

Appendix A: Education Statement

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT EDUCATION STATEMENT

PART 1

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire is home to around 1.2 million people, with around 247,000 of those under the age of 16 years⁴¹. Hertfordshire's strategic plan 'Our Way Forward – Plan for Children and Young People 2021 – 2026' recognises the importance of children and young people accessing good school places, supporting their learning and development to help them to thrive.
- 1.2 There are a wide variety of communities across the county, from larger town and urban areas to smaller villages and rural settlements, served by a variety of mainstream, alternative provision (AP) and SEND⁴² primary, secondary and all-through schools. These schools vary in size and governance and include community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and foundation schools, as well as free schools and academies.
- 1.3 Hertfordshire County Council has a statutory responsibility for education. One of its key duties is to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of its residents, now and in the future. Good and sustainable growth means planning and shaping existing and new communities, with families wanting good, well-located schools as part of that. Our corporate plan recognises that our schools are a key part of what makes Hertfordshire an attractive place to live, helping our residents to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.
- 1.4 Getting that right means considering how sufficient future capacity could be secured, either through expansion or relocation of existing schools or by establishing brand new schools where these are needed. Securing land allocations for school sites is critical as, whilst new provision may not be required for some time, it will ensure that schools can be brought forward when and where needed in the future. We will continue to be flexible and responsive to local context; recognising that not every community and its needs will be the same.

School Provision in Hertfordshire

- 1.5 Hertfordshire experienced a significant rise in the demand for school places over the last decade. Since 2010, approximately 17,000 additional primary

⁴¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS)

⁴² Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

school places and over 16,500 additional secondary school places have been created in Hertfordshire⁴³, with further new provision planned to meet emerging demand in future years.

- 1.6 At a county level, pupil numbers have peaked in the primary phase with smaller cohorts now entering reception. Pupil projections indicate this trend may continue in coming years. As was the case with planning for increasing demand, the scale and impact of this decline in intake numbers will vary in different areas, while some parts of the county are seeing significant pressure on school places from families moving into Hertfordshire mid-year.
- 1.7 Demand for secondary school places remains strong, with secondary phase pupil numbers still increasing as the large cohorts previously seen in primary schools age through the system. Similar to the primary phase, some parts of the county are also seeing additional pressure on school places from families moving into Hertfordshire mid-year. In the medium term, pressure from the existing population may ease as the smaller primary cohorts now entering reception reach secondary school age.
- 1.8 This means that, whilst we continue to plan for growth relating to new homes in the medium term, we must also manage capacity at existing schools in the shorter-term to help ensure financial sustainability and maintain good educational standards. Schools with governance under the remit of bodies such as the Department for Education (DfE), may also be subject to school organisation proposals to manage changing demand. As a result, capacity or surpluses currently shown in short-term forecasts may not be available in the medium or longer term to meet demand from new development.

2.0 The role of Hertfordshire County Council in school place planning

- 2.1 Hertfordshire County Council is the local authority (LA) with statutory responsibility for education. The county council is subject to a number of statutory duties and responsibilities including:
 - Promoting high standards of education
 - Planning and commissioning school places in its local authority area
 - Extending diversity and choice
 - Co-ordinating admissions in the normal admissions round for all maintained and academy schools
 - Resourcing the shared maintenance, improvement to, and provision of, the built school environment, and securing value for money.
- 2.2 In coming to a view about the most appropriate education strategy in response to development growth proposals, the county council will look for a solution which takes into account all of the above elements. The county council has to apply judgement to often complex and challenging issues in fulfilling its statutory duties.

⁴³ Source: DfE Local Authority Scorecard 2021/22. Total places created between May 2010 and May 2022. Includes additional places planned to be added up to the 2024/25 academic year.

Planning and Commissioning School Places

- 2.3 The county council has a duty to secure sufficient school places in its area, ensuring that every child has access to a school place. The county council fulfils its planning responsibilities by:
- forecasting and analysing the demand for school places in order to identify an appropriate balance between short-term supply and demand
 - negotiating and commissioning the right number of places, within a diverse and varied education landscape including academies as well as other own admitting authority schools who are outside the LA's control
 - securing appropriate mitigation for new development, through planning obligations which may include both land and financial contributions
 - undertaking longer term strategic planning to ensure sufficient education infrastructure is identified within the local plan process to meet the long-term needs arising from proposed housing growth.

Short-Term Place Planning

- 2.4 The county council produces yearly pupil forecasts to help illustrate short-term Reception and Year 7 demand (as well as Year 5 and Year 9 demand in 'three-tier' areas). At the primary phase, the county council publishes forecasts four years ahead while secondary forecasts are published 10 years into the future.

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- 2.5 These forecasts are based on:
- pupil numbers in each school year group
 - 0-5 year olds registered with general practitioners
 - Intake and transition rates for pupils joining primary school, or primary pupils moving on to secondary school
 - the initial additional pupils arising from new housing developments
 - pupil movement patterns, taking account of cross-area flows between planning areas within Hertfordshire, other local authorities and other sectors (independent schools, alternate provision and SEND).
- 2.6 The forecasts take account of known development (those schemes with planning permission), plus an allowance for windfall based on the information provided by the relevant District or Borough Council. Forecast demand includes an allowance for the yield arising from new development *in the short term* and therefore the subsequent impact across the forecast period. The *full* and most significant impact of new developments will only occur outside the forecast period.
- 2.7 Emerging evidence from our Pupil Yield Study (PYS) indicates that peak demand at the primary phase occurs, on average, approximately 8 years from completion of the development, while peak demand at the secondary phase can occur 13 years or more from completion of the development. Even developments with very long trajectories (e.g. 10+ years) may see demand continue to grow following final completions.
- 2.8 More information on short-term demand is available on the Hertfordshire website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces

3.0 Town Planning – Strategic and Local Plan Approach

- 3.1 The county council uses a tiered approach to calculating the appropriate level of education provision it needs to plan to be able to deliver, to ensure it can meet the potential demand arising from emerging local plan housing allocations. This tiered approach is derived from and underpinned by observed yield data from new developments within Hertfordshire from our PYS⁴⁴.
- 3.2 A tiered approach to strategic planning allows a more nuanced development or settlement-based strategy, based on the form(s) of development likely to come forward in a specific area, while still providing sufficient comfort that the county council will be able to meet potential demand arising from emerging local plan housing allocations. The three broad tiers of development are as follows:

Tiered Approach to Education Planning		
Tier	Ratio	Description of development
1	1:400	Typically edge-of-settlement or other greenfield sites with a dominance of houses (e.g. 80%), a greater proportion of 3+ bed properties, and a greater proportion of detached or semi-detached houses, at lower densities.
2	1:500	Typically, Previously Developed Land (PDL) with a mix of houses and flats and higher density than Tier 1. Greater proportion of terraced houses, maisonettes or flats. More even split between smaller (1 & 2-bed) and larger (3-bed+) family homes.
3	1:1000	These sites are typically PDL with a dominance of 1 & 2 bed properties and are predominantly flatted developments with higher densities (e.g. 75+ dph) as a result. May form part of mixed-use schemes and/or be town center locations.

- 3.3 The planning ratio expresses the number of new dwellings in each category for which the county council would plan to be able to provide an additional form of entry; a tier 1 development site would, for example, be planned at a ratio of one form of entry⁴⁵ (FE) for every 400 dwellings. The tier ratios are normalised to forms of entry rather than a specific number of pupils and can therefore be applied to all school phases (primary and secondary, or first, middle and upper).

4.0 Creating Additional Capacity

Opening New Schools

⁴⁴ Further information about the PYS is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/growth

⁴⁵ School provision is often described in terms of 'forms of entry'. One form of entry (1FE) equals 30 places per year group.

- 5.1 The county council's role as a commissioner of places is such that where it considers there is a basic need for a new school it must:
- Seek proposals to establish an academy/free school; or (if unsuccessful)
 - Hold a statutory competition; or (if unsuccessful)
 - Publish its own proposals for a new maintained school.
- 4.1 The county council remains responsible for providing the school site and meeting all associated capital and pre/post-opening costs in instances where the new school provision is meeting basic need.
- 4.2 Where a Section 106 agreement provides the land and funding for a new school, the county council will usually procure the school building and then arrange any necessary leasehold transfer to the provider. The county council would only support developer delivered education infrastructure in lieu of contributions in exceptional circumstances. The county council remains the appropriate authority to assess the requirements for school place provision for any new housing developments, be a signatory to any S106 agreement and receive the appropriate contributions.

Expanding Existing Schools

- 4.3 There is a diverse range of schools within Hertfordshire, but the county council has the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places within its area irrespective of how education is provided. Hertfordshire County Council is only the admitting authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hertfordshire. All other schools (Academies, including Free Schools, Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools) are their own admitting authorities (OAA), determining their own admissions policies and over-subscription criteria.
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- 4.4 All admitting authorities' admissions rules and policies must abide by the School Admissions Code but the county council, in its role as commissioner of places rather than as provider, has no power to direct schools that are their own admitting authority to enlarge and provide additional places. OAA schools may also have admission criteria which mean that some or all of any additional places created would not be available to pupils arising from a particular development.

Size of Schools

- 4.5 The county council's preference is for primary schools of 2FE or more, as this larger size provides improved opportunities for delivery of a broad education curriculum and staff development, as well as offering the ability to optimise operational costs. All new primary schools are expected to include nursery classes of an equivalent size. A nursery class in a 2FE primary school would offer 30 full-time equivalent (FTE) places; 60 children in total, often split into 30 morning and 30 afternoon places.
- 4.6 At the secondary phase, the county council's preferred size for new secondary schools is between 6FE and 10FE. In Hertfordshire, the majority of secondary schools have sixth forms and new schools are expected to follow this model.

New secondary schools of 6-10FE (equating to approximately 1,150-1,920 places, including sixth form) offer improved opportunities for the delivery of a broad education curriculum as well as the provision of a viable sixth form.

External Play Areas

- 4.7 A school should have all of the facilities it requires, including playing fields, provided on a single site. The county council expects all new school sites to be compliant with its standards, taken from BB103 and BB104⁴⁶, including standards for all categories of external area. Further information on the county council's standards and the external layout of school sites is available by contacting: education.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- 4.8 Where there are no other deliverable options and a detached playing field (DPF) is required to provide part or all of the Soft outdoor PE area, careful consideration must be given to the availability and standard of offsite provision. Exclusive use of the facility for the school during specified hours is highly preferable due to safeguarding concerns, as well as maximising the quality of provision that can be offered in an already compromised situation. For a primary school, this facility should ideally be located within close proximity to the main school site and be appropriate to enable delivery of the PE curriculum. Detached playing fields will not be supported for SEND and alternative provision.
- 4.9 Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting school playing fields. It should be noted that, due to the practicalities associated with travelling to off-site locations for primary school children, the significant loss of curricular time, transport costs, child safeguarding issues etc, Sport England does not support the use of detached playing fields for meeting the needs of a primary school if they are not located in very close proximity to the school.
- 4.10 The current education land specification can be found in the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions, or by contacting: growth@hertfordshire.gov.uk

1.1 ⁴⁶ Building Bulletin 103: Area guidance for mainstream schools and Building Bulletin 104: Area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision.

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Part 2

5.0 St Albans Education Strategy

- 5.1 The following section provides a high-level overview of the level of new provision which would need to be planned for in response to the emerging growth scenario in the St Albans City & District Council Local Plan consultation.

Baseline Demand

- 5.2 The current level of deficit or surplus in mainstream schools across the larger settlements in the district is shown in Table 1 and 2 below. Pupil numbers are dynamic and can change throughout the year, as families move into or out of the area or otherwise seek alternative school provision, but these tables provide a reasonable snapshot of the current⁴⁷ position.

Table 1: Primary Phase Deficit/Surplus

Settlement	Year Group						
	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
St Albans City	11.32%	10.97%	5.49%	4.59%	2.85%	3.04%	4.44%
Harpenden	8.42%	2.05%	1.85%	-1.02%	1.83%	-0.20%	-2.04%
London Colney	20.00%	17.50%	8.33%	19.17%	23.33%	20.83%	6.67%
Redbourn	1.67%	1.67%	10.00%	5.00%	15.00%	1.67%	3.33%

Table 2: Secondary Phase Deficit/Surplus

Settlement	Year Group				
	7	8	9	10	11
St Albans	0.93%	1.07%	0.00%	-0.29%	3.14%
Harpenden	-0.24%	0.27%	1.20%	2.39%	0.48%

- 5.3 The county council will, where practicable, plan for a small surplus across an area; typically, no more than 5-10% in an urban area. This supports parental preference and allows for short-term fluctuations in demand and the efficient operation of the in-year admissions process.

⁴⁷ Snapshot based on spring census 2023 data and admission capacity.

- 5.4 Consistently large surpluses can prejudice a schools' financial sustainability and make maintaining good educational standards challenging. The tables above are RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated accordingly with the following key.

Table 3: Surplus/Deficit RAG Rating

Band	RAG
<0%	Red
0-4.99%	Amber
5-10%	Green
>10-14.99%	Amber
>15%	Red

St Albans City and Surrounding Settlements

- 5.5 The draft plan makes provision for over 5,500 new homes, including existing commitments, across the wider St Albans area (the city and surrounding settlements such as London Colney). Using the tiered strategic planning approach, this equates to planning to be able to accommodate approximately 13FE of demand.
- 5.6 At the primary phase, new school sites are supported at St Albans North (2FE), St Albans East (2FE) to ensure demand from new development can be met as locally as possible. A further site at the former Ariston works (2FE) means that up to 6FE of new provision can be delivered through new schools. The balance of potential future demand would be expected to be met through current and projected capacity within existing schools (for example through school expansion), particularly in the smaller settlements surrounding of the city.
- 5.7 At the secondary phase, the inclusion of two new secondary school sites (East St Albans and London Colney) is supported; they would be able to provide up to 16FE of new provision as necessary to meet future demand.

Harpenden and Surrounding Settlements

- 5.8 The draft plan makes provision for approximately 3,000 new homes across the greater Harpenden area (including Redbourn and Wheathampstead), which equates to planning to be able to accommodate approximately 7FE of demand, using our tiered strategic planning approach.
- 5.9 At the primary phase, new school sites at North-West Harpenden (2FE) and West of Redbourn (2FE) will help ensure demand from new large developments in those localities can be met as locally as possible. The balance of potential future demand would be expected to be met through current and projected capacity within existing schools (for example through school expansion).
- 5.10 At the secondary phase, future demand is assumed to be able to be met within existing schools, including through expansion and projected capacity for

local children as smaller cohorts currently entering primary school age through into the secondary phase.

Hemel Garden Communities

- 5.11 The draft plan makes provision for 5,500 new homes within the section of Hemel Garden Community (HGC) which falls within SACDC, some of which will be delivered beyond the plan period. This equates to planning to be able to accommodate around 12FE of demand, depending on the type of development which comes forward as the scheme develops.
- 5.12 At the primary phase, primary school sites at Hemel Hempstead North (3FE), East Hemel Hempstead (North) (3FE) and East Hemel Hempstead (South) (totalling 4FE) are supported and will allow up to 10FE of new provision to be delivered as necessary. There may be scope to accommodate initial and any balance of future demand in existing schools within Hemel Hempstead town, where those schools are in close proximity to the new development sites.
- 5.13 At the secondary phase, two new school sites are required to ensure potential demand arising from these development sites, and the wider Hemel Hempstead and Hemel Garden Community areas, can be accommodated. Secondary school provision is a strategic matter which often extends beyond the boundaries of individual sites or districts. The county council must undertake assessments, and make spatial judgements including consideration of the levels of growth proposed in adjacent settlements/districts, when securing land allocations for secondary school provision. The most recent Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) local plan consultation set out proposals for significant growth across the settlement of Hemel Hempstead, including the Garden Community. Wider growth proposals result in a more than 20FE of further demand which the county council must plan to be able to accommodate.
- 5.14 One new secondary school site within East Hemel Hempstead (North) will allow up to 8FE of new provision to be delivered. The allocation of a second secondary school site adjacent to the East Hemel Hempstead (South) broad location, capable of accommodating up to 10FE. Both of these allocations for the provision of secondary school places are supported. While one of these sites the site falls outside of, but adjacent to, the HGC boundary, it is included in this section for simplicity. These two sites could contribute up to 18FE of additional secondary provision to ensure potential future demand could be met. As discussed above, based on the latest growth scenario included in a DBC local plan consultation, the County Council will pursue the allocation of two additional secondary school sites within Dacorum to mitigate demand arising from development.