

ENTERPRISE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

1. Cabinet decisions since the last Executive Report to the County Council

- 1.1 There will have been 5 Cabinet meetings (29 March 2016, 18 April 2016, 16 May 2016, 20 June 2016 and 11 July 2016) since the last Executive Report to County Council. The items of business specifically attributed to this portfolio were:-

29 March 2016

Acquisition of land at Carpenders Park Farm for future Secondary provision

- 1.2 Cabinet agreed the acquisition of the freehold title of Lot 2, Carpenders Park Farm, Watford. This provides an opportunity to acquire a land holding in the open market which is strategically placed to the south east of Watford and could provide secondary school provision in the future for South West Hertfordshire. The costs of the land purchase will be met from the Children's Services 'Basic Needs' budget provided by the Education Funding Agency for the provision of additional school places.

18 April 2016

Secondary School Provision in Harpenden

- 1.3 The County Council has actively supported the Harpenden Secondary Education Trust in its application for a new secondary school in Harpenden and has acquired a site for it. The new school will be delivered by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The next stage in its delivery programme is to gain final capital approval for the cost of the scheme. The EFA has indicated that the estimated cost of this particular free school proposal is relatively high compared to other free school proposals and that it is concerned over its ability to gain capital approval for the project. It has, therefore, requested that the County Council makes an additional capital contribution towards the cost of the new school to facilitate the approval process.
- 1.4 Cabinet agreed that the County Council makes a contribution of capital towards the proposed new secondary school in Harpenden and authorised the Director of Resources in consultation with Executive Members to determine the size of contribution.

16 May 2016

Closure of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) bases at Barnwell School in Stevenage and at Frances Combe Academy in Watford

- 1.5 Cabinet authorised the publication of a statutory notice to close the SpLD bases at Barnwell School and Frances Coombe Academy as of 31 August 2016.

Additional Primary and Secondary School Places

- 1.6 Cabinet authorised the expansion of Leavesden Green Primary School from 1 to 2 forms of entry (f.e.) from September 2017 and the necessary capital costs to support enlargement.
- 1.7 Cabinet agreed the expansion of four secondary schools and the necessary supporting capital costs from September 2018. The schools are:

	Increase in admission numbers
Beaumont School, St Albans	30
Hitchin Boys School, Hitchin	45
Hitchin Girls School, Hitchin	45
Rickmansworth School, Rickmansworth	30

- 1.8 In addition, Cabinet approved a contribution towards the Broxbourne School rebuilding project and the application of £4.7m of section 106 contributions, subject to the completion of relevant school expansion and town planning statutory processes where necessary.

School Premises Space Standards Policy Revision

- 1.9 Cabinet approved a change in the current County Council policy concerning school space standards to follow the higher end of the internal and external ranges as set down in Building Bulletin 103 issued by the Department for Education.

20 June 2016

Additional School Places

- 1.10 Cabinet agreed to authorise the Director of Children's Services to enter into a funding agreement with Hertswood Academy in Borehamwood for an expansion by 1 form of entry from 2018/19 and to the cost of doing so; the cost of independent certification for all of the latest round of secondary expansions; and to the cost of land acquisition for the Herts & Essex school in Bishops Stortford.

2. Consequences of Cabinet decisions before the last meeting of the County Council on 17 May 2016

- 2.1 Nothing to report.

3. Anticipated/ future decisions to be made by Cabinet

11 July 2016

- 3.1 Cabinet will be asked to agree, in principle, to the County Council entering into land contracts to facilitate the limited immediate expansion of the Herts & Essex School and The Bishops Stortford High School (including that school's

relocation) and to the related improvement to Thorley Hill Primary school, all in Bishops Stortford.

- 3.2 It will also be asked to approve the serving of a notice to the developer of the High Leigh housing scheme to take up the option to acquire an additional piece of land to provide for a 2 form entry school. Finally, it will be asked to approve updated primary expansion costs and secondary expansions in Watford, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead, which completes the second programme of secondary expansions across the County.

4. Key Partnerships

4.1 Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

4.1.1 There have been two meetings of the LEP board since my last report

- In March, the Board met at VolkerWessels UK in Hoddesdon and learned about the work of this multinational integrated civil engineering and construction company which is leading a number of national infrastructure projects in the energy, rail, highways, waste and airport sectors. The LEP Board reviewed its Strategic Economic Plan and priorities for the future, and agreed to focus on fewer larger projects that would have real impact in terms jobs, housing and economic growth going forward.
- In June, the Board met at Airbus in Stevenage to see the exciting home of the MARS ROVER project and the proposed STEM centre aimed at inspiring a new generation of engineers. Mark Bretton has taken over from John Gourd as the new chair of the LEP. The main focus at this meeting was to agree the SLGF3 Bids that will be submitted to Government in July. The bids include proposals for the redevelopment of Stevenage Station as part of the regeneration of central Stevenage, infrastructure improvements to support the Enterprise Zone in Hemel Hempstead, transport and infrastructure studies to support growth along the A414 Corridor. Details of the bids were reported to Planning Panel on 30 June. Decisions on the bids are expected to be made in the Government's Autumn Statement.

4.1.2 Information about the LEP Board agenda and minutes are available on its website www.hertfordshirelep.com and the newsletter is circulated to all County Councillors.

4.2 London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC)

- 4.2.1 The LSCC Growth Commission will launch its final report at the House of Commons on 14 July. Full details are on www.lsccgrowthcommission.org.uk. The report will make a compelling case about the economic potential of the corridor and the future infrastructure and skills investment needed to unlock this growth.
- 4.2.2 In May the LSCC launched its prospectus for the 4 Lane Tracking of the West Anglia Main Line and Cross Rail 2 in the Corridor. Work is continuing on developing a detailed business case.

4.3 Visit Herts

- 4.3.1 Visit Herts, the Tourism / Destination Management Partnership for Hertfordshire launched its new brand and website on 10 June, and is continuing to attract new investor partners from both the private and public sectors.
- 4.3.2 The Partnership Group met on 17 June and agreed the Marketing Plan for the year ahead. Details can be found at <http://visitherts.co.uk>.

4.4 Broadband Superfast Extension Programme

- 4.4.1 With the successful conclusion of contract 1 in March 2016 (92% premises covered) the programme now continues with contract 2, which will seek to achieve 98% of premises covered in Herts by June 2018. As a result, BT Openreach has started a surveying initiative including some of the most rural and remote parts of the County. BT Openreach is also now starting to construct fibre cabinets in the designated areas such as Buntingford. The programme will look to make postcode level timescales available as the results of the surveys and subsequent works permit.

5 Other Comments

Educational Excellence Everywhere

- 5.1 In May, the Government announced a number of changes to the way in which it intended to implement the White Paper. It remains committed to every school becoming an academy over the next six years. However, measures will now target those schools where the need to move to academy status is most pressing. For high-performing schools in strong local authorities, the choice of whether to convert will remain the decision of individual schools and governing bodies. In addition, it announced a package of measures to guarantee the success of small rural schools.
- 5.2 The Government will bring forward legislation which will trigger conversion of all schools within a local authority in two specific circumstances
 - (1) Where it is clear that the local authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools because a critical mass of schools have converted.
 - (2) Where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools.
- 5.3 Prior to the further government announcement The Telegraph published a piece which highlighted the opportunity for strong councils to establish Multi-Academy Trusts, specifically highlighting Hertfordshire 'Government should be looking to build on the pioneering work done by councils such as Hertfordshire....'
- 5.4 Officers are now working closely with HfL and school representative groups to look at possible Multi-Academy Trust arrangements for the future. This has included an extensive range of briefings for Headteachers and Governors which have been very well received.

School Ofsted Inspections

- 5.5 We continue to see strong progress in the number of schools that are assessed as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The proportion of schools receiving such a judgement will exceed 91% before the end of this term, placing us significantly ahead of both national and statistical neighbour comparators.

School Places

- 5.6 15,695 applications were processed for reception places for Allocation Day this year, of which 96% were from Hertfordshire residents. Of the 16,853 applications processed for secondary transfer at Allocation Day, 78% were from Hertfordshire residents.
- 5.7 The satisfaction rate of Hertfordshire applicants gaining a place at one of their preferred schools at allocation day remained high with 95% in both processes. The below table shows the current number of non-ranked allocations following the continuing interest processes (with a comparison at the same time last year).

Primary and Secondary Admissions 2016/17 NRA Statistics as at CI1 and CI2	Allocation Day	CI1	CI2	Variation	CI2 2015/16
Primary*	588 (plus 216 unplaced)	487	454	-134	473
Secondary	641	429	337	-304	339

*108 of the 216 unplaced children were given an NRA at CI1 the remainder received a school of preference.

- 5.8 Given that there are 10,000 more children under the age of four in Hertfordshire today than a decade ago, this is a significant challenge. However, as Members are aware, we are committed to ensuring that where the County's population grows we build the appropriate infrastructure and have spent more than £180m since 2010 to provide more than 3,200 additional reception places. We are working alongside free schools and academies to attract extra funding for more school places where they are most needed.
- 5.9 An extra 270 reception places were added at the Continuing Interest stage with schools' across the County expanding to meet local demand. This strategy has been successfully employed in several previous years and ensures that the location of additional places matches as closely as possible with the areas of demand.

Other Meetings

- 5.10 I met with Luton Borough Council on 9 June to discuss its plans for its Enterprise Zone at Luton Airport, including the new mass passenger transit system that will connect the Parkway railway station direct to the airport terminal. Details can be found at www.llal.org.uk.
- 5.11 On 16 June I attended the Stevenage First Board – the partnership overseeing the regeneration of central Stevenage. The County Council has signed a

Memorandum of Understanding with Stevenage Borough Council, LEP and others to take forward the various projects including the redevelopment of the station and the first phase of the town centre.

- 5.12 Together with County Council School Place Planning and Property officers I attended a meeting with the Leader of Hertsmere Borough Council, planning portfolio holder and planning officers to discuss education provision in Borehamwood.
- 5.13 I have undertaken a number of visits to schools since the last Full Council Meeting. These include, a visit to Priory School in Hitchin to discuss future school place planning; Hitchin Girls School to meet to new Chair of HASSH; Hemel Hempstead School to consider future development and expansion plans; Presdales School to meet with Janine Robinson, Headteacher, who is retiring after 40 years of service in Hertfordshire; and the opening of the Ascot Road Community Free School in Watford.

6. Cabinet Panels

- 6.1 Since the last Executive Report to Council, the Enterprise, Education and Skills Cabinet Panel has met on 27 April 2016 and 29 June 2016. The matters discussed can be found at the following locations:

27 April 2016

<https://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/321/Committee/10/Default.aspx>

29 June 2016

<https://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/322/Committee/10/Default.aspx>

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