

STRATEGY FOR EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN ST NEOTS

To: Children & Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 10 October 2017

From: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Executive Director: People and Communities

Electoral division(s): St Neots & the Eatons, St Neots & Eynesbury, St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton, St Neots East & Gransden

Forward Plan ref: 2017/045 **Key decision:** Yes

Purpose: To consider the education strategy for St Neots in light of the planned development within the Eastern Expansion strategic development site.

Recommendation: To note and endorse the strategy for education across St Neots to address the need for future new places in response to the:

- growth arising from the Eastern Expansion development site and
- increased demand for primary school places in the existing community of Loves Farm

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1. BACKGROUND

1. Love's Farm is a 160 acre site to the east of the railway station in St Neots. The development comprises over 1400 homes, a primary school, shops, open space and community facilities. The first homes were occupied in 2009, with the main part of the site completed in 2017.
- 1.2 The strategic expansion site known as St Neots Eastern Expansion will provide a further 3,820 new homes. This is comprised of Wintringham Park (2,800 homes) and Loves Farm 2 (1,020 homes). The number of children arising from these developments will create the need for primary provision totalling 7 forms of entry (FE)/1050 places. It is currently planned to secure the additional places needed through a primary school (2 form entry (FE)/420 places) at Loves Farm 2 and two primary schools at Wintringham Park. A map of St Neots is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The forecast demand for secondary school places to result from the Eastern Expansion development is 1050/7FE. However, it is not expected that there will be a need to provide any additional places until approximately 2250 new homes have been released for occupation. In the absence of planning applications, housing mixes or trajectories for the two sites it is not possible to forecast the year when additional places would start to be required.
- 1.4 It is expected that approximately 25 children from the Eastern Expansion development would require area special school provision.

2 SECONDARY AND POST-16 PROVISION

2.1 Current provision and capacity

- 2.1.1 St Neots is served by two secondary schools each providing for the 11-18 age range, Longsands Academy and Ernulf Academy, which together form the St Neots Learning Partnership Trust (SNLP Trust). Currently, between them the two schools have capacity for 2610 students (17.4 FE), excluding sixth form; split 1450 places at Longsands and 1160 at Ernulf. In September 2017 Longsands will be full in all year groups and is expected to remain full. In contrast, the number on roll at Ernulf will be 524 (plus sixth form).
- 2.1.2 Cabinet took a decision in May 2013 to meet the demand for the additional secondary school places required across St Neots for pupils aged 11-16 as a result of the Eastern Expansion, through the expansion of both Longsands Academy and Ernulf Academy. Based on previous feasibility studies, the schools could be expanded to provide up to a total of 3,300 places (22FE) between them; 10FE at Ernulf and 12FE at Longsands. Expanding the two existing secondary schools also offers the possibility of rationalising post-16 provision in St Neots.
- 2.2 Proposed new free school for St Neots
- 2.2.1 Since the Council agreed its strategic response to the planned growth in St Neots the future secondary landscape has changed. In April 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) approved to pre-implementation stage a new secondary free school (4FE/600places) in St Neots under Wave 12 of the centrally delivered Free Schools programme, with a proposed opening date of 2018. The sponsor is the Bedford & Kempston Free School Trust (BKFST). The DfE's property arm, LocatED, is currently seeking a site for the school.

- 2.2.2 A new 4FE free school, together with secondary provision at Ernulf and Longsands at the assessed capacity of the current sites (8FE and 10FE respectively) would provide sufficient capacity to mitigate the impact of the Eastern Expansion development in the town. In all likelihood the free school would be established ahead of any housing development. Therefore, it is unlikely that a case could be made for s106 contributions from the developers as there would be no basic need requirement for additional secondary school places.
- 2.2.3 At the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee meeting on 12 June 2017, Members identified the need for Officers to work with the SNLP Trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) Office to develop a revised strategy for secondary school places in St Neots that would address 11-16 and sixth form provision in the light of these changed circumstances.
- 2.2.4 In the first instance, officers have commissioned a feasibility study which is expected to report by mid-October. It will focus on how best to:
- support SNLP over the next few years before secondary numbers increase as result of the Eastern Expansion developments; and
 - deliver across the two sites up to 18FE for 11-16 year olds and an integrated sixth form of between 600 and 900 places to include post-16 students from the town's Samuel Pepys Area Special School.
- 2.2.5 This would build on and give due recognition to the fact that Ernulf has been hosting post-16 students from Samuel Pepys, and adaptations were made several years ago to accommodate them. Pressure for places at Samuel Pepys, which provides for children and young people aged 3-19 with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) continues to increase. However, the ability to expand the post-16 provision at the school is limited given the constrained nature of the site. It would help ease the overall pressures at the school if Ernulf could accommodate greater numbers of post-16 students from Samuel Pepys. It would also take account of the fact that, following a decision by Huntingdonshire Regional College to close their St Neots base, the post-16 options available to students in the town have been much more limited, leading a number to travel out of the town in order to continue their studies.

3 PRIMARY PROVISION

- 3.1 The County is divided into areas for the purpose of the planning of school places. Whilst 70% of parents in Huntingdonshire prefer to access their child's education at their catchment school, this percentage is much lower in St Neots at 54%. For this reason it is essential that the whole town (including Loves Farm) is considered as a single area for the planning of school places.
- 3.2 The number of children across the town requiring a school place is rising. **Appendix 2** provides detail of the pupils forecast to start school in reception over the next 5 years.
- 3.3 The education provision for Loves Farm was negotiated in 2008. Evidence at that time (from previous new developments) was that a 2FE (420 places) primary school would be required to meet the anticipated need. The Round House Primary School, which serves the development opened in September 2008. It was designed as a 2FE 420 place school, but was constructed in two phases, each providing 1FE (210 places). Phase 2 was implemented in September 2013. However, as the Committee will be aware from the petition presented at their meeting on 12 June 2017, there is already

pressure for places at the school. It was oversubscribed from within its catchment for Reception entry in September 2017. This led to 13 children who live at Loves Farm being offered places at nearby schools, all within the statutory 2 mile walking distance.

- 3.4 There are a number of factors which have been identified as having contributed to the demand for increased primary school places at Loves Farm.
- The original outline planning permission was for 1250 dwellings. However, two separate variations of planning condition were accepted, in 2007 and 2011 respectively, which resulted in an additional 214 dwellings.
 - Fewer 1-bed houses and more 3-bed houses were built than originally planned.
 - The slowdown in the housing market when construction first began meant that more of the initial houses released were for social housing rather than market housing.
- 3.5 The current pupil yield multipliers (revised in 2016) when applied retrospectively to Loves Farm would show a need for close to 3FE (90 Reception places and a total of 630 places). This is borne out by the demand for places at the Round House Primary Academy from its catchment area. The strategy for provision of primary places in St Neots will, therefore, include an additional 1FE (30 places per year group) to reflect the increased demand from Loves Farm. This will be provided within the St Neots Eastern Expansion site.
- 3.6 Urban & Civic, the developer for Wintringham Park, is planning first occupations for 2019. Gallagher, the developer for Loves Farm 2, has yet to confirm likely first occupation but has advised that they are working to similar timescales and currently have a live planning application. It will be important, therefore, to ensure that sufficient places are available for those families moving into new homes on the St Neots Eastern Expansion site.
- 3.7 In February 2016 the Council launched a competition to discharge its statutory duty, under the Education Act 2011, to seek an academy sponsor for the first primary school at Wintringham Park. Two bids were received from the Diamond Learning Trust and the St Neots Learning Partnership. In May 2016, shortly after the closing date for applications from interested sponsors, Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) planning committee refused the developer's planning application for 2,800 homes at Wintringham Park. Consequently, the Council decided to halt the primary school sponsor selection process. With a new developer in place (Urban & Civic) preparing to submit a fresh planning application shortly, officers have re-activated the Council's well established assessment process, following receipt of confirmation from both trusts that they wish to be part of this.
- 3.8 In order to ensure that there are places for the academic year 2018/19, available from September 2018, these will be provided in mobile classrooms pending completion of the building work necessary to provide the permanent accommodation required. This is subject to approval of planning consent and agreement of landowners once a site has been agreed. This approach will ensure that there is school provision for the first families moving into homes on the Eastern Expansion site as well as other local children from the existing community of Loves Farm.
- 3.9 As part of the planning for new places, officers will take the opportunity to review catchment area arrangements in liaison with the respective academy trust(s). Any proposed changes would be subject to consultation with the local community.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

Providing access to local and high quality education and associated children's services should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

If pupils have access to local schools and associated children's services, they are more likely to attend them by either cycling or walking rather than through local authority-provided transport or car. They will also be able to access more readily out of school activities such as sport and homework clubs and develop friendship groups within their own community. This should contribute to the development of both healthier and more independent lifestyles.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no particular areas of alignment with this priority.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

- 5.1.1 Where new schools are commissioned local authorities are responsible for all the start-up and post-opening costs, including diseconomy of scale costs, funding for which may be needed over a number of years. This is currently met from centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding which is subject to annual Schools Forum approval. Given this burden of revenue expenditure, the Council will only consider commissioning new schools where there is no possible alternative.
- 5.1.2 Prior to the dissolution of Parliament, the Government had commenced a consultation process on the future funding arrangements for schools. Following the first stage of this process there are still significant areas of uncertainty in respect of funding for new schools and as such the implications detailed below are based on current legislation and processes. The full response to the consultation and further guidance is due to be published in September 2017.
- 5.1.3 Where new free schools are centrally delivered i.e. via application to the DfE, where there is no basic need requirement, revenue start-up costs are met by government. Construction costs are also met centrally by the DfE although future basic need allocations will be adjusted to take account of the additional capacity created. Local authorities are still required to meet the post-opening diseconomies funding.
- 5.1.4 Where schools are to be established where there is no identified basic need for places, this will have a significant impact on the rolls of existing schools and the funding they will receive.

5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

All new presumption free schools which are designed and built by the Council are done so under the Council's framework arrangements. A business case will be need to be submitted for each of these using the Education Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) template form.

5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Where the Council has negotiated the land for a new school through s106 agreements and/or the land is in the Council's ownership, the Council will grant a standard 125 year Academy lease of the whole site (permanent school site) to the successful sponsor based on the model lease prepared by the DfE as this protects the Council's interest by ensuring that:

- The land and buildings would be returned to the Council when the lease ends.
- Use is restricted to educational purposes only.
- The Trust is only able to transfer the lease to another educational establishment provided it has the Council's consent.

The Trust (depending on the lease wording) is only able to sublet part of the site with approval from the Council.

If the ESFA or the Trust acquires the land the above approach would not apply.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

5.4.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision.

5.4.2 The accommodation provided for delivery of education for all phases within the 0-19 age range, including childcare and special education will fully comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and current Council standards.

5.4.3 As part of the planning process for new schools, local authorities must also undertake an assessment of the impact, both on existing educational institutions locally and in terms of impact on particular groups of pupils from an equalities perspective.

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

5.5.1 A group of parents, affected by the situation described in paragraph 3.3 above, unable to secure a Reception place at their catchment school for their children in September 2017, have formed the Round House Campaign. At its meeting on 12 June 2017, the Committee received a petition from the spokesperson for the Campaign. Officers have had regular communications, including a face to face meeting to answer the Campaign group's questions and concerns.

5.5.2 All new school projects, whether initiated by the Council or via the central DfE process, are subject to a statutory process which includes public consultation requirements.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

5.6.1 Local members are always invited to take part in the joint officer/member panel to assess new school proposals when these are conducted under the Council's

established new school sponsor selection competition process.

- 5.6.2 The Local Member has been in close contact with the representatives of the Round House Campaign. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee have committed to meet with them.

5.7 Public Health Implications

- 5.7.1 It is Council policy that schools:

- should be sited as centrally as possible to the communities they serve, unless location is dictated by physical constraints and/or the opportunity to reduce land take by providing playing fields within the green belt or green corridors;
- should be sited so that the maximum journey distance for a young person is less than the statutory walking distances (3 miles for secondary school children, 2 miles for primary school children)
- should be located close to public transport links and be served by a good network of walking and cycling routes
- should be provided with Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) and all weather pitches (AWPs) to encourage wider community use of school

- 5.7.2 There is also an expectation that schools will provide access to and use of the school's accommodation for activities e.g. sporting, cultural, outside of School hours.

- 5.7.3 New schools will have an impact on the Public Health commissioned services such as school nursing, vision screening, National Childhood Measurement Programme, school-based immunisation programmes.

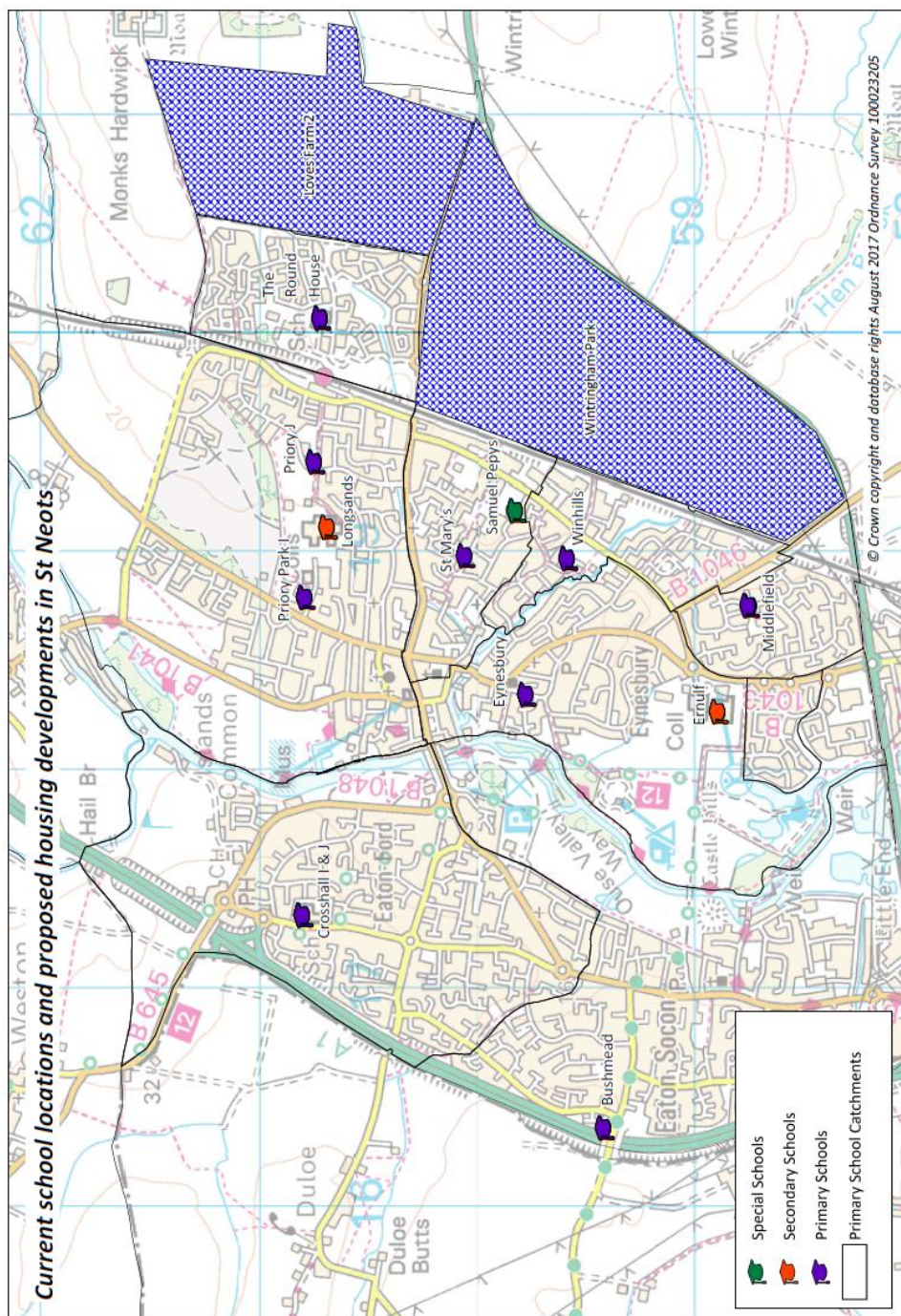
Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade 29/08/2017
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?	No Name of Financial Officer:
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan 29/08/2017
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Keith Grimwade
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall 29/08/2017
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Keith Grimwade

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	No Name of Officer:

Please include the table at the end of your report so that the Chief Executive/Executive Directors/Directors clearing the reports and the public are aware that you have cleared each implication with the relevant Team.

Source Documents	Location
<p>The Free School Presumption: Departmental advice for local authorities and new school proposers. February 2016</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption</p>	<p>Clare Buckingham</p> <p>0-19 Place Planning & Organisation Service</p> <p>Octagon 2nd floor OCT1213 , Shire Hall, Cambridge.</p>

MAP OF ST NEOTS



PUPIL FORECASTS

Appendix 2

All St Neots; Eynesbury, Winhills, Round House, St Mary's, Priory Park, Middlefield, Bushmead and Crosshall Infant Schools			
Year	Total children entering reception	Total PAN	Shortage (+)/ surplus (-) of places
2017	444	457	13
2018	460	457	-3
2019	496	457	-39
2020	496	457	-39
2021	496	457	-39
2022	496	457	-39

St Neots East of River; Eynesbury, Winhills, Round House, St Mary's, Priory Park, Middlefield Primary Schools			
Year	Total children entering reception	Total PAN	Shortage (+)/ surplus (-) of places
2017	324	285	-39
2018	329	285	-44
2019	373	285	-88
2020	373	285	-88
2021	373	285	-88
2022	373	285	-88

St Neots West of River; Bushmead and Crosshall Infant Schools			
Year	Total children entering reception	Total PAN	Shortage (+)/ surplus (-) of places
2017	120	172	52
2018	131	172	41
2019	123	172	49
2020	123	172	49
2021	123	172	49
2022	123	172	49

Primary School Catchment	School Year	Pri Ft4	Pri 5	Pri 6	Pri 7	Pri 8	Pri 9	Pri 10	PAN
Bushmead Primary School	2017/18	58	91	83	69	60	60	54	52
Bushmead Primary School	2018/19	78	59	93	83	65	57	58	52
Bushmead Primary School	2019/20	64	79	61	93	79	62	55	52
Bushmead Primary School	2020/21	64	65	81	61	89	76	60	52
Bushmead Primary School	2021/22	64	65	67	81	57	86	74	52
Bushmead Primary School	2022/23	64	65	67	67	77	54	84	52
Bushmead Primary School	2023/24	64	65	67	67	63	74	52	52
Bushmead Primary School	2024/25	64	65	67	67	63	60	72	52
Bushmead Primary School	2025/26	64	65	67	67	63	60	58	52
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2017/18	49	47	32	25	41	26	19	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2018/19	52	56	49	36	27	41	28	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2019/20	79	62	61	55	40	28	44	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2020/21	79	81	59	62	54	39	29	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2021/22	79	81	78	60	61	53	40	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2022/23	79	81	78	79	59	60	54	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2023/24	79	81	78	79	78	58	61	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2024/25	79	81	78	79	78	77	59	30
Eynesbury C of E Primary School	2025/26	79	81	78	79	78	77	78	30
Middlefield Primary School	2017/18	26	18	22	23	24	24	38	30
Middlefield Primary School	2018/19	21	24	20	21	25	24	25	30
Middlefield Primary School	2019/20	18	19	26	19	23	25	25	30
Middlefield Primary School	2020/21	18	16	21	25	21	23	26	30
Middlefield Primary School	2021/22	18	16	18	20	27	21	24	30
Middlefield Primary School	2022/23	18	16	18	17	22	27	22	30
Middlefield Primary School	2023/24	18	16	18	17	19	22	28	30
Middlefield Primary School	2024/25	18	16	18	17	19	19	23	30
Middlefield Primary School	2025/26	18	16	18	17	19	19	20	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2017/18	32	16	24	24	34	27	21	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2018/19	34	31	14	24	27	34	26	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2019/20	27	33	29	14	27	27	33	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2020/21	27	26	31	29	17	27	26	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2021/22	27	26	24	31	32	17	26	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2022/23	27	26	24	24	34	32	16	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2023/24	27	26	24	24	27	34	31	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2024/25	27	26	24	24	27	27	33	30
St Mary's C of E Primary School	2025/26	27	26	24	24	27	27	26	30

Primary School Catchment	School Year	Pri Ft4	Pri 5	Pri 6	Pri 7	Pri 8	Pri 9	Pri 10	PAN
Winhills Primary School	2017/18	39	39	45	58	42	44	51	45
Winhills Primary School	2018/19	51	39	37	44	59	42	43	45
Winhills Primary School	2019/20	46	51	37	36	45	59	41	45
Winhills Primary School	2020/21	46	46	49	36	37	45	58	45
Winhills Primary School	2021/22	46	46	44	48	37	37	44	45
Winhills Primary School	2022/23	46	46	44	43	49	37	36	45
Winhills Primary School	2023/24	46	46	44	43	44	49	36	45
Winhills Primary School	2024/25	46	46	44	43	44	44	48	45
Winhills Primary School	2025/26	46	46	44	43	44	44	43	45
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2017/18	62	68	62	64	72	79	63	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2018/19	53	62	68	62	64	72	79	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2019/20	59	53	62	68	62	64	72	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2020/21	59	59	53	62	68	62	64	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2021/22	59	59	59	53	62	68	62	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2022/23	59	59	59	59	53	62	68	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2023/24	59	59	59	59	59	53	62	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2024/25	59	59	59	59	59	59	53	120
Crosshall Infant School & Crosshall Junior School	2025/26	59	59	59	59	59	59	59	120
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2017/18	56	68	56	63	66	69	72	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2018/19	56	55	67	57	62	69	70	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2019/20	69	55	54	68	56	65	70	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2020/21	69	68	54	55	67	59	66	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2021/22	69	68	67	55	54	70	60	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2022/23	69	68	67	68	54	57	71	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2023/24	69	68	67	68	67	57	58	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2024/25	69	68	67	68	67	70	58	90
Priory Park Infant School & Priory Junior School	2025/26	69	68	67	68	67	70	71	90

Primary School Catchment	School Year	Pri Ft4	Pri 5	Pri 6	Pri 7	Pri 8	Pri 9	Pri 10	PAN
The Round House Community Primary School	2017/18	122	113	102	95	97	87	51	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2018/19	115	120	111	103	97	98	87	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2019/20	134	113	118	112	105	98	98	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2020/21	134	132	111	119	114	106	98	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2021/22	134	132	130	112	121	115	106	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2022/23	134	132	130	131	114	122	115	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2023/24	134	132	130	131	133	115	122	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2024/25	134	132	130	131	133	134	115	60
The Round House Community Primary School	2025/26	134	132	130	131	133	134	134	60