

**IMPACT OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITES UPON SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

*To:* Children and Young People Committee

*Meeting Date:* 19 May 2015

*From:* Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services

*Electoral division(s):* Brampton & Kimbolton, Buckden, Gransden & the Offords, Godmanchester & Huntingdon East, Huntingdon, Sawtry & Ellington, Hemingfords & Fenstanton, Lt Paxton & St Neots North, St Neots, Eaton Socon & Eynesbury, Ramsey, Somersham & Earith, Norman Cross, St Ives, Warboys & Upwood.

*Forward Plan ref:* N/A

*Key decision:* No

*Purpose:* In response to planned housing developments in Huntingdonshire to:

- (a) advise the Committee of the impact on secondary school provision in Huntingdon and the wider district of Huntingdonshire;
- (b) seek the Committee's agreement to make interim secondary provision at Sawtry Village Academy for the first secondary school pupils from Alconbury Weald; and
- (c) seek the Committee's agreement to make interim secondary provision at St Peter's School, Huntingdon for the first secondary school pupils from the proposed development at Wyton Airfield

*Recommendation:* The Committee is recommended to:

- (a) note the identified need for new secondary schools to serve both the Alconbury Weald and Wyton Airfield developments;
- (b) agree to Sawtry Village Academy taking the first secondary pupils from the development at Alconbury Weald; and
- (c) agree to St Peter's taking the first secondary pupils from the proposed development at Wyton Airfield

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire County Council, the local Children's Services Authority, has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state funded sector. To achieve this, the Council has to keep the number of school places under review and to take the appropriate steps to manage the position where necessary. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also requires local authorities to adopt a strategic role, with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision.
- 1.2 Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) draft Local Plan to 2036, contains proposals for some 17,000 new homes including three strategic expansion locations:
- Alconbury Weald (at least 5,000 new homes)
  - St Neots East (4,050 new homes)
  - Wyton Airfield, (at least 4,500 new homes)
- 1.3 Huntingdonshire is currently served by the following secondary schools all of which are Academies.

Town	Secondary schools
Huntingdon	Hinchingbrooke School St Peter's School
St Ives	St Ivo School
St Neots	Ernulf Academy Longsands Academy Collectively known as the St Neots Learning Partnership
Ramsey	Abbey College
Sawtry	Sawtry Village Academy

- 1.3.1 All these schools will be affected by the planned housing and associated population growth to some degree and additional secondary school capacity will be required. The table in **Appendix 1** sets out further, relevant information about these schools.
- 1.4 New secondary schools are not planned to open until at least 3 to 4 years into the life of new developments. There are a number of reasons for this:
- secondary numbers are slower to build up than numbers of primary aged children;
  - the overall viability of a new development in its early stages;
  - the need for a sufficiently sized pupil population to be able to offer a broad and balanced secondary curriculum.
- In September 2007 Cabinet approved a policy whereby new secondary schools should be planned to open when it is expected that there would be around 150 pupils, a sufficient Year 7 entry cohort size to provide students with a range of curriculum subjects.
- 1.5 Cabinet took a decision in May 2013 to meet the demand for the additional pupil

places required across St Neots for pupils aged 11-15 through the expansion of both Longsands Academy and Ernulf Academy which together form the St Neots Learning Partnership Trust (SNLP Trust). The Trust is responsible for governing and managing both of the schools. The main reasons are set out in paragraphs 1.5.1 to 1.5.5.

- 1.5.1 Based on available forecast data, the two existing schools could be expanded to provide a total of 3,300 places (22FE) between them. Alternatively, if a third school were to be established, this would be much smaller than the existing schools, assuming they continued to provide the same number of places as they do currently, thus creating an imbalance of provision in the town. With the further extension of St Neots to the east and south, the two existing schools would be well placed geographically in the town to serve this wider catchment. The third school would be located close to the existing Ernulf Academy and would be likely to operate in competition with the SNLP Trust.
- 1.5.2 Expanding the two existing secondary schools offers the possibility of rationalising post-16 provision in St Neots which the SNLP is keen to do. Currently each school operates with its own small sixth form.
- 1.5.3 Local Authorities are responsible for all post-opening start-up costs associated with establishing new schools on a sound financial footing including diseconomy of scale costs, funding for which may be needed over a number of years. The revenue implications of committing to a third secondary school in St Neots are significant, in the region of £1m on average for each of the first three years.
- 1.5.4 Experience suggested that Section 106 (S106) negotiations to secure funding from the developer were likely to focus on the need for additional capacity over and above that available at the existing schools. This could leave a shortfall in the funding necessary to meet the capital costs of establishing a new 4-6FE school
- 1.5.5 HDC as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) supported the expansion of the existing secondary schools and indicated that it would commit investment to the sports facilities located alongside the existing schools as part of the expansion programme.
- 1.5.6 Officers are confident that following a review of current and forecast demand undertaken in the last few weeks following a request from one of the local Members, the Council should continue to plan on this basis. Consequently, the focus of this report is the impact of the other two strategic development sites upon the other secondary schools in Huntingdonshire.

## **2 MAIN ISSUES**

### **2.1 Planned Housing Growth**

- 2.1.1 The chart below sets out the major housing developments in and around Huntingdon, as proposed in HDC's Local Plan to 2036 and the additional school places identified as required to secure sufficient provision in the District for young people of secondary school age.

Site	No. of homes	Current Catchment	No. of secondary children (max)	No. of Forms of Entry (FE) (max)	Approx date by which first new homes will be built
Brampton Park	400	Hinchingbrooke	100	0.66	2016
Bearcroft Farm, Godmanchester	750	Hinchingbrooke	170	1.13	2016
Ermine Street, Huntingdon	1450	St Peter's	360	2.4	Unlikely before 2022
West of town centre, Huntingdon	200	St Peter's	50	0.33	Ongoing
Smaller sites in/around Huntingdon Town	780	Hinchingbrooke /St Peter's	140	0.88FE	Ongoing
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>3580</b>		<b>820</b>	<b>5.5FE</b>	
Wyton Airfield	4500	St Peter's	1125	7.5	Unlikely before 2018
Alconbury Weald	At least 5000	Alconbury Weald	1250	8.5	Late 2015
St Ives West	500	St Ivo	125	0.8	2017

- 2.1.2 As will be evident from the above table, the planned housing growth in and around Huntingdon lies within the catchments served by St Peter's and Hinchingbrooke schools which have Published Admission Numbers (PANs) of 300 (10 forms of entry/FE) and 277 (9.2FE) respectively.
- 2.1.3 Forecasts suggest that the number of 11 to 15 year olds will remain relatively stable until 2016/17 before increasing due to larger cohorts transferring from primary school and additions from Bearcroft Farm (Godmanchester) and development to the north of Huntingdonshire Regional College. The number of 11 year olds in Huntingdon (and the surrounding area) is forecast to exceed the two schools' current combined PAN from 2018/19 reaching 21 FE in 2021/22.
- The additional ~ 12,850 homes identified in HDC's draft, to be built between 2015/16 and 2035/36 in the area served by these two schools could add between 19.5 and 19.7 FE to the secondary-age population, split as follows: 2.5 to 3.7 FE from smaller developments, 6 to 8.5 FE from Alconbury and 5.4 to 7.5 FE from Wyton Airfield (subject to confirmation of dwelling mix).
  - On current arrangements, there would not be sufficient capacity within the two schools for all these pupils. Therefore, alternative solutions need to be considered if provision is to be provided for all 11 to 15 year olds in Huntingdon.
- 2.1.4 Officers have identified the need to create additional places at St Peter's (at least 2FE/300 places) to meet need from planned housing development in the school's catchment. In addition, the governing body of Hinchingbrooke has indicated its willingness to expand to 12FE/1800 places

- 2.2 New secondary school at Hampton Gardens and its potential impact on Sawtry Village Academy (VA)
- 2.2.1 The Committee will be aware from the report considered at its September 2014 meeting that the Council is jointly commissioning with Peterborough City Council, a new secondary school, with sixth form, at Hampton Gardens, Peterborough, which is planned to open in September 2017 and will become the catchment school for Cambridgeshire children living in Yaxley. The catchment school for these pupils is currently Stanground College, also in Peterborough. However, Sawtry VA has been, to date, a popular choice for parents from outside its catchment area, particularly from Yaxley with, approximately, 25% of its roll made up of pupils from Yaxley and Farcet.
- 2.2.2 Sawtry VA has a falling roll. The demography within its catchment area is that of an aging population. In addition, there is no planned housing development of any significant size in the school's catchment area. Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT), the Department for Education's (DfE) approved sponsor of Sawtry VA following the Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted) inspection judgement of the school as 'inadequate' and subject to 'special measures', is concerned that the attraction of the new school at Hampton Gardens could threaten pupil numbers at Sawtry by the end of the decade. In turn, these changes could be expected to threaten the viability of Sawtry VA's sixth form in the medium term.
- 2.2.3 Judging by the track record of CMAT e.g. the significant improvements at North Cambridge Academy since it has been sponsored by CMAT, officers are reasonably confident that the school will be out of special measures by 2016-17, which is the earliest date the school could be taking students from Alconbury Weald.
- 2.3 Secondary provision for Alconbury Weald
- 2.3.1 Forecasts for the development at Alconbury Weald indicate that it will be large enough to sustain its own secondary school of 8FE/1600 places. It is proposed that the catchment area for that school would be Alconbury Weald itself. However, forecasts suggest that it would not be viable to open the new school before 2020/21 and the developers have agreed that, in the interim, it would fund the transport costs for the 11-15 year olds from the development to attend another secondary school in the area. Both St Peter's and Sawtry CC could accommodate the first cohorts of secondary pupils arising from Alconbury Weald on an interim basis until the opening of the new secondary school there. The different variables (housing trajectories that are provisional and subject to change) which create uncertainty surrounding the amount of extra provision required plus the challenges created by unknown timescales for when new development will come forward, together with the facts set out below, have led officers to conclude that Sawtry VA would provide the best solution to this issue.
- The existing village of Alconbury, the closest to the new development lies within Sawtry VA's catchment area.
  - It has capacity to accommodate the forecast additional demand for places until 2026/27: such an influx of students would enable the school to weather better the demographic and financial challenges which it faces;
  - As developments come forward in Bearscroft and Brampton Park (in the

catchment area of Hinchingsbrooke) the scope will be reduced for families from the St Peter's catchment to successfully exercise parental preferences for Hinchingsbrooke. (Around 38% of those living in St Peter's catchment opt to attend elsewhere, compared to 19% of those in the Hinchingsbrooke catchment. St Ivo is a popular alternative).

- When numbers from the Ermine Street development are combined with the existing catchment population, the number of 11 year olds in the St Peter's catchment could exceed 9.5 FE in 2021/22, reach 10 FE by 2025/26 and 10.8 FE by 2028/29. Expanding the school by 2 FE should be sufficient to meet this forecast demand. If St Peter's were required to take the first Alconbury Weald secondary students, it would be necessary to expand the school earlier.

## **2.4 Proposed Development at Wyton Airfield**

2.4.1 The proposed development of 4,500 homes at Wyton Airfield is of a size sufficient to sustain its own secondary school. However, the forecast growth of secondary school children from this development is such that it is unlikely that there would be sufficient students to make it viable to open a new secondary school before 2022/23. So, as with Alconbury Weald, another school would need to be identified to take 11-15 year old pupils in the interim. Officers have identified three schools which could be considered:

- St Peter's the catchment school for the existing community at Wyton-on-the-Hill;
- St Ivo, the nearest secondary school and one to which the Council is already providing free transport for those pupils from Wyton-on-the-Hill who attend the school on preference grounds because it is the closest school. Currently the Council transport 45 students to St Ivo as the nearest school and 45 students to St Peter's as the catchment school.
- Abbey College Academy, which with a current PAN of 300 (10FE) has the physical capacity and attendance trends (30% opt elsewhere, particularly to St Ivo) to accommodate its existing catchment demand and that forecast from the very limited new development in its catchment as well as the early demand for places from the Wyton Airfield development.

Officers have concluded that the best option would be St Peter's for the reasons set out below.

- 2.4.2
- It could accommodate its existing catchment population and both Ermine Street and Wyton Airfield until 2021/22 without the need for any additional accommodation provided it was not also providing the interim solution to Alconbury Weald.
  - Taking in to account the numbers forecast from the St Ives West development, if St Ivo were designated as the interim secondary school for Wyton Airfield, pressure on intakes could be seen from 2020/21; a year earlier than would be the case at St Peter's.
  - Whilst there are already links between the existing community of Wyton-on-the-Hill and St Ivo (50% attend there on preference), St Peter's is the catchment school and changing the catchment area for a time limited period would be disruptive and potentially undermine the integration of the new and existing communities which is the aspiration set out in the Local Plan and one which officers would endorse.
  - Abbey College Academy has stated an intention to reduce its PAN to 180, with effect from September 2016. Furthermore, the Council could incur

secondary school transport costs on three fronts:

- existing Wyton-on-the Hill children entitled to transport to St Peter's as catchment and St Ivo as their nearest school
- Wyton Airfield children entitled to attend Abbey College on grounds of interim catchment and St Ivo as their nearest school.

2.4.3 The following table sets out the anticipated impact of the new developments and both proposals on pupil numbers/forms of entry at Hinchingsbrooke, St Peter's and Sawtry. The figures reflect the expectation that any Alconbury Weald or Wyton student beginning their secondary school career at Sawtry and St Peter's respectively, before the secondary schools open on these 2 new developments, would remain there for the duration of the 5 years of their secondary education.

**Table : Recent & forecast catchment population aged 11-15**

School & Development	PAN	2013/14	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21	2025/26	2030/31
<b>Number of Children</b>							
Hinchingsbrooke	300	1411	1393	1456	1514	1661	1649
Hinchingsbrooke & Brampton Park <sup>1</sup>	300	1411	1393	1466	1540	1725	1746
Sawtry VA	230	758	743	723	736	726	713
Sawtry & Alconbury Weald <sup>2</sup>	230	758	748	774	819	726	713
St Peter's S	277	1156	1199	1223	1280	1410	1414
St Peter's & Ermine St & RAF Wyton <sup>3</sup>	277	1156	1199	1228	1308	1387	1425
St Peter's & RAF Wyton <sup>4</sup>	277	1156	1199	1228	1308	1316	1297
<b>Forms of Entry</b>							
Hinchingsbrooke	10	9.4	9.3	9.7	10.1	11.1	11
Hinchingsbrooke & Brampton Park <sup>1</sup>	10	9.4	9.3	9.8	10.3	11.5	11.6
Sawtry VA	7.7	5.1	5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.8
Sawtry & Alconbury Weald <sup>2</sup>	7.7	5.1	5	5.2	5.5	4.8	4.8
St Peter's S	9.2	7.7	8	8.2	8.5	9.4	9.4
St Peter's & Ermine St & RAF Wyton <sup>3</sup>	9.2	7.7	8	8.2	8.7	9.2	9.5
St Peter's & RAF Wyton <sup>4</sup>	9.2	7.7	8	8.2	8.7	8.8	8.6

**Notes**

1. The first pupils are expected from Brampton Park in 2017/18.

2. The first pupils are expected from Alconbury Weald in 2016/17. The new school is expected to open in 2020/21.

3. The earliest pupils might arise from RAF Wyton in 2018/19 and the Ermine Street developments in 2021/22. The earliest the new school might open is 2022/23.

4. The first pupils might arise from RAF Wyton in 2018/19. The earliest the new school might open is 2022/23.

3 & 4. Wyton-on-the-Hill village transfers to the new Wyton secondary catchment from 2022/23.

### **3 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- 3.1.1 Providing access to local and high quality mainstream education will enhance the skills of the local workforce. The schools would also provide local employment.
- 3.1.2 In the specific case of Sawtry VA, maintaining buoyant pupil numbers will also support the library and community sports facilities which are located on the school site and support the viability of the sixth form and local students' progression into further education or work.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

- 3.2.1 Whilst the first secondary cohorts from Alconbury Weald and Wyton will need to be accommodated elsewhere, and would, therefore, be unable to walk to school, they would still develop the independence skills associated with using home to school transport.

#### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

- 3.3.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource Implications**

- 4.1.1 The Council is responsible for all pre-opening start up costs in respect of new basic need schools, including diseconomy of scale costs, funding for which may be needed over a number of years. Demographic forecasts suggest a slower build up of secondary-aged pupils in a new development than their primary counterparts. Thus new secondary schools necessary to provide for predicted pupil demand are not usually planned to open until 3-4 years into the life of the developments, when they are viable not only in financial terms but also in terms of a sufficient cohort size (around 150 pupils) to provide students with the appropriate range of curriculum subjects.
- 4.1.2 The Council has already secured, via its S106 negotiations, agreement from the developer, Urban & Civic, to fund the transport costs for secondary aged pupils from Alconbury Weald to attend a local secondary school until it is viable for the secondary school on the new development to open. Officers would negotiate similarly with the developers of Wyton Airfield to fund interim transport costs for the first secondary aged pupils from that new development.

#### **4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

- 4.2.1 There are no significant implications within this category

#### **4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 4.3.1 There are no significant implications within this category



#### **4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

- 4.4.1 All the secondary and post-16 providers in Huntingdonshire (and Whittlesey) were invited to the public consultation meetings which took place jointly with Peterborough City Council in 2014 around the proposed development of a new secondary school at Hampton Gardens.
- 4.4.2 A series of individual meetings took place between officers and all the secondary and post-16 providers in Huntingdonshire in 2011/12 prior to the developers Urban & Civic submitting their outline planning application for the new development at Alconbury Weald. In addition, in response to a request from the new Principal of St Peter's School the lead officer for place planning in Huntingdonshire met with him and his governing body in September 2014 to outline the scope and implications of planned and proposed development within Huntingdon Town and the surrounding area.
- 4.4.3 Following the decisions made by Committee officers will consult with the secondary schools in Huntingdonshire about the proposed arrangements for secondary aged pupils from the planned housing developments in the strategic expansion locations at Alconbury Weald and Wyton Airfield.

#### **4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

- 4.5.1 The Local County Councillors for Sawtry and Yaxley and Farcet have been kept informed of the Council's joint project with Peterborough City Council to develop the new secondary school at Hampton Gardens and the possible implications for Sawtry VA.

#### **4.6 Public Health Implications**

- 4.6.1 There are no significant implications within this category

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b><i>Report by Cambridgeshire Research Group on Secondary Provision in Huntingdon and Surrounding Catchments March 2015.</i></b>	Clare Buckingham 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Octagon Building, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
<b><i>CYP Committee Report September 2014 on new secondary school at Hampton Gardens, Peterborough.</i></b>	As above
<b><i>Huntingdonshire Draft Local Plan to 2036</i></b>	Huntingdonshire District Council website