

## SUSTAINABILITY BASELINE REPORT – 2021/22 REFRESH

1. On 9 August 2021, Education Minister Michelle McIlveen made a written statement to the Assembly, setting out her area planning priorities for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Area Plan for the Education Sector in Northern Ireland. The statement is accessible at the following link:  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Written%20Ministerial%20Statement%20-%20Setting%20the%20Priorities%20for%20the%20Next%20Regi....pdf>
2. Referenced within that statement was analysis undertaken by the Department (the “Sustainability Baseline Report” - SBR) examining the impact of area planning activity since 2011. The analysis within the SBR informed the Minister’s thinking on area planning priorities and was published to the Department’s website on 4 August 2021 and is accessible at the following link:  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/sustainability-baseline-report>
3. In the context of plans for the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Area Plan (now referred to as the “Strategic Area Plan 2” – SAP2), the Minister called on the planning authorities and sectoral support bodies to take full cognisance of the SBR, to draw on the evidence presented within it and to examine their own further evidence base to plan provision under SAP2.
4. The Education Authority (EA), as lead area planning authority for provision of education services has carried forward that analysis and presented for consultation the draft SAP2. In line with a Ministerial decision, SAP2 will cover the 5-year period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2027 and will be underpinned by 2-year Operational Plans. The EA conducted a 12-week consultation on the draft SAP2 which it will publish in final format, supported by the 1st Operational Plan (OP1) for implementation from 1 September 2022.
5. OP1, which identifies the specific work-streams to be delivered in support of the Ministerial priorities, is underpinned by analysis additional to that set out in the SBR and prepared by the EA in collaboration with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the sectoral body representatives.
6. Referencing aspects of the Department’s own forward work programme and specific initiatives which were implemented to set the scene for the planning and delivery of SAP2, the SBR contains a commitment to re-examine and update the SBR in advance of the launch of the next Area Plan. This paper is the update to the SBR and has been prepared from the published 2021/22 school Census data. It should be read alongside the SBR.

7. **It is important to note that the presented analysis within this update paper (and within the SBR) does not take account of pupils with statements of Special Education Needs when examining the level of available places in the system.**
8. Article 18(1) (f) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 specifies that normal admissions arrangements do not apply in respect of children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). These children are therefore treated as supernumerary, meaning that a school may admit pupils up to its approved enrolment number and that some schools have significant numbers of statemented pupils.
9. It is the Department's understanding that in its analysis in support of SAP2 and OP1, the EA has counted children with statements. These respective accounting treatments will therefore result in some differences between the respective analyses. It is important to note however that in the exercise of its functions as they relate to the sustainability of any school, the analysis of available places presented to the Minister in respect of a published Development Proposal always examines the enrolment position both inclusive of and excluding children with statements.
10. The remaining structure of this update paper follows that which was adopted for the published SBR, with analysis at both Northern Ireland and Local Government District levels.