Nottinghamshire County Council

16/00467/FUL Proposed Housing Development on land at St John's College, Bramcote

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.

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 2014/15.

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 2015.

Figure 3 – January 2015 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 16/00467/FUL – Residential Development on land at St Johns College Bramcote - on the education infrastructure which will serve the development

The proposed development is situated within the primary catchment area of Beeston Fields Primary School and the secondary catchment area of The White Hills Park Academy Federation (Although there is no guarantee that all families in the proposed new housing would apply for places in these schools, 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 at each 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.

Beeston Fields Primary School

		Projected demand for places - Beeston Fields Primary and Nursery School									
		Year group							Totals		
		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	KS1	KS2	Total
	Jan 2016 actuals	49	50	46	49	43	44	39	145	175	320
Projections	2015/16	54	51	48	43	45	47	35	153	170	323
	2016/17	56	55	53	47	49	41	40	164	177	341
	2017/18	57	56	56	54	47	47	37	169	185	354
	2018/19	49	57	57	57	54	45	43	163	199	362
	2019/20	53	49	58	58	57	52	41	160	208	368
	2020/21	53	53	50	59	58	55	48	156	220	376

KS1 yr group size	50	KS2 yr group size	50

In the above tables, the 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.

The above data clearly illustrates the pressure on school places at Beeston Fields Primary School. There is no capacity to accept more children.

Secondary

The proposed housing development is in the catchment of The White Hills Park Academy Federation. Based on current projections, any additional secondary places can be accommodated in the existing catchment secondary school

Conclusion

Nottinghamshire County Council therefore have no alternative but to request primary education contributions from any proposed housing development on land at St John's College, Bramcote.

A proposed development of 40 dwellings would yield an additional 8 primary places.

We would therefore wish to seek an education contribution of £91,640 (8 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.