

## **Update on Primary, Secondary, and Post-16 Mainstream and SEND Sufficiency 2025-2030**

### **Key Messages**

Further to the paper that was presented to the June 2024 Education Funding Forum, members are asked to note the update as detailed in this paper and the attached Committee Report (Appendix 1) - that:

- There continues to be a citywide position of excess/surplus primary school places in Sheffield and this is forecast to remain the case for the next 5-7 years.
- There is a forecast citywide deficit in Y7 places in 2027/28. and a surplus position for secondary places is currently anticipated from the mid-2030s.
- Post-16 numbers are forecast to increase each year, reaching a 'peak' in 2028/29.
- There is continued growing demand for SEND places.

### **1. Introduction/background**

- 1.1. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient mainstream school places available in their area for every child of compulsory school age (the 'sufficiency duty'). This is set out under section 14 of the 1996 Education Act.
- 1.2. Local authorities also have a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient SEND places to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in their area (up to the age of 25 for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan).
- 1.3. Whilst the Local Authority has the statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places in the area, the Local Authority does not have the statutory power to compel schools in Academy Trusts to provide places. It is therefore imperative that we work in partnership and collaboratively with the sector to manage sufficiency pressures, this is the expectation set by the Department for Education.
- 1.4. The Local Authority has a duty to consider the organisation of school provision to create a sustainable network of schools, and in some circumstances rationalisation of provision can benefit other schools by reducing surplus places in an area so that the remaining schools can operate more efficiently with more certainty over their pupil numbers.

## **2. Progress to date**

2.1. Following the Secondary Partnership Group meeting in May 2024, the update to the Education Funding Forum in June 2024, and update to the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee in September 2024, work is now progressing to address sufficiency challenges in the city.

## **3. Committee Report – Appendix 1**

3.1. Appendix 1 – “Update on Primary, Secondary, and Post-16 Mainstream and SEND Sufficiency 2025-2030” is the committee report which was presented at the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee on 2 September 2024.

3.2. The report outlines the current position in the city and the overall approach to address sufficiency challenges and the different areas of activity taking place.

## **4. Primary Mainstream**

4.1. The recent data review shows there continues to be a citywide position of excess/surplus primary school places in Sheffield and this is forecast to remain the case for the next 5-7 years.

4.2. The citywide excess/surplus is due to falling rolls and ongoing low birth rates. Despite the citywide surplus, this has not been the trend in all primary schools and some pockets of primary place deficits are in the process of being addressed through permanent expansions.

4.3. We will continue to monitor areas where pockets of place shortfall/deficits exist. Intervention will only be considered where there is a shortage of places across a sub-planning area.

## **5. Secondary Mainstream and SEND**

5.1. There is a forecast 15 Forms of Entry (FE) citywide deficit in Y7 places in 2027/28. This pressure is across a number of planning areas: particularly 1, 3, 5 and 7. A surplus citywide secondary position is currently anticipated from the mid-2030s.

5.2. The Local Authority’s Education and Childcare Commissioning Team has developed a programme of work aimed at addressing the secondary and SEND challenges. As covered in briefings in 2023/24, the team are seeking to collaborate and work in partnership with the sector.

5.3. As a first step, the Local Authority has commissioned an external organisation, 1<sup>st</sup> Planner, to undertake a sufficiency review of the whole mainstream secondary and special school estates. 1<sup>st</sup> Planner has a track record of supporting local authorities, schools and academy trusts across the country with sufficiency pressures. The purpose of this activity is to ensure

we have an up-to-date understanding of the potential capacity and estate opportunities in the city.

5.4. 1<sup>st</sup> Planner has a mandate from the Education and Childcare Commissioning Team to undertake these reviews, and to work with schools and academy trusts to identify creative opportunities to increase sufficiency, for which there is capital investment available. We are asking for your engagement and support in this – there could be exciting opportunities that emerge from the reviews.

5.5. Due to the urgency of the pressures we are facing as a city, this activity is commencing ahead of planned briefings throughout the upcoming academic year.

## **6. Post-16 Mainstream**

6.1. For the post-16 sector, (Year 12 to 13) learner numbers are forecast to increase each year, reaching a 'peak' in 2028/29 where we forecast a Year 12 population of approximately 7,900 pupils.

6.2. We are already working closely with the sector to help support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and we are also liaising with post-16 providers need to do more to better understand the post-16 sufficiency position including ensuring we have sufficient data to enable more accurate forecasting.

6.3. We need to work collaboratively with the sector to ensure sufficiency of post-16 places across the city and consider the impact of planned housing on the likely demand for post-16 places.

## **7. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

7.1. Demand for specialist education provision continues to grow. The number of Education, Health and Care Plans have increased significantly and are forecast to increase further by 2029. The demand for special school places has also increased over recent years and is forecast to increase further by 2029.

7.2. To meet the rising demand for specialist education provision, we plan to focus on:

- a) Further increasing and developing provision in mainstream settings.
- b) Targeted growth within the specialist sector.
- c) Long-term strategic developments to provide high quality provision for future generations.

7.3. Key activity in relation to SEND includes working with the Inclusion Taskforce to develop a consistent continuum of provision across the city to support children with SEND from 0-25. This includes development of new provision

such as integrated resources, training activity and supporting school led provision.

7.4. Alongside this, we are working to increase specialist provision. This includes working with the Department for Education to open two new special schools, providing an additional 180 places for Sheffield.

7.5. Activity is also taking place to improve post-16 provision, including improvements to Sheaf Training Centre College and the development of a high needs provision at Peaks Campus with The Sheffield College.

7.6. This activity forms part of a wider transformation programme across SEND.

## **8. Recommendations**

Forum members are asked to note the update provided and support continued Forum engagement and involvement in addressing sufficiency issues including:

- Helping to identify creative opportunities to increase sufficiency in secondary, for which there is capital investment available.
- Working collaboratively with the Post-16 sector to ensure sufficiency across the city.