevention, early help, strengths and asset-based approaches to draw demand downstream giving the greatest potential for meeting needs earlier, at a lower level without a need to commission new places. Put simply in the context of sufficiency; regardless of revenue and capital pressures, the sustainable solution to sufficiency is by us collectively being better, not bigger.

4.31 The ongoing work by the school improvement team, supported by the new inclusion service, is the key mechanism by which the Council as a strategic leader can create self-sustained quality practice and best provision across the school estate, both of which are fundamental to local inclusion and supports sufficiency by limiting the extent to which children's needs escalate beyond that which a provision can meet.

4.32 Special Educational Needs, and Disability (SEND)

4.33 Stockport currently has a blend of graduated provision to meet the needs of all its pupils.

- **Mainstream** – pupils are supported in class having their needs met by a class teacher or teaching assistant;
- **Mainstream (SEN support)** - pupils are supported within mainstream classes and may need additional support with their learning;

- **Resourced** - pupils attend a mainstream setting but spend some of their time in a support rich environment separate from the mainstream class and receive differentiated learning;
- **Special School** - pupils for whose needs are so significant and complex that they cannot be met in a mainstream or resourced settings;
- **Alternative** - This provision offers appropriate placements for pupils who would not receive suitable learning due to exclusion, illness or other reason. This also applies to pupils who struggle to engage with an academic curriculum and would therefore suit vocational based subjects (currently Stockport has no borough wide vocational provision for children requiring a vocational offer).

- 4.34 Currently approx. 17% of the pupil population has a special education need or disability, of which approx. 5% of the pupil population has an Education, Health and Care Plan which has been historically higher than regional and national levels. The number of pupils with SEND is projected to grow (upper limit) by 2.85% (approx.56 pupils) each year for at least the next 5 years.
- 4.35 The profile of types of SEND (primary need) continues to change with children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or an amalgam accounting for a greater proportion of children each year (increase of 17% and 29% respectively since 2018) whereas Speech, Communication and language Needs (SCLN) is decreasing in relative proportion (decreasing by 2.2% each year).
- 4.36 Stockport has lacked the necessary blend of provision and sufficient places to adequately meet this demand and those with more complex SEMH and ASD have in some cases had their provision commissioned in schools external to Stockport at significant cost.
- 4.37 As well as profiles of size and need changing for pupils with SEND, localities contributing the greatest proportion of pupils have changed. Edgeley, Stockport (centre) and Reddish have proportionally higher numbers of children with SEND than other areas of Stockport.
- 4.38 For some children whose needs are significant or complex, it requires a specialised form of provision that cannot always be provided in mainstream schools. The number of special school and resourced places has grown in recent years in both the primary and secondary sector to keep up with demand.
- 4.39 The Council have addressed this problem through the creation of new places that have either been delivered already or are anticipated to be formalised by 2025;

Provision Type	Places in 2020	Places in 2025
Resource Base (Primary)	94	184
Resource Base (Secondary)	18	120

Pupil Referral Unit	81	109
Special School (Primary)	252	303
Special School (Secondary)	425	530
Post-16 (Special)	74	175

4.40 A greater emphasis on local provision meeting local need is needed, connecting and rooting a pupil within their community. This can be achieved through our schools being better and best, delivering an enhanced mainstream offer underpinned with in some cases resourced nurture provision and resource bases.

4.41 **Resource Base plans and strategy**

4.42 The previous School Investment Plan committed to the creation of new resource base places as part of a strategy to ensure mainstream high needs places had sufficient geographical spread. Using the Stockport Family neighbourhood footprints, we committed to ensuring there were at least two primary resource bases per footprint and there was at a minimum of one secondary resource base in the north, west, east and south of the Borough.

4.43 We have worked alongside resource base and special school headteachers to draft a resource base specification. The document sets out the ambitions for mainstream high needs provision, a funding model and an indicative staffing model. The specification is intended to provide confidence in the sustainability of the model as well as certainty on minimum funding levels.

4.44 We have created two secondary resource bases and expanded an existing base to release a total of 72 new places. We also have negotiated agreements that a fourth base will open in 2025 which will release a further 40 places as.

4.45 In primary:

- the LA has secured the rebuild of Thorn Grove Primary School and Moorfield Primary School. Both schools will have their physical resource base expanded as part of the negotiated agreements with the DFE.
- Two new primary resource bases will open (one subject to a Cabinet decision in June 2024) in Brinnington bringing some much needed high needs capacity to the locality.
- As part of this years plan, we propose to take forward the creation of new provision in the Heatons
- We continue to explore ways in which we create further capacity in Reddish, Edgeley, and Cheadle Heath

4.46 This plan has repeatedly underlined the importance of excellent local mainstream provision and its role in the sufficiency of both mainstream and high needs places. It is for this reason that we continue to look for ways in which we can support the progression of better and best practice and provision through the principals of resource bases (resource and base) - this may be by providing additional resource to schools to create capacity and support provision such as

nurture in secondary schools or considering capital investment which may aid a specific aspect of school improvement.

4.47 A formal resource base strategy will be published by the Autumn of 2024 which will set out the continued ambitions for resource bases in Stockport but also outline ideas and plans to create much broader capacity without having the constraint of capital funding.

5. A RESPONSIVE STRATEGY TO GROW AND DEVELOP THE SCHOOL ESTATE

CHALLENGES

5.1 Stockport schools are some of the lowest funded schools per pupil in England and central funding for maintenance and condition is insufficient.

5.2 Our plans therefore reflect how we intend to utilise the funding we have to best effect. We must be realistic with what we can achieve with the funds we have. Any approach must therefore seek to maximise impact, outcomes and value:

- It must further embed schools in their communities recognising them as anchors and/or hubs;
- It must seek to sustain, underpin, diversify and fully utilise existing schools' capacity. Drawing on the strength and resilience given by the enhanced team around the school (Stockport Family operating model) and inclusion service;
- It must recognise that the quality of teaching, the education offer, and school leadership are as important as physical space in terms of parental preference, school place planning and high-quality sufficiency;
- Where capital investment is needed, it must seek out opportunities to combine projects to achieve economies of scale, greater inclusion and better value.

RESPONSE

5.3 Our strategy focuses on what can be achieved with our limited funds:

Strategic focus	How we will do this
Secure sufficient funding through central funding streams and developer contributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use our strong understanding of historic trends to predict future needs - Use our understanding of the population forecast for 0-25yrs for the next 5 years to highlight sufficiency issues - Use 5-10yr forecasts to highlight infrastructure requirements - We will articulate our understanding of the Stockport context to Government through statutory returns

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will maximise government funding by providing accurate predictions of need through government returns - We will have a robust developer contribution policy through the new Local Plan - We will articulate our sufficiency needs to central government regional leads to help identify potential bidding opportunities for capital investment initiatives. - We will clearly articulate our social infrastructure needs through our new Local Plan
<p>Prioritise the spend of funding to assure sufficiency from early years, primary, secondary, through to Post-16 in mainstream and SEND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will use our understanding of the population forecast for 0-25yrs including SEND to identify pressures. - We will use our understanding of the risk posed to the Council through lack of sufficiency in each given area to recommend investment plans - We will use our understanding of the nature of solution needed, capital investment or otherwise to provide a robust plan that meets the requirements of the 3 lenses of sufficiency. - We will ensure robust decision making by using our understanding of the costs, site constraints, land requirements and community, political and school response to any given solution to provide accurately costed and supported plans to Board for decision making
<p>Prioritise maintenance and condition work which may impact the accessibility or availability of school places for all children and to ensure safety of our school buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will prioritise budget based on our understanding of the condition and maintenance requirements across our maintained schools - We will challenge schools to ensure leaders take responsibility for their duty to plan and prioritise maintenance works to ensure the learning environment is safe, warm, and weatherproof. - We will risk assess presenting issues and identify those likely to close schools or reduce a school's capacity - We will risk assess issues including safety, fire and asbestos - We will accurately present the site constraints for any given solution and the costs
<p>Prioritise diversification/repurposing of existing school sites that directly reduce the need for external high-cost special school places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will use our strong relationships with partner schools and academies to develop our Stockport response to inclusion and SEND.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will deliver a blend of provision needed to meet children’s needs and predicted pupil forecasts - We will ensure robust training, support structures and SEND and inclusion experts to wrap around schools and localities to support inclusion - We will assess all school sites to identify and address physical accessibility - We will coproduce an agreed School Inclusion Strategy
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5.4 Where possible capital investment will be identified and prioritised on the basis that it meets more than one strategic focus. (See 6. Risk based Prioritisation for Investment).

OUR PROGRESS SO FAR

5.5 Since the revision of the School Investment Plan in 2023, the Council has been working with stakeholders across the sector, we have:

- Consulting on a supplementary planning document which will enable the Council to seek and secure developer contributions towards education infrastructure;
- Worked with school partners across the secondary school estate to negotiate and secure flexible places agreements which will ensure the Council has sufficient secondary school places over this challenging short-term period;
- As part of the flexible places agreement, investments are being made at those schools offering flexibility. This will ensure that as pupil numbers ease, we will emerge with a **better, not bigger** school estate;
- The Council has successfully negotiated that both Thorn Grove Primary School and Moorfield Primary School will have physical resource bases built as part of the school rebuilding programme.
- We have successfully negotiated subject to a Cabinet decision, the opening of two resources bases in Brinnington

6. RISK BASED PRIOTISATION FOR INVESTMENT

6.1 Stockport has competing priorities for investment which all relate to and impact upon school place sufficiency. Acknowledging the limited funding available, it is imperative that investment is aligned with our strategy and is targeted at key priorities.

6.2 Investment priorities have been identified and feature three key themes;

- **Condition**, ensuring schools are safe and accessible as well as maintaining physical capacity so that it remains operational and accessible.
- **Sufficiency**, ensuring there are sufficient school places to meet the needs of our all pupils and learners.
- **Education and Inclusion**, ensuring schools can deliver the national curriculum efficiently and effectively and ensure more complex or enhanced need can be effectively met.

6.3 The priorities are as follows:

1. Ensuring our school buildings are safe for staff and children (Estates sub-group)
2. Ensuring our physical capacity remains in adequate condition to ensure school places are accessible (Estates sub-group)
3. Resolving under/oversupply of school places (Sufficiency and Admissions sub-group)
4. Adapting our existing schools to aid operation and efficiency (Education Improvement and Inclusion sub-group)
5. Adapting our existing schools to meet local need (Education Improvement and Inclusion sub-group)

6.4 The priorities listed have been risk assessed based on a simple likelihood/impact based matrix (Appendix 1). The resultant score from comparing likelihood with impact is attributed to a school. School's whose context fits multiple priorities will receive higher compound scores, effectively highlighting the greatest risk, scope for economies of scale and possible value for money.

6.5 **Condition - Safe and operational buildings.**

6.6 Methodology to provide a condition rating is based on intensity (Impact) and urgency of need. Intensity is measured as value of surveyed condition need divided by the gross internal area of the school. Urgency (likelihood) is considered by only using surveyed need due within 5 years. Schools therefore have an objective RAG rating based on condition need due within 5 years divided by the area of the school. Schools with an intensity $>£500/m^2$ are rated RED; schools with an intensity of $£200 - £499/m^2$ are rated AMBER; schools with an intensity $<£199/m^2$ are GREEN.

6.7 **Sufficiency - Resolving under/over supply of places.**

6.8 Sufficiency has been risk scored using pupil projections. Timing and surplus places (a percentage of the admissions limit) have been used as parameters.

6.9 Sufficiency challenges in the next:

- 1-3 years are considered 'probable',
- 3-5 years 'possible' and
- 5+ years 'improbable'.

6.10 Surplus places in the range of:

- 0-2% are considered 'intolerable',
- 2-4% 'undesirable',
- 4-6% 'tolerable',
- 6-8% 'acceptable',
- 8-12% 'tolerable',
- 12%+ 'undesirable'

6.11 **Education and Inclusion - Operational efficiency and alignment of need.** For schools where data suggests that the building (condition or layout) creates a barrier to effectively delivering the national curriculum, inclusion, accessibility, and/or performance, officers will make judgment-based decisions on risk scores. The Ofsted inspection grade, % parental preference and proportion of SEND learners will also be considered for each school.

6.12 For each school, under each priority, they will be risk assessed and will receive a risk score. For planning areas that have identified need for more or fewer school places, all schools in that planning area will receive the same risk score. Each priority is weighted so that higher priorities score more. Schools where multiple priorities can be fulfilled will receive higher scores as a result of their compound score. Investment in schools with higher compound scores allows Stockport to seek better value for money and improved outcomes for its residents.

7. OUR PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT YEAR

7.1 The asset management plan (**Appendix 2**) should be read alongside this report and details the prioritised projects identified through risk analysis. These include:

- Condition projects at 13 schools totalling £5.134m
- Creation of new resource base places totalling £2.041m
- Provision for contingency funds for both condition need and SEND places totalling £1m

7.2 To deliver the asset management plan, officers will be seeking authority from Cabinet to procure the works and services, and subsequent contract award process.

7.3 Further to the above, officers will be seeking authority from Cabinet to enter into funding agreements and allow specified schools to draw basic need funds from the LA as part of negotiated flexible mainstream places sought to meet sufficiency needs. Allocations previously agreed by Cabinet in January 2023 are:

- St James' Catholic High School maximum £0.367m for 25 places
- Kingsway School maximum £1m for 75 places
- Priestnall School maximum £1m for 75 places

7.4 Finally officers will be seeking authority from Cabinet to reallocate the basic needs funds from Bramhall High School (as agreed by Cabinet in January 2023), as part of the flexible places negotiations. Bramhall High School can no longer fulfil their obligations (section 4.12). Officers require authority from Cabinet to negotiate new agreements totalling a maximum of £2m, to enter into funding

agreements with those schools and to allow those schools to draw basic need funds from the LA.

- 7.5 The use of basic need funding by schools as part of any flexible places negotiation will be on projects specified by the school. Those projects will be subject to scrutiny by the LA's engineers and must have approval by the LA's Capital Board. Officers will only then use the delegated authority from Cabinet to enter into funding agreements and allow the school to draw the funds.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Local authorities must plan for and secure sufficient schools for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.
- 8.2 Section 14 states that a Local Authority shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary education, and secondary education are available for their area. The schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.
- 8.3 'Appropriate education' means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 8.4 It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their local plan document. The local plan will include policies relating to the remodelling and expansion of existing education facilities, and developer contributions required to mitigate the impact of new developments, including in relation to local education provision.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1 This investment strategy seeks to consider and prioritise the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities and where possible provide suitable educational provision in their locality.
- 9.2 An equalities impact assessment has been completed (Appendix 3).

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 10.1 An environmental impact assessment has been completed (Appendix 4).

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 Stockport's physical and socioeconomic landscape is changing. Our local plan, robust intelligence and data can lead us to recommendations of investment

that consider sufficiency through the 3 key influencers that will help achieve our ambition of good and improving local schools.

- 11.2 Fundamentally we lack the funding we require to do everything we would aspire to do so therefore we must target our resources to ensure greatest benefits across the school estate delivering a better offer for local families and the local communities.
- 11.3 Increased focus on inclusion and SEND is required to ensure pupils thrive but within a sustainable public budget which has influenced the decisions to prioritise spend in areas of need and expand out differentiated learning offers in line with growing need.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Agree the terms outlined in the strategy and the associated investment detailed in the Education Asset Management Plan (Appendix 2).
- 12.2 Cabinet to delegate authority to the Director for Development and Regeneration to procure the works and services, and subsequently determine the outcome of any contract award process for any project specified in the asset management plan.
- 12.3 Cabinet to delegate authority to the Director for Education, Work, and Skills and Deputy Chief Executive to enter into funding agreements with schools and to release basic need funding to schools who are working with the LA to create additional mainstream or resource base places as specified in the 2023/24 asset management plan approved by Cabinet in January 2023 and the 2024/25 asset management plan in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 12.4 Cabinet to delegate authority to the Director of Education, Work, and Skills and Deputy Chief Executive to determine the allocation of up to £2m of basic need funds to schools who work with the LA to create additional mainstream or resource base places in the secondary phase.
- 12.5 Further to the above, Cabinet delegate authority to the Director for Education, Work, and Skills and Deputy Chief Executive to enter into funding agreements with schools determined in the above and to release basic need funding to those schools
- 12.6 Consultation to date
- Place planning board 22 January 2024
 - Capital Board 2 February 2024
 - Childrens SMT 5 February 2024
 - CLT 13 February 2024

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 – Risk based assessment model
- Appendix 2 – Education Asset Management Plan
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 – Environmental Impact Assessment

Anyone requiring further information should contact Christopher Harland on Tel: 0161 521 1707 or by email on christopher.harland@stockport.gov.uk