

Faversham Future Forum

8th August 2019

Introduction Faversham Education Needs Project

1. Introduction

1.1 With the recent change of administration at Swale BC there is a renewed risk of speculative development in the town over the next decade. The Forum has decided to champion the preparation of a **Neighbourhood Plan** and to inform that process undertake projects that will help identify and quantify the infrastructure that will be needed to ensure the town remains sustainable and retains its character as it grows. It is imperative that local people play an active part in working with planners, developers and policy makers to shape Faversham's future, ensuring all involved fully understand the infrastructure that will be needed. A Health and Social Care Project has begun this paper focuses on education needs projected to 2031 2019 and 2023 based on headline findings set out in the **County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent 2019 and 2023 (ECP)**.

2. Education Overview

2.2 Over the last 8 years countywide, 20,262 new primary school places have been created and 2,020 secondary places. These are expected to grow by 11,500 extra primary and 20,000 extra secondary places by 2022/2023. New housing is seen as the major driver for increases in school rolls going forward.

2.3 Latest forecasts suggest that across the county up to 45,000 new houses could be built. The scale of core education demand for more school places plus the increasing impact of new housing suggests it is likely that a large proportion of extra demand will be met with brand new schools.

3. Outline of Faversham Needs

3.1 For the first time planned housing numbers are being used as a driver for pupil forecasts and in Swale between 2016 and 2031 a total of almost 12,000 houses are projected to be built, just under 9% of a Kent total of 135,800. Although there is no guarantee that houses will be built at the forecast rate Kent CC plans to ensure sufficient new school infrastructure is in place to meet anticipated need.

3.2 **Swale BC's Local Plan** proposes a total of 13,192 new homes over the plan period to 2031; 776 per annum. In education terms Faversham is expected to have a declining primary place surplus through the life of Kent ECP. In the secondary sector a deficit of up to 261 non selective places is expected requiring permanent expansion of Abbey School from 2021/22 and an increase in need of Year 7 selective secondary places from 37 in 2019 to 133 in 2023. At this time Kent CC's preferred option is to build a satellite selective school on the coast.

3.3 County wide meeting the forecast need for secondary places is expected to have a major impact on the county capital funding programme.

4. Capital Funding

4.1 Currently the cost of a new secondary school is estimated at £20,000,000 and delivery is met by:

- **National government 'Basic Need Grant'**, an annual allowance based on a 3 year rolling programme. However, Basic Need Grant cannot be used to support new housing, developers are expected to fund new schools;
- **Developer Funding** comes through **Section 106** contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (**CIL**);
- **Kent CC Borrowing**, although developer contributions represent a major proportion of funds needed for new schools there is often a time lag between the need for the county to ensure school places are available in good time and receipt of developer contributions. The result is KCC is required to bridge the funding gap to provide new schools through borrowing. This is placing unsustainable pressure on KCC and the council has already raised its concerns with central government.

5. Implications for Faversham

5.1 The challenges for the town are to ensure there is a joined up approach across the main public agencies to assessing education need, understanding demands and delivering school places in good time. Ensuring sufficient developer contributions are made available from Section 106 and CIL contributions should be a priority. Currently Swale BC is not registered for CIL and this is a matter to address to maximise the funding benefits for the Faversham community.

6. Engaging with Practitioners

6.1 The principle of working with the FFF has been agreed with the two secondary school head teachers and a strategic contact at Kent CC is being contacted with the aim inviting the statutory provider and lead practitioners to a future FFF meeting to advise the Forum of specific concerns and opportunities to consider when meeting education needs.

7. Next Steps

- A meeting is planned with practitioners prior to attending a future FFF to clarify the key issues;
- Clarify Swale BC's future position regarding CIL registration to ensure that any funding following the adoption of a Faversham Neighbourhood Plan can be maximised to support future infrastructure provision.