

**CAPITAL WORK GROUP  
REPORT TO FORUM  
FOR PRESENTATION  
AT FORUM ON 12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**



**Date of Work Group meeting: Thursday 1 July 2021**

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

With the retirement of Anthony Watson, Local Authority lead officer, Peter Carroll, Head of Strategic Land & Property, attended the meeting with his colleague Phil Dawes.

**School Place Planning/Commissioning Update (Ann Pearson)** - The following points were noted:

Mainstream Provision

- Based on birth rate data, there will be sufficient primary places; the birth rate has levelled-off now, having risen for some time.
- Focus will now be on making places available based on new housing developments.
- For secondary, there has been significant growth at Arden, Tudor Grange and Alderbrook.
- Longevity has been built-in to plans, so secondary places will mainly be accommodated.
- There remains a shortage with Catholic school places, following planning permission being denied for St. Augustine's School to expand.

Specialist Provision

- Feedback on the draft SEND Commissioning Strategy, particularly the listed priorities, is required before September 2021 when the Strategy will be presented to Cabinet Member for approval.
- It is important that the data provided is tested in the real world.
- Progress is being made with out-of-Borough placements, although there's no "quick fix".
- The new Free School will come on stream within two years, together with the ARP at Mill Lodge, which will each greatly contribute to students being educated within the Borough.
- Good work is being done by mainstream schools in taking-on SEND pupils.
- Clair McNeill is in charge of the placement strategy for Early Years.

**Capital Programme Update (Peter Carroll, Phil Dawes)**

- A detailed strategic plan will be published in Autumn term 2021.
- The emphasis now is on a responsive approach; with the familiar Asset Management Plan becoming a strategic document. All Council properties will become centralised, and it is hoped that each one's needs will be clearly identified, as well as fully met.
- The new approach, the foundations for which owe much to Anthony Watson's work, is to be health and sustainability led.
- At the same time, the department is moving quickly to maintain existing projects, with Yorkswood now completed and work at Cheswick Green currently out to tender.
- The big challenges are the provision of Catholic places; budgets increasing through inflation and insufficient LA funds. Nevertheless, the department is keenly aware of their statutory duty to provide school places.
- Anthony Watson's sterling work was acknowledged and the Group's thanks passed to him in his retirement.
- The Chair will now work to develop the relationship with Peter Carroll's department.

Andrew Wilkins  
Capital Work Group  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2021