



Policy and Scrutiny

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10 January 2014
Subject:	School Sufficiency in Lincolnshire

Summary:

As a large rural county the pressures on school places in some of the urban areas are hidden by the surplus capacity across some of the more rural areas. This report compares the national picture against the local Lincolnshire picture when broken down to smaller geographic areas. This shows that there are local areas of pressures on primary places. This will eventually lead onto pressures on secondary places.

In September 2013 the national media reported on the pressures on primary school places across the country, stating that almost half of Local Authorities will have more primary pupils than places within two years. The report showed that Lincolnshire as a whole was not one of the areas to experience a shortfall (see figure 1 on page 3 of this report).

This report looks at the sufficiency of school places in Lincolnshire in more detail and then goes on to outline the process and criteria involved in addressing those pressures when deciding on how to increase capacity.

Actions Required:

To discuss the content of this report and make comments on the school place planning process for Lincolnshire.

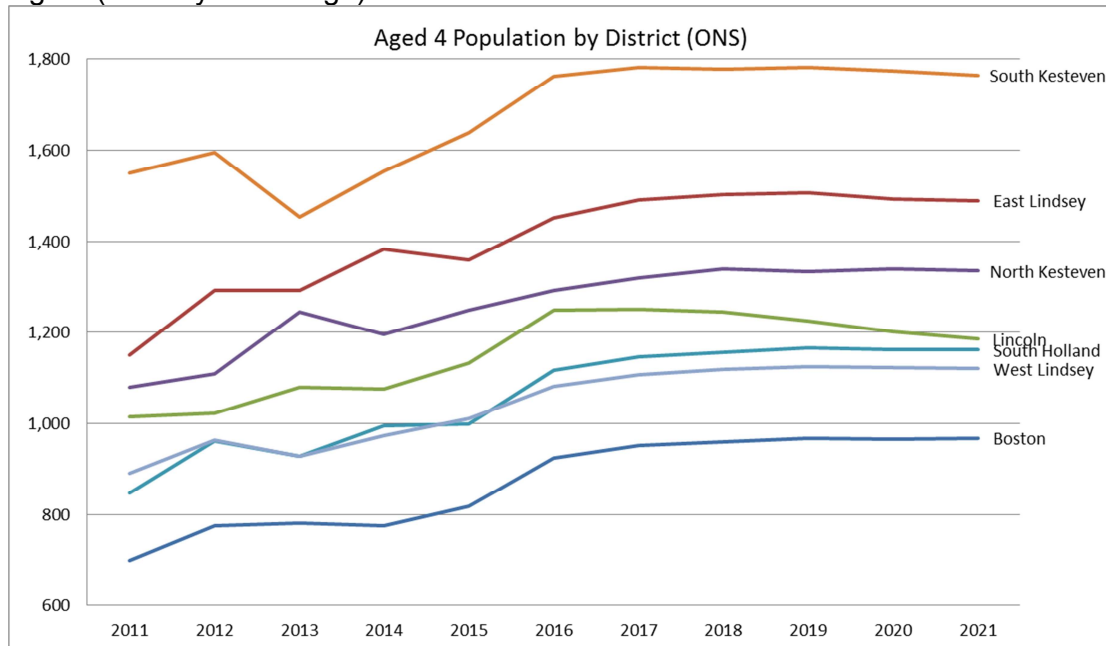
1. Background

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the children of Lincolnshire, whether in schools or academies. This includes the detailed analysis of pupil forecasting and consideration of options to address mid-year admissions pressures across the county as well as future pressures on Reception and Year 7 intakes.

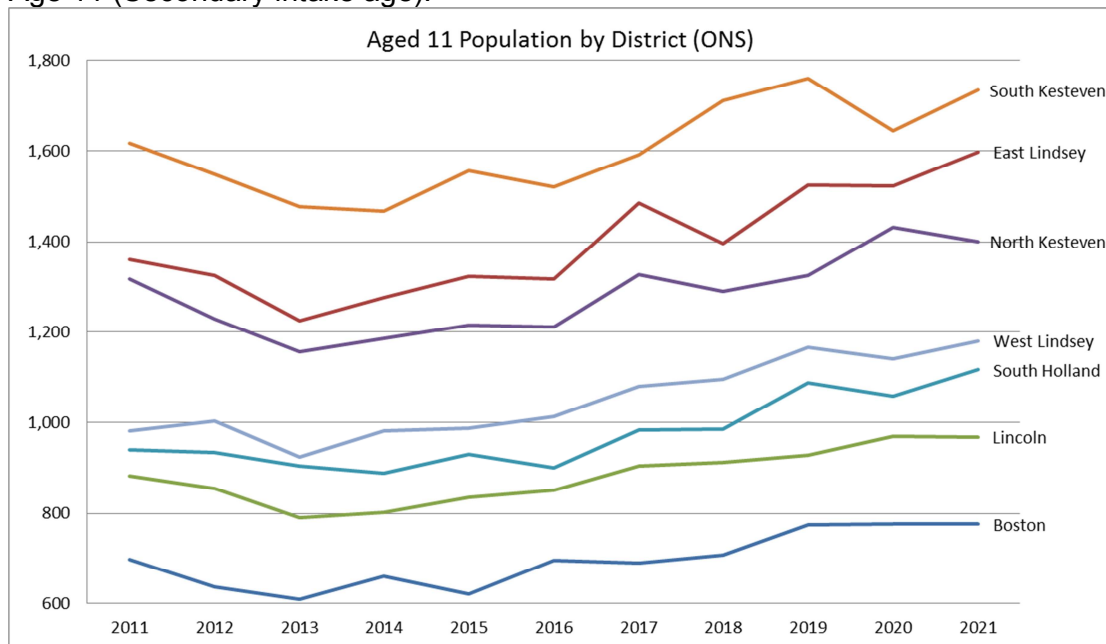
The following graphs show the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data for Lincolnshire by district for both Primary and Secondary intake ages (please note

that age is by calendar year for ONS data and not by academic year and this does not include the impact of large scale housing development):

Age 4 (Primary intake age):



Age 11 (Secondary intake age):



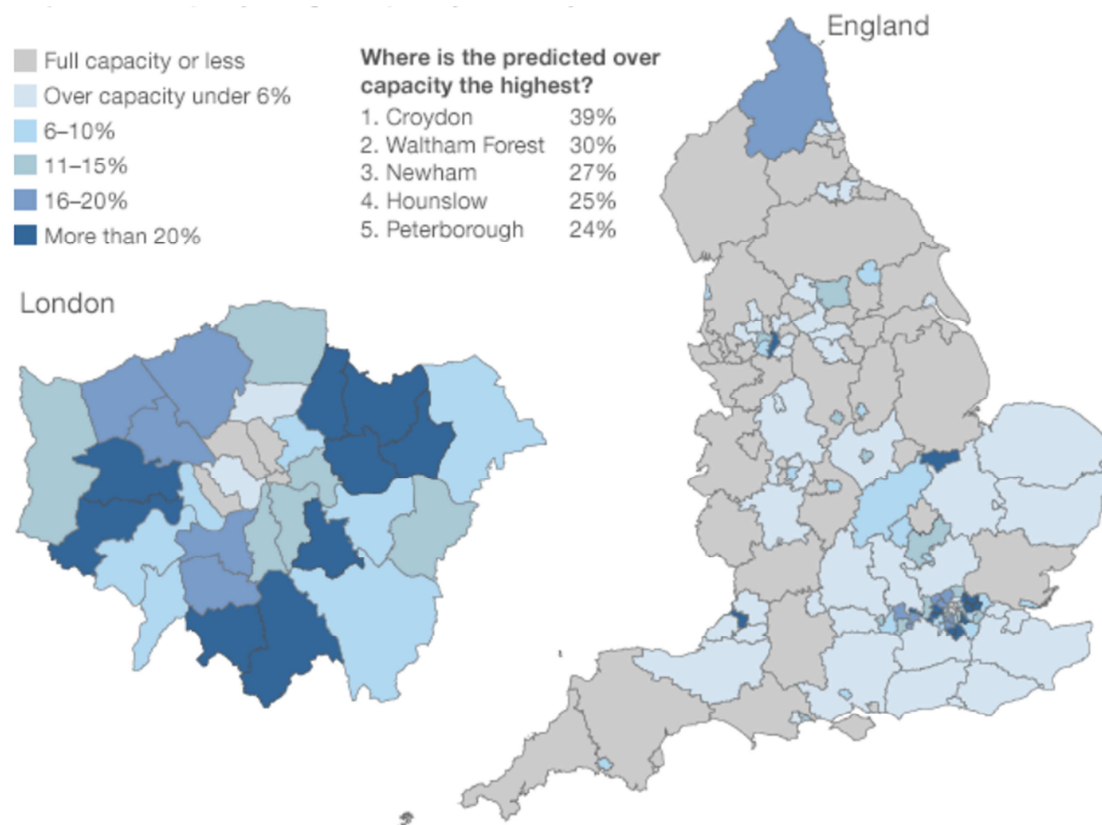
Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has an established and proven pupil forecasting model that informs pupil place planning by academic year. LA pupil projections take into account a number of quantitative sources such as NHS GP birth data, migrational trends and new housing development with planning permission. A range of other factors are then also considered alongside the data including the impact of potential future housing growth, MOD information, changes in parental preference, national projections and ONS population data as well as local knowledge from discussions with schools and other sources.

An annual submission of LA projections and capacity data is sent to the DfE at a planning area level via the SCAP (School Capacity) return for validation, prior to a formulaic allocation of basic need funding from central government. The data is also used by the LA to assess the sufficiency of school places across the county and prioritise basic need requirements against available capacity in schools and academies.

Figure 1. presents anticipated primary school pressures on a national scale which does not highlight Lincolnshire as an area of pressure due to the rural nature of the county. Figure 2 presents the SCAP projections data for Lincolnshire by planning area to show where there are anticipated pressures expected for the primary 2016 Reception intakes at a more local level.

Figure 1. Primary school places – National

Projected over capacity in England's primary schools by 2016-17 by LA

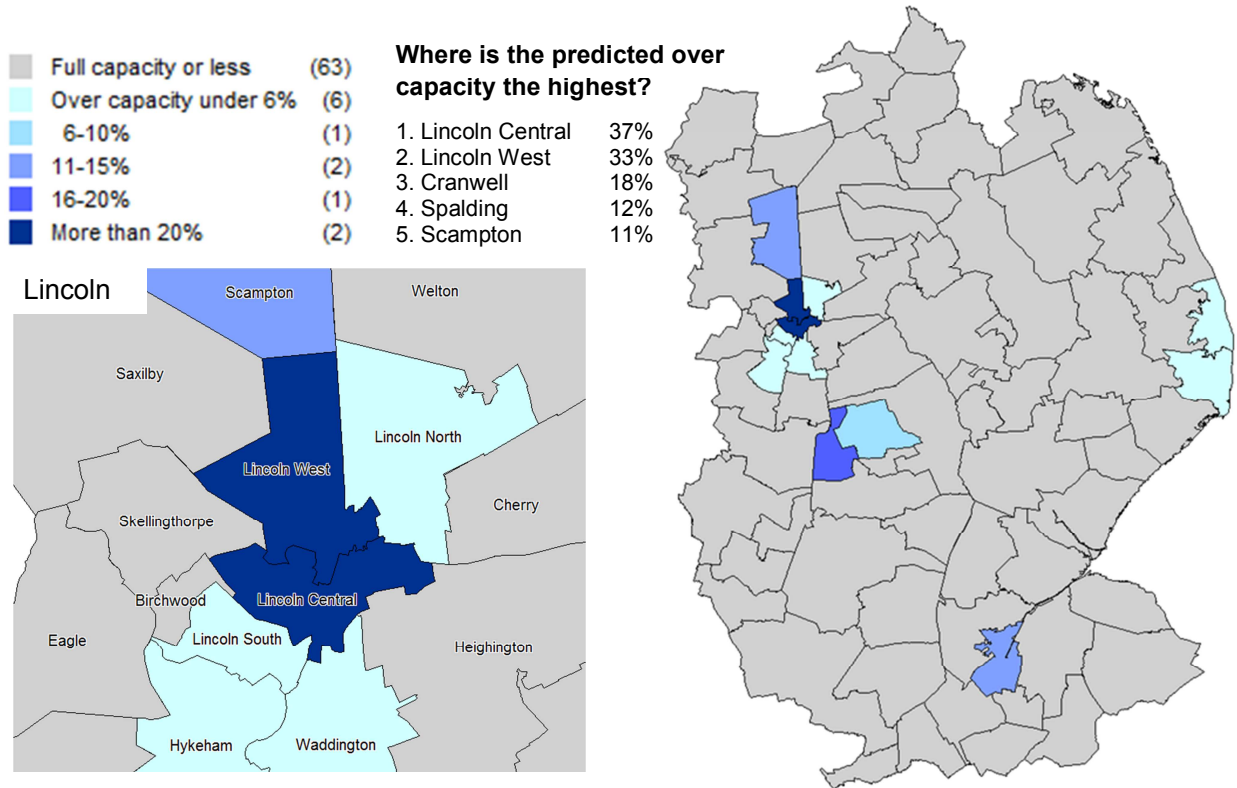


Source: LGA using official DFE data (2012-13)

Where the local pressures shown in Figure 2 were anticipated for 2014 and/or 2015 there are already plans in place to address the majority of those pressures through expanding existing schools, building new schools or supporting free schools where appropriate. Those projects are in the Children's Services Capital Programme for delivery. If the first time a projected pressure is shown is in 2016 then this will be closely monitored and reviewed the following year to gain a better understanding of whether it is likely to be a bulge or a more long term requirement.

Figure 2. Primary school places – Lincolnshire

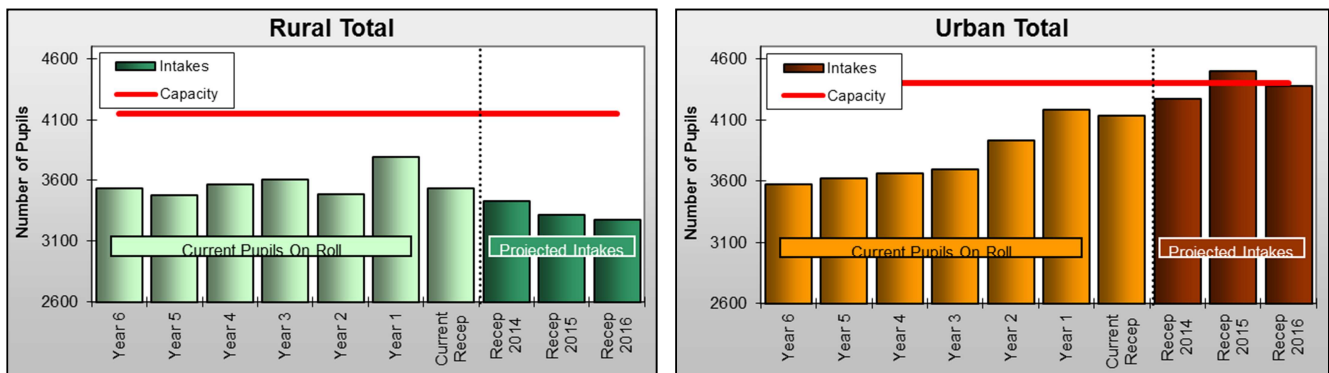
Projected over capacity in Lincolnshire's primary schools by 2016-17 by Planning Area



Source: LCC School Capacity Return to the DfE (2013)

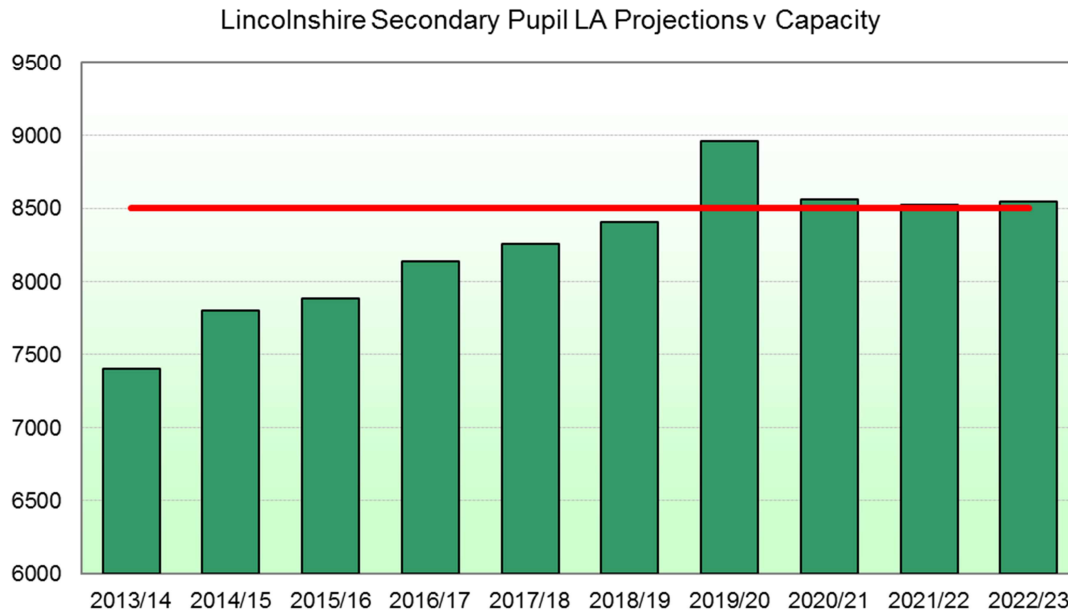
The graphs below show the difference in current and projected surplus capacity between rural and urban primary schools as a whole for Lincolnshire based on LA projections shown against available capacity:

Projected Lincolnshire Primary intakes v capacity:



Although the provision of secondary school places is not yet an issue, it is anticipated that the large cohorts from the primary sector will feed through to the secondary intakes in 2018, maybe slightly earlier in some areas, with 2019/20 expected to be the peak as shown by the following graph. This will be closely monitored over the next few years as basic need pressures for the secondary sector will have to be carefully planned for, subject to appropriate future funding allocations from the DfE.

Projected Secondary intakes (bars) v capacity (line):



Following detailed analysis of the available data, a range of options is considered to address the need for additional places within the identified planning areas.

It is often necessary for schools and academies to over-offer on their existing PAN to cope with bulge years and temporary spikes in demographic trends. Pressures in KS2 can often be managed by having class sizes of above 30 where absolutely necessary and manageable. For KS1 though Infant Class Size (ICS) regulations limit the options available. In many of these instances it can be possible to manage the situation within existing accommodation, sometimes with minor internal alterations to the buildings or small extensions or infills. These can often be cost effective capital solutions delivered through the capital programme. Sometimes there is a need for more major extensions and formal expansion proposals or even new schools.

If the LA has identified a need for additional places and requests that a school or academy take on extra pupils above their PAN, then additional revenue funded resources are often required. If the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding generated by the additional pupils is not enough to fund the required teaching staff and other resources required to put on an additional class then it is the LA's responsibility to fund any reasonable shortfall in funding. The revenue implications are also carefully considered when looking at expanding and over-offering as it impacts on the Dedicated Schools Grant (an element of which is the Growth Fund within DSG schools block). Small increases in PAN or additional bulge classes for only a small number of pupils should be avoided if possible as they are an inefficient use of resources. All other reasonable options are considered first.

All of the above is taken into consideration when determining the best possible solution to address identified pressures. The following list highlights some of the main factors considered equally when determining the best possible solution to address identified pressures, depending on the circumstances:

- Demographic profiling and data analysis of projections intelligence

- Site size and deliverability of a capital project (potential planning issues, avoid building on playing fields, access etc.)
- Site location in relation to demographic pressures and impact on transport costs, traffic implications and reasonable safe walking distances where possible
- Parental preference (this is considered as a short term variable as this can often change over time with changing leadership, governance and Ofsted ratings)
- Future housing growth and potential S106/CIL contributions to education
- Cost and affordability – efficient use of resources (capital and revenue)
- Potential impact on standards – Capacity, strength and quality of leadership and governance of existing schools in relation to being able to effectively implement an expansion proposal and manage the transition
- Potential impact on existing provision and the impact plans for academies and free schools in the area may have on the need for additional school places
- The opportunity to address future growth through intelligent investment of resources now so not to limit further expansions if required in subsequent years

Where the school place planning process has identified an area of the county with demographic pressures the LA must plan accordingly and deliver solutions through the Children's Services Capital Programme to ensure that sufficient school places are made available with the effective use of Basic Need funding. LA officers are encouraged to work with all potential and existing sponsors to address school place sufficiency needs. In determining the best potential solution to meet the needs of the local community both expansion and new school options may be considered depending on the circumstances.

The flow chart on page 8 gives an overview of the process that is followed from identifying the need for additional capacity through to deciding how those places will be provided and where.

An example of where this process has recently been applied is in North Hykeham, Lincoln.

The process is broken down as shown on the flow chart on page 8 through the following stages:

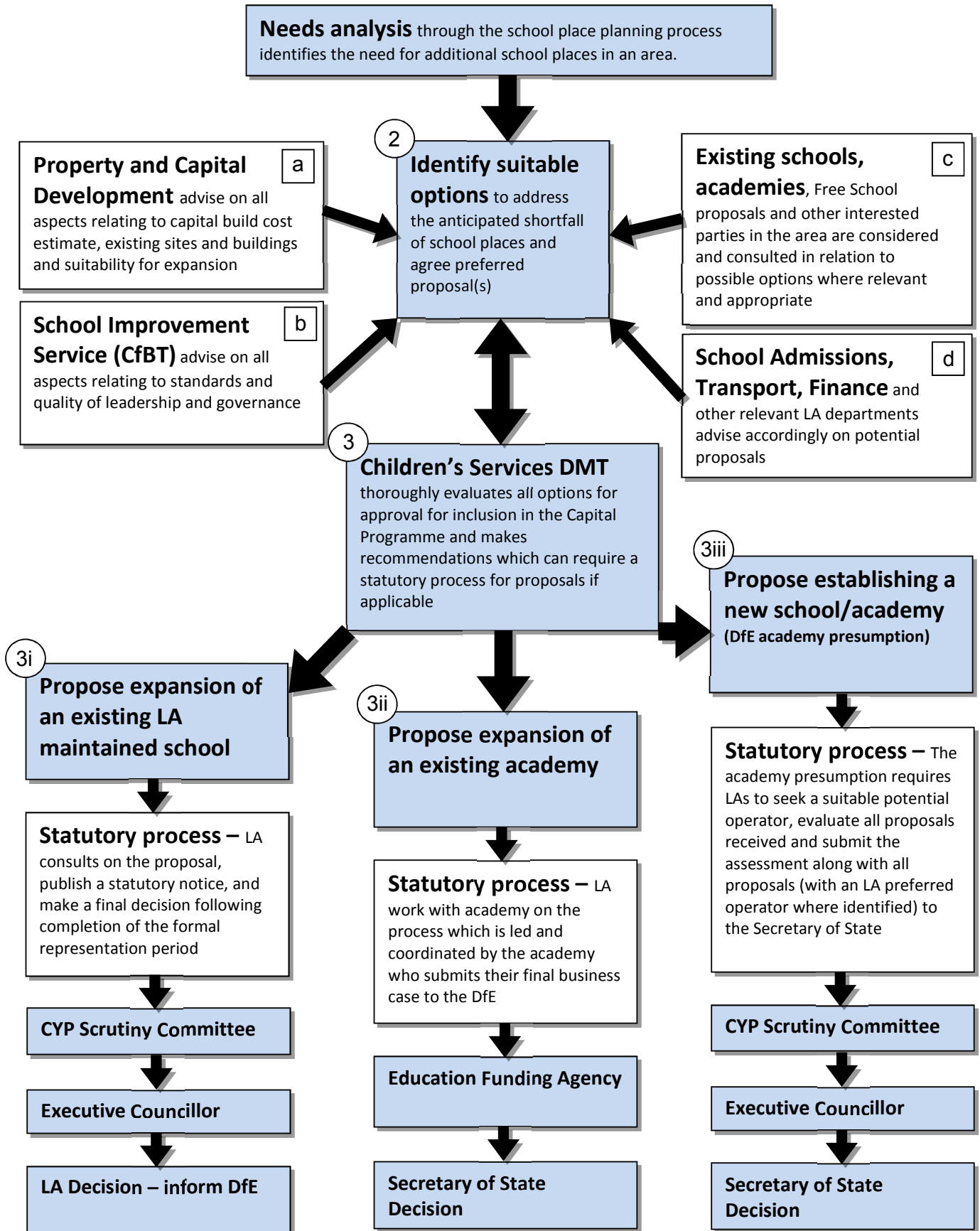
1. The school place planning process using the capacity and projections data highlights areas in the county where there is an anticipated pressure on school places. A detailed needs analysis identifies more specifically where in that area the pressure is, whether there is a long term requirement for additional capacity or a bulge year, and what are the causes e.g. due to new housing, increased birth rates, inward migration etc.
2. In order to identify the most appropriate solution (e.g. which school to expand or whether to propose a new one) a range of options are considered

and discussed with various services and interested parties including the following:

- a. Property and Capital Development – look at all available school/academy sites and buildings to determine estimated costs and achievability for expansion options and potential sites for new schools, including S106 if available. If required this also includes discussing options with Corporate Property, Highways and Planners.
 - b. The School Improvement Service advise on the current and anticipated position of the school regarding their capacity and quality in terms of leadership and standards and whether they are in a position to successfully manage the transition of an expansion without it having a negative impact on standards.
 - c. Depending on the circumstances, varying levels of consultation and discussion with existing schools and academies in the area take place to share data, ideas and explain the need for additional places and the possible options being considered.
 - d. A range of other LA and non-LA services and departments are contacted as appropriate for input into options being considered, including Transport (impact on transport budget, travel times etc.), Admissions (parental preference data), Birth to Five (pre-school sufficiency) and Finance (impact on revenue: school growth fund).
3. A report showing options and recommendations is taken to Children's Services DMT. Information from all of the above is taken into consideration in determining how the LA propose to provide additional school places through the Children's Services Capital Programme and the use of basic need funding. If there is a need for permanent additional capacity then one of the following three main options will be progressed:
- 3i. expansion of an existing maintained mainstream school (if more than 30 places and 25%)
 - 3ii. expansion of an existing Academy (if more than 30 places and 25%)
 - 3iii. establishment of a new Academy

For any of these options there is a prescribed route through which any proposal must be progressed, including any statutory requirements such as formal consultation. Following any such process, reports and recommendations are taken to CYPSC, Executive Councillor and Secretary of State as appropriate prior to a final decision.

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2. Conclusion

The national picture suggests that Lincolnshire does not have an issue regarding pressure on school places at a county level. However, at a more local level it is evident that there are pockets of primary pressure around the county, mostly concentrated around more urban areas.

The sufficiency of secondary places is not anticipated to become a pressure until 2018 for the majority of the county. This is to be monitored and planned for to ensure that required capacity is made available for when it is needed.

The pupil place planning process for Lincolnshire County Council ensures that the LA meets their statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

A wide range of factors are considered and options are looked at in detail and discussed and consulted on with local schools where appropriate.

Basic Need funding is carefully prioritised to ensure that resources are efficiently used to address all requirements within budget whilst meeting the needs of the local communities.

If a formal proposal to expand a school or build a new one is put forward then all necessary statutory processes are followed and final decisions taken to CYPSC prior to any Executive Councillor decisions.

3. Consultation

Not applicable

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable

4. Background Papers or Sources

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-23931974>

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Matt Clayton, who can be contacted on 01522 553535 or matthew.clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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