Nottinghamshire County Council

16/0374/NT Proposed Housing Development on land to the South of Stonebridge Lane, Warsop.

Planning to meet increasing demand for school places – the context

The Education Act 1996 dictates that Nottinghamshire County Council has a duty to secure school places for all children of statutory school age who are resident in the county and whose parents want them to be educated in a Nottinghamshire state-funded school. Subsequent Education Acts have built upon this but the obligation placed on local authorities has not changed.

Funding for the provision of additional school places is derived from two sources:

1. An allocation from DfE (Education Funding Agency) to meet demand from the families occupying existing housing stock. Increasing demand on places in this case is a direct result of either rising birth rates or a net inward migration.
2. Developer education contributions which are required to mitigate the impact of new housing developments on infrastructure.

Forecasting the demand for school places – the methodology

The methodology employed by the County Council for forecasting pupil numbers is the same as that used by most other local authorities.

The County Council groups primary schools across the county into 'primary planning areas'.

Population profile data is aggregated to postcode and age group, which enables the numbers of children in each cohort to be mapped against school catchment areas. In turn, this data is aggregated to the primary planning areas. This provides the number of young people living in each planning area organised by National Curriculum Year.

The statutory school census data for an individual school for each of the past 3 years is compared to the corresponding population profile data for the planning area the school is in. This results in a 3 year period percentage intake from the planning area. These 3 percentages are averaged; however, the average is weighted towards the more recent census year.

This percentage is then applied to the appropriate population profile data for the next 5 years to create a first admission and infant to junior prediction for the following 5 years.

There is always a degree of movement into and out of schools throughout the year and this is calculated to produce a 'cohort flux' – for example, losses or gains between one school year and the next. The average cohort flux for each year group over the past 3 years is calculated for the school which is then applied to each cohort projection to predict numbers for the following year.

The same methodology is employed to forecast the demand for secondary school places.

Demographic changes

In line with the underlying national trend, Nottinghamshire has seen an increase in birth rates across the county since 2007. This is reflected in the overall school population but is particularly well illustrated in the numbers of primary age children (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Total number on roll in mainstream primary schools

The total primary number on roll (NOR) had seen a steady decline in numbers between 2001 and 2010 but subsequent years have seen a sharp increase in total numbers to the school year 2015/16.

The numbers of 4 year olds entering the school system show a sharper increase (Figure 2). Across the whole of the county, the number of 4 year olds began to increase around 2006.

Figure 2 - Total number of children in mainstream schools - reception year

Given the falling rolls of previous years, this sharp increase in numbers of 4 year olds did not impact on the county's overall ability to provide pupil places where they were needed. However, as smaller cohorts of older children are replaced by larger cohorts of young children, pressure on places inevitably increases. Figure 3 shows the cohort profile across the whole county in January 2016.

Figure 3 – January 2016 size of cohorts in mainstream schools – Reception to Year 6 – whole county

Meeting expected demand resulting from proposed housing developments

The County Council's consideration of whether or not developer contributions towards education provision are required will be informed by the projected demand for places compared with the known capacity figures. *Seemingly 'spare' capacity at a school does not necessarily equate to there being sufficient capacity at that school as it is a DfE expectation that schools should not operate at more than 90-95% of their capacity and NCC officers consider recent trends in in-year applications to ensure that a school is able, wherever possible, to accommodate the normal movement of families around the area. This does NOT include new families moving into an area as a result of them occupying newly built houses*.

The projected demand for places, taking into account the proposed development, are calculated during the planning application process using the formulae described in the County's planning obligations strategy. This, in turn, is translated into a funding requirement which is again detailed in the strategy as a per pupil place cost. Any costs to be paid to the County Council will be index linked through the Section 106 agreement.

Where a new development is proposed in an area with sufficient projected capacity, no financial contribution will be required; however, where the proposed development would result in insufficient projected capacity, a contribution will be required. There may be a requirement, in some cases, for the provision of a completely new school. This is likely to be the case if the proposed development is in an area where all schools have already been expanded to reach their site capacity, or where the development is large enough to sustain its own school. Where a new school is required, the base level of contribution required will be an appropriate area of land for the required size of school plus the cost of building the school.

If there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the increase in pupils likely to be generated by a development and the development itself cannot enable the necessary provision the County Council will raise objections to the development.

Analysis of the impact of application 16/0374/ST – Residential Development on land south of Stonebridge Lane Warsop - on the education infrastructure which will serve the development

The proposed development is situated within the primary catchment area of Birklands Primary School and the secondary catchment area of The Meden School. Although there is no guarantee that all families in the proposed new housing would apply for places in schools in this area, it is very likely that this will be the case, especially if families are unable to travel far to a school. The mitigation required is based upon this assumption but this is moderated by an analysis of the availability of places at all schools within a reasonable distance of the development.

The charts below illustrate:

- the projected total demand for places in the school
- the first admissions places allocated
- the projected demand for places in each cohort for the next 5 years

The total projected demand for places typically masks the pressure on first admissions places in the school resulting from the increased birth rates in recent years.

Birklands Primary School

		Projected demand for places - Birklands Primary									
		Year group							Totals		
		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	KS1	KS2	Total
	Jan 2016 actuals	29	24	17	16	27	21	17	70	81	151
Projections	2015/16	22	19	22	20	29	27	21	63	97	160
	2016/17	21	24	25	17	15	27	22	70	81	151
	2017/18	25	22	25	25	16	15	28	72	84	156
	2018/19	20	25	22	24	23	15	15	67	77	144
	2019/20	22	20	25	21	22	22	15	67	80	147
	2020/21	22	22	20	24	19	21	22	64	86	150

In the above table, any red shaded cells illustrate the cohorts which are projected to exceed the Published Admission Number (PAN) for that year and any yellow shaded cells in the right column show where the projected TOTAL demand for places exceeds the total capacity of the school.

An analysis of the school building and the above data suggests that the school could accommodate the additional 84 pupils without additional classrooms being built. However, in order to comply with infant class size legislation, whereby children of key stage 1 age cannot be accommodated in classes of more than 30, it will be necessary to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) by 5 in each year group. This will allow the school to manage class sizes appropriately and will provide the greatest opportunity for the families in the development to be successful in being offered a place at their local school.

A modest increase of this nature would normally require 10.5 standard size classrooms. The school currently operates 8 classrooms but does have a number of other rooms which it currently uses as a library, ICT suite and other resource room.

As the school is an academy, any section 106 contributions would be 'passported' to the academy trust for them to make arrangements to accept the additional pupils. This is likely to require funding to convert and re-equip 2/3 classrooms, depending on the feasibility of such a scheme.

If the education contribution is based upon the established formula, it would total £962,220 but, in recognition of the fact that new build classrooms are not an option on this site, and that there are internal spaces that could be remodelled, the reduced education contributions of £400,925 is requested. This is calculated by taking the additional 5 additional places per cohort (35 in total) and applying the cost multiplier of £11,455 per pupil place. This reduced amount should be sufficient to allow the school to re-model, refurbish and re-equip with the necessary teaching and learning resources associated with the redesignation of existing rooms for classroom use.

Secondary

The proposed housing development is in the catchment of The Meden School. Based on current projections, the additional secondary places can be accommodated in the existing catchment school.

Conclusion

Nottinghamshire County Council therefore request primary education contributions from any proposed housing development on land south of Stonebridge Lane, Warsop.

We wish to seek an education contribution of £400,925 (35 x £11,455) to provide primary provision to accommodate the additional pupils projected to arise from the proposed development.

The information above is given on the understanding that it is based on the best information available to Nottinghamshire County Council at the time. District Council colleagues are advised to contact the County Council again in the future if they require a 'project' to be named. None of the information above should be used to denote a project.

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