

The council role in school place planning

Making sure there are enough school places locally



Foreword



Councillor David Simmonds

Chairman, LGA Children and Young People Board

A debate has been raging for many years about the role that councils should play in education. They retain a very wide range of legal duties to promote high educational standards locally, ensure fair access to schools, and protect the interest of the most vulnerable pupils.

What is not in dispute is the unique responsibility that councils have in making sure there are enough school places available to local children and young people. No other local or national body shares with them the duty “to secure sufficient primary and secondary schools”¹, although they increasingly have to work with schools and other partners to deliver the places needed.

There is no dispute, either, that councils are facing an enormous challenge in responding to the recent surge in demand for school places. The Department for Education (DfE) estimates that 417,000 additional places will be needed over the lifetime of the current Parliament (2010 – 2015), with the surge in primary places beginning to move through to secondary schools over the lifetime of the next Parliament.

The case studies

The case studies in this report clearly demonstrate that councils have risen to this challenge by providing the new places needed on time and with limited capital resources.

As you might expect, the story is different in every area, with each council facing its own unique set of challenges, including having to build a school around a protected tree in **Bournemouth** and the high costs of dealing with former mine shafts under potential school sites in **Derbyshire**.

Collaborative working is a strong theme throughout – **Devon** is working with its schools and district councils through a series of area-based reviews and **Solihull** with a high-performing academy to access funds for an £8 million rebuilding and expansion project. Many councils have adopted innovative solutions to make the most of available space, including a playground on a roof in **Waltham Forest** and a ‘shared form of entry’ system in three Catholic primaries in the **London Borough of Richmond**.

¹ Education Act 1996 Section 14(1)

The capital squeeze

The squeeze on capital funding is clear, with many councils reporting a significant shortfall in the 'basic needs' capital funding provided to councils by DfE for new school places. **Reading** has borrowed £34.5 million to make sure their children have places in permanent school buildings. **Essex** has had to supplement its basic needs grant from its own resources to the tune of £38.7 million. And **East Sussex** reports that basic needs funding only covers 40 per cent of the places needed in its area.

Where new places are needed because of housing growth, it is expected that a contribution to the capital costs will be made by developers. **North Yorkshire** reports difficulties in negotiating contributions from developers in the current financial climate. **Hampshire** is concerned that the introduction of the new community infrastructure levy (CIL) will reduce developer contributions.

Planning for all eventualities

Not all the case studies tell the 'standard' story of strong increases in demand for places for the youngest children which then move through the school system. **Wirral** has a stable population; but because demand varies across its area over time it had to close 10 schools and open two new ones. In **Birmingham**, net migration into the city means the council has to prepare for a primary cohort that could be 25-50 forms of entry larger by Year 6 than it was at reception.

Planning is not just about providing the physical space and equipment needed, but also needs to take account of the challenges that a new cohort of pupils can bring. In **Peterborough**, significant inward migration meant that 92 per cent of the pupils in a 3 per cent increase in the school population between October 2012 and 2013 had English as a second language.

And large volumes of in-year movement in **Sheffield** meant that in one school 24 children joined and 25 left between September and November 2013. This meant significant additional pressures on all the schools involved to manage transitions and deal with the educational effects on pupils of changing schools.

The difficulties that some free school projects have caused is a significant theme. **Oxfordshire** has a proactive approach to free schools, but reports a mixed experience, with one free school delivering excess capacity in the wrong area and others undermining existing plans to find academy providers for new schools.

In **Sandwell** a free school project was abandoned and the council had to create places at short notice. **Brighton and Hove's** two free schools sit on the edge of the city in temporary sites one of them owned by a sponsored academy, because the Education Funding Agency has not been able to find sites in the city centre, where the places are needed.

Finally, there are real concerns that the 'easier solutions' have now been taken in the primary sector and dealing with the surge in demand for secondary school places will become more costly and complex. Councils are looking to innovative solutions, with **Surrey** looking to drive down costs by working in a property cluster with neighbouring authorities. **Bournemouth** is considering the idea of village schools in former church halls or day centres. Less palatable solutions are also being contemplated, such as bussing children to different areas, building on split sites and even building on the green belt.

Looking to the future – a five-point plan

The picture painted by the case studies is of councils responding flexibly and innovatively to significant challenges – a familiar story for local government, I would argue. But councils are clear that as they have the unique responsibility for making sure that sufficient places are provided, they also need to have the power and the funding to deliver them, in partnership with local schools and academy sponsors. To achieve this we believe that five changes are necessary:

- The current schools capital system divides money between school maintenance, new places, and funding for rebuilding crumbling schools. It then further splits things down into separate pots for council-maintained schools, faith schools, free schools and academies. We would like to see **a single capital pot locally for schools capital to allow councils and schools to work together locally to make the best possible use of the limited capital funding available for repairing, rebuilding and building new schools.**
- The recent announcement of three-year allocations, rather than annual grants of basic need funding is very welcome. In the recent Spending Review, a £21 billion schools capital allocation for the whole of the next Parliament was announced so we would like to see a corresponding **indicative five-year allocation to councils to allow them to work with schools and potential sponsors to plan ahead to commission and deliver the primary and secondary places that will be needed between 2015 and 2020.**
- Councils are unable to require academies to expand but the majority of secondary schools are now academies. The hands of councils are also tied in building new schools, which have to be opened as academies, with all the final decisions about proposals and sponsors resting with the Secretary of State for Education. **We would like to see the restoration of decision-making on the provision of new schools to local level, as it was prior to the Academies Act 2011.**
- Councils need the flexibility to deliver whatever new type of school is required to fulfil their statutory duty to offer places and to contribute to the local education offer. **This should include the option of establishing community schools if that is the locally preferred option. Where academies are the preferred option, decisions about sponsors should be taken locally to meet the needs and wishes of local parents and communities.**
- The process for establishing and funding free schools is completely outside the control of local councils, although councils are increasingly trying to engage potential free school sponsors to make sure that new schools are established in areas of need. **We would like councils to be given a greater role in judging and approving free school proposals to ensure that new free schools are established where they are needed and in a way that supports councils in their place planning duties.**



Councillor David Simmonds

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1. Collaboration with schools

Devon: close working relationships with schools and district councils

Primary schools in Devon's larger urban areas are under pressure due to high birth rates and migration. This is slightly offset by rural depopulation. Devon has some of the country's smallest primaries and is also home to one of Europe's largest secondary schools. The county's home-to-school transport bill is over £20 million a year, but there is a presumption that schools should only be closed for educational reasons.

Devon County Council has conducted an **area review** process with clusters of schools, looking at demographics, developments and budgets, to assist with planning. This forms the basis for discussions around demand, amalgamations, expansion and closures, which involve all schools. School place planning now sits in the planning, transport and environment directorate, which has moved education up the planning agenda and underpinned a more evidence-based approach. The education infrastructure plan runs up to 2031 and will inform future investment.

Demand has generally been met through **school expansions**. A high rate of housing development means new schools are sometimes needed. Finding sites is a challenge and can result in the council paying a lot for land and forward-funding land/building work. Having an education infrastructure plan endorsed by the Cabinet has been useful in talking to developers and district councils, and the area reviews provide strong evidence-based data. Simon Niles, Strategic Planner, says it would help in

negotiations with developers to have a clear indication on what the government will fund per pupil, not per square metre, and suggests that ministers should send a strong message that developers should be mitigating their impact.

One large **free school** is currently being built, providing places that will be needed in the future. However, the school will not be in the best strategic location and the council was consulted late in the process. "In another location it could arguably have provided a better strategic role, been more sustainable and demonstrated better use of public funds."

Councillor William Mumford, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills, says Devon has successfully delivered places by maintaining close relationships with all schools and district councils and working in an open and collaborative way. "We recognise the significant constraints on public funding and use what limited funds we have wisely to get maximum value for money, as well as providing better buildings to support teaching and learning. I feel we are well placed to manage the challenge of increasing numbers as they feed through in future years, as well as managing growth from housing development."

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Essex: working with all schools to achieve expansions in a negotiated way

Essex County Council has seen rapid growth in demand for primary places over the past five years, with 1,000 new reception places commissioned so far. This pressure hits the secondary sector from 2017. Solutions include permanent expansions, new provision, and temporary buildings where the demand is predicted to be a shorter-term bulge.

Essex had a high proportion of grant maintained schools since the 1980s, later becoming foundation schools, so the move of many schools to academy status wasn't a big cultural change. The council is used to a role as **commissioner/broker** of school places. Graham Ranby, Head of Commissioning for School Planning, says: "One of our biggest success stories is that we have achieved expansions of foundation, voluntary and community schools, as well as academies, in a negotiated and agreed way to meet the demand." Essex is now looking ahead and will be establishing area reviews to work with schools in planning how to meet future demand. The council is keen to harness the opportunities that free schools could provide at primary and secondary level.

Capital funding is an issue: Essex has supplemented the basic needs grant from own resources to the tune of £38.7 million over the last four years. Special educational needs (SEN) is another challenge: the council spends £24 million a year in the independent sector for SEN places. It recently secured the agreement of its schools forum to fund the debt on borrowing £40 million to create more special school places, which will provide better value for money and more local placements for children.

One example of high demand is Colchester, which has seen 8,000 new houses built in the last decade. The county council has secured more primary places through **collaboration with schools**, and has been working with the secondary sector in its commissioning role – setting out need and working with schools to consider options and develop a plan. This approach has been well received by schools. "It's a good example of how to work in this new environment – councils taking more of a commissioning and facilitating role and not necessarily proposing the solutions." All Colchester's secondary schools have agreed to a strategic plan to provide new places in four stages up to 2023. This will cost £23 million and the council has about £13 million of Section 106 funding, so funding options will have to be explored.

In view of the anticipated long-term funding pressures, Essex is developing an estates strategy to consider some more innovative solutions – such as what land and property in the county could be made to "work harder" and provide better cost-effectiveness, and what other **innovative solutions** could be used such as property development. This will also look at build type and quality, and the size of new builds and extensions, to achieve best value for money.

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Solihull: success of its schools attracts a large number of out-of-borough pupils

Solihull has a mix of foundation, voluntary aided and academy schools serving a population of 200,000. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's approach is to enable good schools to expand, supporting families to get places in preference schools. The borough has very high achievement and attainment levels.

From this success comes its biggest place planning challenge: around 25 per cent of pupils come from **outside the borough**, mainly from neighbouring authorities Birmingham and Coventry. This can make it difficult to access capital for basic needs on the basis of growth. The borough is now beginning to experience growth in primary place demand of 5-10 per cent among its own residents due to a rise in the birth rate and inward migration. Michele Sadler, School Place Planning Manager, says: "On the face of it, Solihull has significantly more school places than resident children but most schools fill up at intake and stay full. School places will need to be added to meet demand from new families moving into the borough. This is not easy to reflect in our returns to the DfE."

One example of good practice has involved **close working** with a high-performing secondary academy to access funds for an £8 million rebuilding/expansion project. The council became aware of three housing developments planned near the academy and worked with it to bid for academy capital funding. Further funds have been secured through Section 106 and a joint bid for post-16 funding is underway. Along with some reserves from the school there is almost enough for the development, which will meet the council's immediate growth needs in that area.

The funding for this expansion is secure, but the Section 106 funds can't be accessed until half of the housing is built and occupied. Working with the academy, the council is trying to find ways to provide the funding up front. One option is to borrow it: if the Education funding agency could loan the money that would provide an ideal solution.

The proportion of out-of-borough pupils in Solihull's **secondary schools** is even higher. In one large secondary, 60-65 per cent of pupils travel in from Birmingham. Secondary demand is predicted to rise from 2014.

The council would like clarity on whether the government intends for out-of-borough children to be pushed out or whether capital to support this provision will be provided as demand increases, in good time so as to be effective. Without capital, there is no possibility of expanding these schools.

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School building in Richmond upon Thames



Wirral: a stable population means balancing areas of demand and surplus places

Wirral is a metropolitan borough with 90 primaries and 22 secondary schools. The population is fairly stable with net neutral migration. Demand for primary places varies between areas and from year to year. Wirral Borough Council has run a programme of **area-by-area reviews** to assess future need and inform the schools capital programme, which has resulted in a good match between places and demand. From these reviews ten schools were closed and two new schools built. Pockets of extra demand have been managed through planned expansion and remodelling. Some schools have volunteered to raise their admission number or take more pupils if they have capacity.

Julia Hassall, Director of Children's Services, says: "The council has been proactive in addressing capacity shortfall whilst being responsive and supportive to the needs of schools in areas where pupil numbers are increasing. This work will continue in order to meet demographic changes in Wirral and ensure every child has a local school place."

Wirral is a selective authority with a **grammar school system**, and public opinion is firmly in favour of keeping it. The council continues to administer selection on behalf of the four non-Catholic grammar schools, which are academies. This provides common testing for pupils and reduces the potential impact of selective schools on surplus place levels across the secondary sector. A satellite school to the Everton Free School, run by Everton Football Club, has opened in spare accommodation at a secondary school site. It is a small school of about 24 children with a strong sports ethos, and is a welcome addition to the borough's alternative provision offer for young people who are disengaged from education.

A new element in the admissions code, where schools can refer children and young people to the **fair access protocol** on the grounds of challenging behaviour, has resulted in far more being considered under the protocol. These are often the most challenging and vulnerable children. The protocol, agreed with head teachers, has worked well so far and schools are engaging with the process.

The growing number of **academy schools** has placed extra emphasis on the council's duty to monitor school admission procedures as a "champion for children". Sally Gibbs, Admissions and Place Planning Officer, says: "We have a duty to plan places strategically over the next ten to 20 years."

Owing to the trend towards conversion to academy status, we will be increasingly relying on historical good relationships with schools. If one school doesn't cooperate this could mean that the future ability of the local authority to plan school places strategically is reduced significantly."

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2. Issues with free schools

Oxfordshire: a mixed experience of working with a range of providers

Oxfordshire has seen demand for primary places rise by an average of three per cent a year, up to 10 per cent in urban areas. Between 2009 and 2013, Oxfordshire County Council created over 4,000 new places.

Urban areas have been affected by inward migration and denser occupation of housing. Emergency action has sometimes been necessary, such as bulge classes, even on occasion where the governors opposed this. Following five years of such measures, capacity is now keeping up with population growth. Places have been created through whole- or half-form entry expansion in extensions or existing space. A secondary school was extended to create a new primary.

Councillor Melinda Tilley, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, says: “With rapidly rising pupil numbers and limited resources, it has been vital to be able to plan the expansion of school capacity in an efficient and coordinated manner. Oxfordshire is working with all types of school provider to meet the needs of local communities, but has faced challenges in joining up different funding streams and decision-making processes.”

Oxfordshire has a proactive approach to **free schools**, and has a good relationship with a school that opened in Oxford in 2013. In a less successful situation, a free school opened in a village location alongside a planned development. The developers refused to provide Section 106 funding for a one-form entry primary and a contribution towards the local secondary school strategy. Instead, they opened a free school, converting buildings into a two-form entry

primary and a secondary school. This has created surplus capacity in the wrong place. The DfE could not confirm the school was opening until a day before term began so the council had to double-allocate the pupils. In another case, a primary academy received Education funding agency funding to double in size when the council already had expansion projects underway in that area.

At least 600 extra **secondary school** places will be needed by 2019. A UTC opens in 2015 in an area of housing growth where the council had secured a site for a secondary school. It will provide some, but not all, of the secondary places needed there. At the time the application was approved, the council had begun finding an academy provider for the planned school. The separate processes caused confusion locally, but the site was large enough for co-location. Elsewhere, the council faces a similar situation with a studio school and a site too small for co-location, which is complicating the process of finding academy providers.

Councils should be properly empowered, or at least there should be area-wide joining-up of proposals, says Barbara Chillman, Service Manager for Pupil Place Planning. “We need a local plan that all parties can help shape, which is given credence when decisions are made. Without coordination, resources will be wasted at a time when the council is cutting other services.”

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A city in North West England: new schools being built through mayoral fund

This city council noticed pockets of demand for primary places from 2010 but had enough capacity to cope using minimum intervention – for example changing IT suites into classrooms. Some areas have had bulge classes for one year, while in other areas the demand is more sustained. The city is now approaching its limit in terms of existing provision so is looking to expand schools. Pupil projections show the shortfall of places will continue in about half of the wards, some with a severe shortage. The council has developed a **pupil place planning strategy** looking at ward-level data. Some wards may not have the capacity to expand their primary schools, in which case wards may be clustered together.

This city has an elected mayor and is benefiting from a pledge to rebuild 12 schools through the **mayoral fund**, which aims to make up for the loss of the BSF programme. This will provide eight secondary schools, two primaries and two special schools. Investment projects are underway to refurbish some secondary schools. On top of that, the city submitted three targeted bids for school expansions: one bid, for an expansion by 1 form of entry of an infant and junior school, was successful.

The city reports that it has a significant backlog of condition issues at primary level, and it is getting more difficult to juggle the priorities: there is significant pressure on the capital maintenance fund.

A closer working relationship with the DfE on **free school bids** would be welcomed. A member of the school organisation team says: “It would be useful if the DfE could let us know when there’s a free school bid. If we knew where this provision might be it would help in terms of planning.” Three free secondary schools have opened but these are providing alternative provision, so have had no impact on other schools.

A studio school and a UTC are planned which could have an impact, although the council doesn’t know which schools will be affected. A primary free school is due to open in an area with some demand, and the council has withdrawn a bid for targeted basic needs funding as a result of that new school.

An outer London borough: infrastructure costs and the free school application process hinder school place planning

Between 2006 and 2013, this outer London borough has created almost 6,000 new permanent primary places and just over 1,000 temporary places. Plans are underway to create a further 2,000 permanent places. At secondary level, projections show pressure on school places from 2016: an extra 31 forms of entry will be needed by 2020. The borough has benefited from **accurate data** on the likely shortfall, which has helped it to meet demand. However, some strategic and practical constraints have raised the cost of providing places.

The emphasis has been on school expansion. It takes three years or more to go from the idea of expanding a secondary school to the intake of pupils. However, a lack of transparency in the **free school** application process can hinder long-term planning. In 2014, six new entry forms are due to come into the system in the borough. A free school application was then submitted, potentially bringing another six forms into play with substantial over-provision. The council considered aborting its expansion project but decided not to; the free school application then failed.

This illustrates the need for central government to fully engage with councils in the free school process, says the chief education planning officer, which is currently shrouded in too much secrecy. Greater **openness and transparency** will be crucial to meeting future fluctuations in demand. “After all, to have the hard work of all concerned undone by parachuting in a free school would be no good for tax payers.”

Infrastructure costs can raise the cost of expansion and often appear to be “out of all proportion” to the development. For example, in a primary school expansion, the cost of providing more electricity to the site was put at £150,000. UK Power Networks raised this to £400,000. They would not agree to the development until the council had paid for a substation that could, in the council’s opinion, “power a small city”.

Transport for London objected to another proposal unless £150,000 was provided for a bus route. These statutory obligations push the cost of developments up significantly. There is concern that the cost-per-place figures used by the Education funding agency make unrealistic assumptions. For example, the cost of building a three-form entry primary is put at £5 million, but this assumes that the site is level, uncontaminated, serviced and has north-south orientation. Real sites are far more expensive.

3. Imaginative solutions

Bournemouth: intense pressure in a small urban area means all options are being considered

In 2006, 1,347 children started school in Bournemouth. By 2013 this had risen to 1,924. Bournemouth Borough Council has been doing whatever it can to create places. Two new primary schools open in 2014, both on the sites of existing secondaries. An academy opened in 2013 on a former primary school site, and a free school is in temporary accommodation in an office building (despite having no significant outdoor space or parking, it is already popular). The council has extended some schools with modular buildings, added bulge classes, and turned spare space into classrooms. There is now no room for expansion. It has been a cultural challenge for local parents to accept the shift to four-form entry primary schools.

Neil Goddard, Service Director for Community Learning, says the biggest barrier has been **planning issues**, from transport to trees. “Sometimes it can feel like the urgent need for additional school places is not fully appreciated by all of our colleagues.” One project had to work around a protected tree, adding significantly to the cost. The council is considering the idea of village schools (which only ever have two year groups or 120 children) in former church halls or day centres. Feedback from the Education funding agency says this is not possible, as there is currently no way of funding or arranging it, but parents and schools like the idea.

The pressure hits at **secondary level** from 2018, and by 2021 an extra 20 forms of entry will be needed. The borough has 11 academy secondaries. Discussions are taking place around whether to expand them (not always

easy or possible) or build a new school. However, sites are limited, and the council may have to purchase a brownfield site or, more controversially, build on green belt land. It is currently reviewing all the secondary sites to assess what is feasible, and hopes to approach the DfE with a plan that all schools have signed up to and a view to agreeing how this will be funded. Neil says: “A key issue is the whole local authority’s role in this. If we are the **commissioner of school places** we need to be able to do that job. It would be very helpful if the government could clarify our role.”

Councillor Nicola Greene, Cabinet Member for Education, says longer-term funding allocations will help with place planning. “Trying to plan ahead was becoming difficult because of the pressures on capital funding. The expansion options we now have aren’t value for money as they are the more awkward and expensive projects.

“The pressure doesn’t stop, and the physical space children need is a real challenge. As a result we are considering all options. We have a free school in an office block. If we are to look at ideas like that we need the government to be involved in a dialogue around the idea that primary schools may not look like they have in the past. Perhaps sometimes we need to look at the buildings first and the situation second.”

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Brighton & Hove: lack of sites for schools in areas of high demand

Brighton & Hove has experienced rising demand for primary places since 2002. The city council has kept pace with growth in the primary sector, but there are concerns this will be more difficult in the more expensive secondary sector.

There is **strong demand in central areas** of the city while larger schools on the edges have spare places. This is partly due to demographic change: in some areas, for instance, family houses are now rented out to students. The council's 'primary strategy for change' focused on providing extra places in the centre then reducing capacity in the periphery schools. However, capital funding has been barely sufficient to meet the first part of this strategy, and there has been no funding for reducing capacity in other schools.

There are few, if any, sites for new schools, so the focus has been on expansion or the adaptation of other buildings. Given the **tight urban nature of this city**, sites are rarely available and must be purchased at residential value. The council is converting a former police station into a junior school. The police authority had to demonstrate best value in selling this asset, so the council had to buy it at residential value. A former infant school is being leased back to the council by a further education college and has been converted back into an infant school, operating as the annexe of a popular 'outstanding' school.

Pressure at secondary level begins from 2014. Schools in the central areas are already quite full. The council's developing strategy for secondary growth depends on the periphery schools being full too.

Michael Nix, Head of Education Planning and Contracts, says: "By 2018 we will need an extra 300 places per year group, which equates to a large secondary school." A secondary free school opened in 2013. A bilingual primary free school has also opened, but neither has a permanent site yet, despite the Education funding agency conducting a "large and extensive" site search. One solution in the secondary sector could be to develop satellite sites, in a similar way to the primary annexes. "We are exploring this with schools and colleges but it's at the very early stage of discussion." New secondary accommodation will cost more, which needs to be recognised in the DfE capital planning.

Councillor Sue Shanks, chair of the council's Children and Young People Committee, says: "We are very proud of the primary school buildings we have achieved in recent years, but there are still serious pressures on places in parts of the city. We need the government to recognise that providing sufficient secondary places is an even greater challenge, so it is very helpful that the Secretary of State recently announced three-year allocations to help local authorities plan ahead."

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Bedford: new procurement process leads to major cost savings

Bedford Borough Council has created 3,000 extra school places in three years, with plans for 1,500 more, through a mix of expansion and new-build. The council has had significant success using the Scape public sector construction procurement framework, which has saved on building costs.

Back in 2011, the council was committed to an £86 million school building programme but had only £51 million of capital. It opted for Scape, a local authority-led **procurement consortium**, which has made the necessary £35 million saving. Scape involves building a steel framework off-site, which is cheaper and involves less architectural input. It uses a basic design but teachers, parents and pupils can choose the layout, colour schemes and furnishings. Previously, a new 420-capacity primary/nursery would cost £8 million, but through Scape it costs £4.5 million. Head teachers are happier with the new system.

The biggest challenge is **inconsistent funding** streams. Capital funding linked to growth is difficult to plan and has to be applied in short timescales. The result of bidding for different funds is that the areas most in need may not have the time or resources to spend on bids. Academies can receive mixed messages on whether they are eligible for capital maintenance funds, creating local tensions. In school place planning, the best mechanism would be one pot of money allocated locally through a mechanism that includes all interested parties.

The borough has a **middle school system**, and these schools are counted as secondary provision in the latest DfE figures. As a result it looks like there is massive pressure on primaries and a big surplus at secondary level. In one housing development there was not enough Section 106 funding for new lower and middle schools so the solution was to move to a junior/secondary system. Councillor Henry Vann, Portfolio Holder for Education said: "The lack of money for schools is frustrating. However our scheme has been such a success that we are now investing the small amount of money we receive into replacing temporary classrooms. This will greatly enhance learning environments but what we really need is significant investment to build new schools."

Bedford Borough Council would like to see a successor to the BSF programme. Using the new procurement system, they can deliver new and improved school buildings for around 40 per cent less than was the case at the time of the former BSF programme. Cllr Vann said: "We'd like to say thanks for challenging us to look at procurement frameworks. Now we've done so, can we have the money we should have got to improve our schools?"

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Richmond upon Thames: a large-scale primary expansion programme

Back in 2008, having noticed a growing demand for school places since 2005, Richmond upon Thames was one of three London boroughs to successfully bid for basic need funding for growth. This, along with capital funding, Section 106 receipts, council reserves and borrowing, enabled it to embark on a major primary expansion programme.

Richmond has created 27 new primary forms of entry from a base of 57, most of that since 2010 and most through **straightforward expansion**. Two schools have expanded twice, and one of them onto a third site. Two have been converted from three-form entry infant and junior schools into two-form entry all-through primary schools.

A 'shared form of entry' system has been introduced in three Catholic primaries which couldn't expand but are close together. A set of three community primary schools followed suit. This system groups schools to provide the extra classrooms needed for a full form of entry between them: each admits an extra form every three years. The council has leased land on a peppercorn rent basis for a new voluntary-aided primary and secondary school and two primary free schools. Both free school providers were directed towards areas under pressure. Matthew Paul, Head of School Place Commissioning, says these strategies have been successful. "Close co-operation with schools is vital. No-one should underestimate the difficulties expansion can create for schools. It can be a distraction and has to be managed well."

Richmond sees a problem in the **basic need funding formula**, which provides more money for secondary places than for primary. Here, the pressure has mainly been at Key Stage 1. With a primary expansion costing up to £3 million, the basic needs allocation doesn't go far. As a result, permanent expansions have been supplemented by a large number of bulge classes. One solution would be to have more schools expanded across split sites, but land is extremely expensive.

Richmond's primary schools top the league tables in England and are very attractive to parents. There is a large drop-off to the **private sector** but this fluctuates. The recession reduced the drop-off at a time when birth rates were growing and new housing was being built.

Matthew welcomes the fact that the Education funding agency now has a pupil place planning team and is consulting with local authorities. "Whether that will translate into allocations taking account of local circumstances remains to be seen." Richmond has exhausted the "easy" expansions and the remainder are more difficult and expensive – such as building an extra storey or dealing with difficult access issues.

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Waltham Forest: using expansion as a chance to review how schools operate

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has seen its birth rate rise 38 per cent in 11 years. This has been exacerbated by migration from elsewhere in London and overseas. So far, 70 extra classes have been created and there have been 23 permanent expansions to schools.

Katherine Coggles, Planning and Research Officer, says expansions have been used as an opportunity for schools to review their models of teaching including how they group children or use open plan arrangements. Some have requested more outdoor space in exchange for smaller classrooms. It has also provided an opportunity to look at school size: becoming larger doesn't have to impact negatively on teaching quality.

The capital projects team now has a lot of experience in school building projects. It has come up with solutions such as a playground on a rooftop, turning ICT suites into classrooms, and looking at how schools can work together – for example two primary schools have PE lessons in a secondary school. Where appropriate, modular buildings have been used which are cost effective and less disruptive. The borough has also **been creative in seeking solutions** such as creating a “Site 2” site for existing popular schools, whereby vacant school sites are used to expand existing schools.

Capital funding has been well utilised to support expansions. However, the funding envelope does not take sufficient account of the high build and land purchase costs in the borough.

The authority has welcomed the move to a three-year capital funding allocation. One-year allocation of resources resulted in phased expansion, bringing one classroom into use at a time. One primary school had a building programme stretching over six years for a one-form entry expansion, which was expensive and disruptive. The borough bids for capital resources to supplement the basic needs allocation. Katherine says it would be useful if future allocations could be frontloaded to ensure school places are there when needed.

The opportunities for expansion are now very limited in some parts of the borough and new sites will be needed. The free school legislation has provided both an opportunity and a challenge in this respect. There are proposals for two free secondary schools that will open earlier than needed and would lead to an over-supply of places. Information regarding the demand for school places and the need for new schools is now published on the Council website to encourage new providers in the right location and timeframe.

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4. In-year pressure

Birmingham: a rapid increase in net migration sees year groups grow in size as they progress through the system

Birmingham has experienced pressure on reception places since 2010. Back in 2004 the annual birth rate was 16,179; by 2010 this had risen to 17,774. A total of 10,600 permanent primary places have been created through 40 school expansions. Pressure on secondary schools begins from 2014. One key challenge is increased net **migration** into the city. This translates into the need to prepare for a primary cohort that could be 25-50 forms of entry larger by Year 6 than it was at reception. By 2013, the cohort of 2008 had grown by 5.4 pupils per month; the cohort of 2012 had grown by 22.3 pupils per month in just two terms.

Birmingham City Council was prepared for the rising birth rate, but the rapid increase in net migration exceeded forecasts and has created pressure in some areas. This is being eased using two models: bulge classes (30 students in one year group) or flexible classes (30 students across a range of year groups, with flexible staffing/grouping to preserve class sizes). Emma Leaman, Head of Education and Skills Infrastructure, says some national measures to alleviate the pressure on the growth fund created by the birth rate increase and cohort growth would be welcome.

Expansion projects in Birmingham's 450 primaries are prioritised through criteria such as location, standards and leadership capacity, popularity and suitability. The council is close to exhausting its expansion options and will need to build new schools and/or introduce more temporary solutions.

The city has some free schools. There have been issues around location in areas without basic need and identifying appropriate sites, but in the main these schools are helping to meet basic need. The council invites academies and **free schools** to discuss expansion intentions at an early stage. However the Education funding agency's (EFA's) process means free schools may open at short notice, creating difficulties in coordinating place planning.

The council is exploring whether it may be necessary to use powers to direct schools to increase capacity, and is interested in whether the DfE/EFA is prepared to influence academies to increase admission numbers when they have the potential, within existing buildings, to expand.

To meet future growth in primary, secondary and special provision, the city has used data intelligently to share a "market view" and is inviting all education providers interested in expanding to submit an expression of interest. Basic need capital funding will be allocated to the projects that most effectively meet the gaps in provision.

For further information contact Emma Leaman, Head of Education and Skills Infrastructure

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Peterborough: Intense demand for places leads to creative solutions

Peterborough is a small city coping with massive population growth. It has one of the highest birth rates in England and very high inward migration, particularly from Eastern Europe. In 2007 the reception class intake was 2,100; by 2013 it was 3,000.

Peterborough City Council has created 5,000 extra primary places and is delivering another 4,000. Since 2007, it has overseen 25 **expansion and building projects** through a £190 million 10-year capital programme for school places and modernisation. Finding sites has been difficult so the council has created capacity wherever it can. This includes refurbishing an old children's home to create a school annexe; creating all-through schools using space on secondary sites; creating schools with community facilities; and expansion into any available space. It is now looking at creating a school on an office block site.

The council also initiated a free school bid on a former secondary site, sourcing a provider and putting the bid together with them and adding £5 million earmarked for redeveloping the site. The government added £10 million, creating a 1,000 place secondary school and a special school for children with autism.

The council has an ambition to deliver **growth in the city**. Councillors recognise the value of education in this and have released money wherever possible. This support has led to a rise in attainment: GCSE results are rising significantly. Jonathan Lewis, Assistant Director for Education and Resources, says: "We are also putting a lot of effort into targeting where we put the places and trying not to build too much too quickly, as we don't want to end up with substantial over-capacity."

With 150 applications a week, finding places is a daily challenge. At the start of the 2013 academic year there were no spare reception places but 15 children had arrived, so a school was asked to create a new class in a spare room. Another challenge is the number of children with **English as a second language**, which is 35 per cent in the reception cohort. Between October 2012 and October 2013 the city's school population increased by three per cent; 92 per cent of those pupils had English as a second language.

A strong relationship between the council and schools has meant schools have been willing to help find solutions. Councillor John Holdich, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, says: "The challenges we have faced in Peterborough are significant and we have, through being creative and persistent, met those challenges head-on whilst continuing to drive up educational attainment.

"I am pleased the government has recognised our plight through additional capital funding this year, although I would request that they continue to strengthen the role of local authorities around school place planning, in particular in ensuring fair access to all schools including academies and free schools. I hope they reconsider centralising in-year admissions with authorities once again to ensure this happens."

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Sheffield: council working with schools to manage a large number of in-year admissions

In the past 10 years Sheffield's birth rate has risen from 5,500 to 7,000. That means an extra 1,500 children are now coming into reception each year – equivalent to 50 full reception classes. Sheffield City Council has expanded existing schools and built new ones: two primaries open in 2014 and an all-through primary/secondary follows in 2015. So far three secondary expansions are planned, along with the new all-through school, but many more places will be needed by the end of the decade.

One key issue has been the extent of **in-year movement**. In the past three years, many families have moved into the areas of high pressure during the school year. One family may have three or four primary-age children, and these siblings may be offered places split between schools and/or have relatively long journeys to school. Many of these families have just arrived in the UK, are unfamiliar with the English school system and need help with applying for places and arranging transport. Attendance can be a huge issue and turnover is also a problem, as when a closer place becomes available families may change schools.

Joel Hardwick, Acting Senior Manager, School Organisation says: "Because the schools with available places are in different parts of the city, this has meant some schools have had rapidly **changing demographics**, creating new challenges for them. We encourage schools to share good practice on procedures around integration of new pupils and are open and transparent about how we manage our in-year admissions."

One such school saw the number of pupils change by just one between September and November 2013, but this masked the fact that 24 children had joined and 25 had moved away. The children begin to pick up English and integrate then move on, while the school begins the process again with new pupils. "We now use monthly monitoring to keep us informed of new arrivals, distances being travelled and siblings at different primary schools. We then have regular meetings with the schools in pressure areas to make sure we've got a shared understanding." The new primary schools should resolve some of these issues.

As a temporary measure, the council has used its **fair access protocol** in some areas to admit up to 32 children to each class, in consultation with schools. However, this has not been an easy ask of schools, which face the pressure of demonstrating to Ofsted that these children can make good progress. Sheffield says it is vital that councils retain strategic oversight for school place planning. Without this lead role, it is unlikely that the pressure of in-year admissions could be managed effectively. The council provides a voice for all children, especially the most vulnerable, and brokers solutions across all types of schools.

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5. Council investment to fill funding gaps

Derbyshire: large-scale housing development leads to a rise in demand

Derbyshire has a mix of urban and very rural areas, with varying demand for school places between the towns and the rural villages.

Derbyshire County Council has a good relationship with the eight **district planning authorities** and works with them to address impact of housing development on education infrastructure and to find solutions to those pressures. The districts engage with the county over potential developments and place a high priority on education provision. This ensures that the county is part of any discussion on where the infrastructure can support development and where it can be expanded to support development.

The nature of the geography and geology of the county can mean that there is increased cost in building; the ground works are complex and expensive. School sites located above coal measures and former mine workings can result in higher building costs. The DfE's guidance on a revised cost per square metre to deliver school places has not yet been tested here. There are examples of projects where unexpected ground problems have been discovered after the start on site leading to an increased cost of building.

There are proposals for **significant housing development** across the county. Using the government's costing formula and using the county's pupil generation yield per 100 houses does not always provide enough funding to deliver the additional places required.

The biggest **pressure point from new housing development** is the boundary between South Derbyshire and Derby City. Education teams from Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council have been working with planning officers from Amber Valley Borough Council and South Derbyshire District Council to develop a joint strategy to address the need for enhanced education infrastructure. As the councils have been working together, the infrastructure need has been identified early on.

The Government takes the view that new housing is creating this need so developer contributions are required through S106. However, developers can argue that the education contributions sought mean that a development is no longer viable. There is a potential funding gap for local authorities as the viability of the site must balance education against highways and other demands; developer contributions are not always sufficient to deliver all the provision required.

The requirement for land and the cost of building the school places that are needed will create great pressure to maximise developer contributions, and the County Council will need to consider how to address any potential funding gap.

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East Sussex: a three-phase approach to primary school place planning

East Sussex County Council expects primary place demand to rise from 2012 until 2020. By 2016 there will be an extra 39,000 children in the system, and this is expected to peak at an extra 41,200 by 2020 (16 per cent up on 2012). At secondary level numbers will grow from 2017 to the point where the county needs an extra 17 forms of entry, or 2,550 places.

East Sussex has a **phased programme** of primary place planning. The first phase, which runs to 2015, is providing five extra forms of entry in permanent accommodation and 19 temporary classes (where schools have space for mobile classrooms or demand will eventually tail off). Phase two aims to provide 11 further forms of entry by 2018. The cabinet was due to consider funding for phase two early in 2014. It will cost up to £50 million if the extra places are provided on a permanent basis, or £15-20 million in temporary classrooms. Jessica Stubbings, Education Development Manager, says: "We don't feel that providing all the places in temporary accommodation would be the best solution for pupils – it doesn't allow for expansion on the rest of the school site, for example hall or catering facilities. We won't provide the best educational experience for pupils if all of their primary schooling takes place in temporary classrooms."

The council is looking at other options too, such as encouraging **free school** applications in areas of demand. An all-through free school in Eastbourne is helping to meet the need for primary places but has created some over-provision in the secondary sector. The council is working with some secondary academies that are interested in sponsoring a primary free school on their sites. The schools can see the benefits of creating an all-through school in terms of outcomes for learners and ensuring there is enough demand in the future.

Basic needs funding supports about 40 per cent of the places needed. The council was successful in securing funding for two new primaries through the targeted basic need fund but this will only provide 50 per cent of the cost; the council will have to supplement the rest. Building and expanding schools within these funding limitations is challenging, says Jessica. "Academies and free schools have greater freedom to expand, while local authorities have to follow a more complex statutory process for maintained schools to expand."

Councillor Nick Bennett, Lead Member for Learning and Schools Effectiveness, comments: "Ensuring that there are sufficient school places is a key priority, but we also need to make sure that these are in the right place and of the highest quality. However, the funding provided by the government is not sufficient to meet all the demand for new places, and we are working closely with boroughs and districts to lever in funding from developer contributors."

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Hampshire: ensuring school expansion provides high-quality teaching environments

Hampshire has experienced a rise in the birth rate, new housing developments and inward migration, leading to significant extra demand for school places. This has occurred rapidly and unevenly, so Hampshire County Council is balancing issues of isolated rural need against urban expansion. To date, 1,620 primary places have been added, with a further 7,300 primary and secondary places due to be created by 2016.

Demand has been met through permanent expansion or new schools where a long-term need is identified; otherwise **bulge classes** have been used, with extra spaces provided as a one-off for a specific year group. Demand does not always happen in neat, whole forms of entry. For example, one primary was willing to expand by 30 places but the extra need ended up at 17 pupils. This has implications for budgets and class organisation, including the need to move to mixed-age teaching, which can be unpopular with parents.

Councillor Keith Mans, Lead Member for Children's Services, says: "Over the next few years, across the county, we will provide 7,300 additional primary and secondary school places in areas of high demand with a planned investment of £165 million. Our objective is to deliver quality education near to where children live. I am very proud that through this period of change we have sustained remarkably good performance in ensuring that parents get a good school of their choice. For September 2013 entry, for children starting in reception, 90 per cent were allocated their **first preference** school. The investment we are making to transform and expand existing schools, and in building new schools, will meet the demand. Pupils will benefit from high-quality teaching environments in which to learn."

The introduction of a **community infrastructure levy** (CIL) means Hampshire's 13 district and borough planning authorities will set a charging schedule for developers to mitigate the impact of developments. The allocation of CIL finds will be determined by the relevant planning authority. Hampshire has been successful in negotiating Section 106 agreements, which, together with basic needs allocations and its own limited resources, has in some cases met the full cost of provision. However, there are concerns that CIL will reduce the amount of capital the council receives from developers.

There is some surplus at **secondary level** but some 600 extra places will be needed by 2017. Hampshire will fund this through developer contributions and its own resources. School place planners are assessing future demand and the capital cost of this provision, which will be substantial.

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Reading: community consultation helps shape school expansion programme

Reading Borough Council is creating 2,520 extra primary places by 2016. It began the process with two community consultation exercises, and the message was clear: people wanted quality school places local to them. The extra demand is concentrated in pockets of the borough. As part of its long-term strategy, Reading looked at the feasibility of different options, identified 13 schemes and bid for government funding for eight of them (one new school and seven expansions). All eight bids were successful and the council will receive £19.1 million, but this accounts for less than 50 per cent of the cost. Reading's councillors are sympathetic to the need to prioritise education and have committed to borrowing the rest.

Councillor John Ennis, Lead Member for Education, explains: "Coping with this unprecedented increase in children wanting a place at our primary schools presents a massive challenge for our council, as we believe that all Reading children should expect to attend schools with decent learning environments. This costs what it costs, and whilst we welcome the grant aid from central government, which represents approximately half of the total cost, the council has committed to borrowing £34.5 million to ensure that our children have places in permanent school buildings." The loan will cost around £2.5 million a year from the council's revenue funds, putting pressure on other services.

Reading was pleased to see the introduction of three-year spending announcements. There is a problem with deteriorating school buildings, and longer-term funding will help address that.

Another issue is how to meet the rising demand for **secondary school** places, which will be exhausted by 2016. The lack of control over **free schools** and academies is making this more difficult. Myles Milner, School Services Service Manager, suggests two solutions to meeting demand. One is to encourage free school applications and get the government to recognise that these must provide the right thing in the right place. One current free school application could provide six of the 16 extra secondary forms of entry needed by 2021. The other solution is to negotiate with existing schools, but most are academies.

Community consultation was the foundation of Reading's approach, but it can be difficult to balance everyone's needs. Existing schools can't always cope with pressures such as traffic and parking. As a unitary authority, Reading has its planning and transport departments under the same roof, which can be an advantage. There is also doubt that the figures quoted by central government for the cost of projects can be achieved. They appear to be "stripped down" and don't reflect the real issues urban authorities face in developing brownfield sites.

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North Yorkshire: mixed picture of demand across urban and rural areas

North Yorkshire has a **mixed picture** in terms of demand, with rapid growth in urban areas and depopulation in some rural areas. Some small remote schools are struggling to fill places; meanwhile urban schools are under intense pressure.

Over the past two years, school planners at North Yorkshire County Council have noticed that families are not moving from urban to rural areas in the numbers they used to. The factors include job availability, cuts to public transport and the extra cost of living in rural areas, from house prices to petrol. Most **housing growth** is also in the urban areas. Some unpredictable factors have further increased demand for school places, such as housing developments that had stalled and have now re-started. As a result some school expansions have happened at short notice, often using temporary accommodation for reasons of speed and cost.

It has become more difficult to negotiate with developers for **Section 106** contributions. District councils can be motivated to agree to reduced levels of contribution in order to get house building projects off the ground. However, this has a knock-on effect on the county council, which gets less money for schools and has to meet the shortfall.

Three years ago the council received £5 million a year in **capital allocation** but the figure is now £1.5 million. Capital allocation is not keeping pace with need, causing a major challenge in delivering infrastructure. Suzanne Firth, Strategic Planning Manager, says: “We know from experience that developer contributions don’t meet the full cost of projects, nor does the basic need allocation.

Other authorities are supplementing this with capital maintenance funding, but this compromises existing school buildings. It looks likely we will have to go down that route.”

This lack of capital can lead to decisions being taken that may not be best for pupils or communities. For example, it may be appropriate to build a new school, but expanding existing schools will be more cost effective. The Priority School Building Programme is building some **secondary schools** smaller than they were, taking places out that are surplus now but will be needed further down the line. Buildings are replaced at the size requested by the academy and funding is on that basis. “The local authority may be left to pick up the pieces, putting yet more pressure on capital funding.”

For further information contact Suzanne Firth, Strategic Planning Manager

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6. Solutions becoming more difficult

A city in the north east of England: schools concerned about the impact of providing extra places

This city council has seen primary place demand going up for five years. School planners have already added 315 extra places, with 150 more being created to meet immediate demand. The city is split into nine zones for strategic planning purposes. Two primary zones have no spare capacity, although plans are underway to add places here.

Extra capacity has been created by doubling the size of one primary school, expansions and bulge classes. The school planning manager says the “quick wins” have been done and they are now having more **difficult discussions** with schools, such as around space used for IT suites or music rooms. Schools can be concerned about the impact of this – for example ‘outstanding’ primaries may worry that removing this provision will impact on future assessments.

What is more difficult for the council is where schools have invited **childcare providers**, such as after-school clubs and nurseries, into the extra space. The schools worry that removing these facilities will make the school less attractive to parents. In some cases, this provision is helping the council to meet the statutory childcare offer and must be kept.

As a result the council is sometimes spending money expanding schools that already have extra space but are using this for childcare provision. “We are spending some basic needs money on taking schools up to what their capacity should be, just to enable them to continue to provide those facilities.”

A draft **local plan**, currently in consultation, would see more than 20,000 houses built in the next 15 years. Up to two secondary schools and eight primaries will be needed. Section 106 money is getting more difficult to access – particularly when affordable housing is being built. Only two of the city’s 10 secondary schools are academies. As a small unitary authority it has been able to maintain a collaborative relationship with head teachers. However, austerity measures may be beginning to affect this, and could lead to further academy conversions.

Sandwell: moving towards more complex solutions

Sandwell's birth rate has risen by almost 20 per cent in seven years. By 2015 an extra 25 primary forms of entry will have been created, amounting to over 5,000 places. The reception cohort of 2012 was the first big increase. Extra places have been provided through expansion plus a few bulge classes.

Sue Moore, School Organisation Manager at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, says the move to three-year allocation of resources, announced at the end of 2013, would give councils more certainty about what was over the horizon. The council had been struggling with the allocation of resources on a yearly basis, which was "severely restricting" their ability to plan ahead.

By 2023 an extra 26 **secondary school** forms of entry will be needed, or 3,900 places. However, with the focus on primary schools, the borough has so far had no money to spend on planning for this future demand. Secondary demand can be forecast over a long period, so earlier access to resources would mean solutions could be more cost efficient and timely. Re-developing a former secondary school site would provide eight of the required 26 extra forms of entry. Sandwell hopes to find a provider but is concerned the DfE could reject the proposal, as its guidance says councils should have all the capital monies for a project from the outset.

The borough is running out of **solutions and space** and the options are becoming more costly. "The solutions are getting more difficult, and as a result there are more objections from other schools and communities." There are also concerns around the cost-per-place formula.

For example, the highways department often asks for traffic calming measures, but this cost is not taken into account. "For most situations we have a solution. The concern is whether we can afford to deliver these solutions as they become more complex. We certainly can't do it for what they say we can per square metre."

Sandwell expected provision in one area to increase through a new **free school**. However, the project was abandoned and the council had to create those places at short notice. The DfE did not explain why it had failed as it only engages with councils at approval stage.

Chris Ward, Sandwell's Learning Services Manager, says: "The challenge to the council is to balance its school place planning responsibility with other priorities at a time of diminishing resources and rising numbers. Local authorities have to respond quickly to changing legislation as more schools opt out of council control and have greater autonomy in setting admission limits."

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Surrey: borrowing to fund a large-scale capital programme for school building

Since 2002, Surrey's birth rate has increased by 20 per cent. Pressure on primary school places has risen by 30 per cent in some of its urban areas. Led by the Cabinet, the council has developed a **capital programme** for school building – the biggest in Surrey's history.

The investment, which is strongly supported by Members and partly funded by borrowing, is targeting around £330 million to create the 13,000 school places needed over the next five years. Work is currently focused on the primary sector but secondary schools will need to expand and there will also be an increase in pupils with special educational needs.

While recent capital announcements and the agreement of a longer-term funding settlement were helpful and welcome, the cost of the programme is far in excess of Surrey's basic need allocation. However, the council is looking for **innovative ways to drive down costs**, for example working in a property cluster with neighbouring authorities to use their collective purchasing power.

Finding sites in a county mostly within the **green belt** presents a challenge but plans are in place for two new schools to be built and the DfE is working with the council on tying in free school applications with strategic planning. Surrey has some concerns about the community infrastructure levy (CIL), which could hamper its ability to request infrastructure funding, and believes the Section 106 route is much clearer in a two-tier situation.

Tight funding can make putting forward building proposals difficult but despite the pressure increasing demand is putting on resources, the council is committed to continuing to provide the excellent education children deserve.

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Glossary

Basic needs funding/targeted basic need funding – DfE capital for new school places needed as a result of increasing demand locally. See the DfE website page on schools capital.

For further details: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schoolscapital>

Building Schools for the future (BSF) programme – Capital programme for rebuilding secondary and primary schools introduced by the previous government. Ended in July 2010 and replaced by the Priority Schools Building programme.

Cohort – a group of children of the same age group – a single class or year group in a school

Community infrastructure levy (also see S106 entry) – a new levy that district councils in England can choose to charge on new developments in their area.

For further details see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-infrastructure-levy-overview>

Forms of entry – the numbers of classes normally in each year group in a school. For example, a one-form entry primary school will have one class of up to 30 children in each year group from Reception to Year 6. A three form entry primary will have three classes for each year, catering for around 90 children.

Fair access protocol – an agreement between a council and the schools in its area about how to place children without a school place outside the normal admissions rounds (of entry into primary, middle and secondary school).

For more detail see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions>

Grant maintained and Foundation schools

– Grant maintained status for schools was introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988 and gave schools greater freedoms. It was ended by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and many GM schools became Foundation Schools or reverted to Voluntary Aided status.

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grant-maintained_school

In-year admissions – admissions to schools outside of the normal round of admissions (of entry into primary, middle and secondary school)

Middle school – a school which has an age range which crosses the traditional primary/secondary divide at age 11. Eighteen council areas have middle schools.

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_middle_schools_in_England

Priority school building programme –

A capital programme for rebuilding and repairing the secondary and primary schools most in need of repair, introduced to replace the BSF programme (see above)

Scape public sector procurement framework– see: <http://www.scapebuild.co.uk/Procure.aspx>

Shared form of entry – This system groups schools to provide the extra classrooms needed for a full form of entry between them. In a group of three, for example, each school would admit an extra form every three years.

Studio school – academies or free schools for pupils between 14 and 19 that offer academic and vocational qualifications, but teach them in a practical and project-based way. Study is combined with work placements at local and national employers who are involved in the school.

See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a0076307/technical-academies-university-technical-colleges-and-studio-schools>

S106 funding – (see also community infrastructure levy entry) a form of developer contribution, often associated with mitigating the effects of, and providing infrastructure to support new housing developments.

See: http://www.pas.gov.uk/3-community-infrastructure-levy-cil/-/journal_content/56/332612/4090701/ARTICLE

UTC – University Technical Colleges are academies or free schools that specialise in subjects that need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment - such as engineering and construction – and teach these disciplines alongside business skills and the use of ICT.

See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a0076307/technical-academies-university-technical-colleges-and-studio-schools>

Voluntary aided school – is a state-funded school in which a foundation or trust (usually a religious organisation), contributes to building costs and has a substantial influence in the running of the school. Often referred to as ‘faith schools’.

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voluntary_aided_school



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