

WIRRAL PUPIL PLACE PLANNING STRATEGY 2021-2026

March 2021

FOREWORD

Wirral Council is committed to ensure that Wirral children can attend local schools that provide high quality education which meets their needs and are efficient and viable. We want to promote and create a culture of inclusion to ensure that the life chances of every child and young person are maximised and so that vulnerable children can reach their full potential.

The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places available for children and young people in the right locations and at the right time to meet demand. This includes both maintained and Academy schools.

The School Organisation Plan 2003 set out how we would meet our responsibility to secure sufficient education provision. This was followed by ongoing updates to continue to monitor requirements, identify emerging need and new projects and inform sufficiency strategy. The purpose of the Pupil Place Planning Strategy 2021 – 2026 is to refresh the previous strategy to take account of legislative changes whilst also setting out a robust framework for reviewing pupil place planning alongside a suggested schedule of reviews to take place over the next five years.

The Strategy set out a series of key principles which will underpin pupil place planning and will ensure that any future proposals are made in line with the principles and agreed framework as set out. Fundamental to this is:

- Using detailed and **meaningful insight and data** to allow accurate and robust forecasting
- Taking a **collaborative approach** and a commitment to work with all schools and stakeholders in ensuring they are consulted and involved
- Maintaining a **focus on inclusion** so that children with different needs are offered high quality education which meets their need
- Ensuring that children's **educational outcomes and attainment** are at the forefront of decision-making.

As a council, we are embarking on an exciting change journey across our education sector. We have already identified opportunities and priorities for change, and these are providing our focus and momentum moving forward. The Pupil Place Planning Strategy 2021 – 2026 not only ensures we adhere to our statutory responsibilities but will enable us to revitalise focus on our school places, ensuring that Wirral children are provided with inclusive, local education which meets their needs.

Paul Boyce, Director for Children, Families and Education

Councillor Wendy Clements



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STRATEGIC CONTEXT

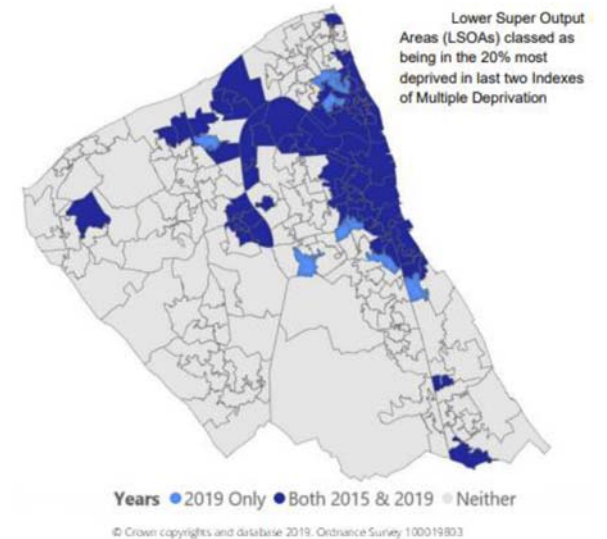
ABOUT WIRRAL

Wirral is a large metropolitan area covering the northern 60 square miles of the peninsula between the Dee and Mersey Estuaries. Wirral is well known for the high quality of its countryside and coast, and transport links to Liverpool, Chester and North Wales.

The Borough is an area of strong contrasts. The predominantly built-up eastern area opposite Liverpool, forms part of the core of the Merseyside conurbation. Almost two-thirds of the population live within the urban area to the east of the M53 motorway, between the coastal resort of New Brighton in the north, to the entrance of the Manchester Ship Canal in the south. Birkenhead, located at the heart of east Wirral, is the largest town within the area, historically built around the maritime trades associated with the Mersey docklands. The west of the Borough is characterised by a series of largely dormitory residential settlements surrounded by open countryside, of which over 60% is still used for farming.

The population of Wirral is 322,796 (ONS, 2018) with an economically active population of 155,300 (ONS 2018). The proportion of people of working age, particularly of younger adults, is at its highest in central and inner areas of east Wirral. The proportion of older age groups is generally larger in the west. The proportion of children is also higher in east Wirral. 20% of children are living in poverty compared to 17% across England. Although Wirral's overall ranking for deprivation has gone down between 2015 and 2019, the number of LSOAs in the most deprived 20% of areas in England has increased by 10. This means that an additional 20,000 residents are now classed as living in deprivation compared to 2015 (IMD 2019).

The main areas of deprivation are concentrated in the east of the Borough – Birkenhead, Bidston, Seacombe and Rock Ferry. There are pockets of deprivation in the south and west of Wirral, including the Mill Park area of Eastham, the Acre Lane area of Bromborough, Prenton Dell in Prenton, Woodchurch, Overchurch, Moreton, Leasowe and the Greenbank Road area of West Kirby. There is a significant concentration of social housing in east and central Wirral, these areas often correlate with areas of greatest socio-economic need.



This map shows areas classed as being in the most 20% most deprived in Wirral

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This Strategy is underpinned by legislation including:

- **The Education Act 1996:** Local authorities have a duty under **section 14 of the Education Act 1996** to secure that sufficient schools are available for their area to provide primary and secondary education. To do this, local authorities are required to produce information about the number of registered pupils and the capacity of schools in their area. This information is used to monitor the provision of places nationally, assess current and future shortfalls in school capacity and to inform the calculation of basic need capital allocations to support new pupil places. The data also informs the locations and sizes of new schools, or school expansions, provided through centrally funded capital programmes.
- **The Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations 2016:** These regulations require local authorities to submit School Capacity surveys each year based on guided methodology and forecasts.
- **The Education and Inspections Act 2006:** This Act changed the way in which education provision is established and aimed to empower schools by devolving decision making to them. It also increased the strategic role of local authorities as champions of pupils and parents, and a duty to act as commissioner of school places, rather than provider. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also made provision to increase opportunities for parental choice and ensure fair access to educational opportunity.
- Section 37 of the **Education Act 2011** requires Local Authorities to seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy or Free School whenever they identify a need for a new school; the “Academy/Free School presumption”.

This legislation underpins much of the planning around pupil places within Wirral, will be regarded and considered as part of future development. Any proposals moving forward and aligned to this Strategy will adhere to this and other relevant legislation and specific responsibilities around significant change to school provision.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

National Pupil Projections

The most recent national data on pupil projections for England was released in July 2020 and provides projections are based on:

- new mid-2018 ONS national population projections published in October 2019.
- ONS monthly births data up to and including 2018; and,
- School Census data up to and including January 2020.

This data, (which is reviewed annually) shows that the population in state funded schools is projected to decrease by 408,000 (to 7,370,000) over the next ten years to 2030, a total rate of decrease for the whole period of 5.2%.

Total state-funded schools	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Numbers in 000's	7,778	7,833	7,858	7,854	7,815	7,752	7,689
year on year change		55	25	-4	-39	-63	-63
	%	0.70	0.32	-0.05	-0.50	-0.81	-0.82

Pupil projections	2020 January	
actual population in 2018	8,082,120	
actual population in 2019	8,180,743	1.21
actual population in 2020	8,258,194	0.94
projection for 2021	8,314,771	0.68
projection for 2022	8,340,128	0.30
projection for 2023	8,335,451	-0.06
projection for 2024	8,296,696	-0.47
projection for 2025	8,233,773	-0.76
projection for 2026	8,170,753	-0.77
projection for 2027	8,094,646	-0.94
projection for 2028	8,006,289	-1.10
projection for 2029	7,919,593	-1.09
projection for 2030	7,851,676	-0.87

Analysis by cohort

The **nursery and primary school population** which has been rising since 2009, has now plateaued. This is primarily due to the fall in births in 2013 which is now feeding into the main school population. This drop is expected to continue for the whole projection period to 2030. The fall is steeper than previously projected due to lower births recorded since the end of 2016.

State-funded nursery & primary schools	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Numbers in 000's	4,647	4,631	4,593	4,527	4,450	4,391	4,342
year on year change		-16	-38	-66	-77	-59	-49
	%	-0.35	-0.83	-1.46	-1.73	-1.34	-1.13

The **secondary school** population began rising in 2016 and is projected to continue increasing until 2024 before gradually dropping. The peak and then fall is primarily due to the lower births seen in 2013 and beyond, which start to reach secondary school age in around 2025.

State-funded secondary schools	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Numbers in 000's	3,003	3,069	3,130	3,189	3,227	3,223	3,210
year on year change		66	61	59	38	-4	-13
	%	2.15	1.95	1.85	1.18	-0.12	-0.40

The population in **special schools** has been increasing for several years, at least partly driven by the increase in the overall population, and this is projected to continue until 2024, before also very gradually dropping.

State-funded special schools	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Numbers in 000's	113	116	119	120	121	120	119
year on year change		3	3	1	1	-1	-1
	%	2.59	2.52	0.83	0.83	-0.83	-0.84

LOCAL CONTEXT

Pupil Projections

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces 25-year projections by quaternary age group for each local authority area.

Primary

For Wirral, the ONS are currently projecting the primage age population to decrease to 2032-2033, then rise gradually again to 2043. There are projected to be 3,800 fewer children than the current point by 2032-33, with the level in 2043 remaining ~2,300 below current levels.

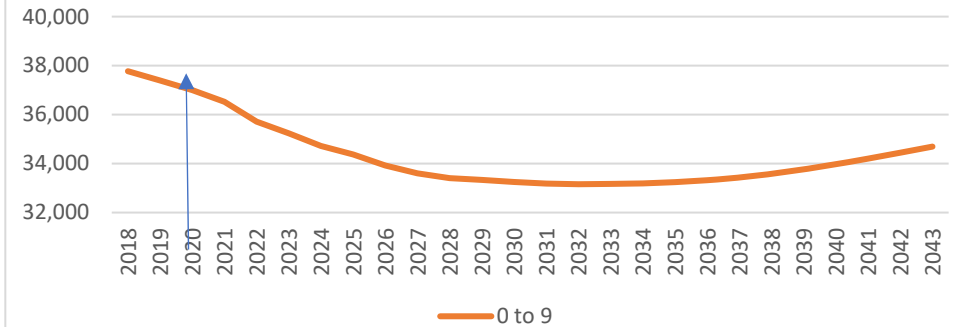
This fall may not be equally distributed across Wirral and some areas and some schools are likely to be affected more than others. The local authority produces detailed 5-year projections by small planning area and school considering local factors. In January 2019 across Wirral there were 2,442 vacant places in primary schools (~9%) – this is expected to increase by 2026 to 4,868 places (~17%).

Secondary

In secondary schools, the ONS project that the number of secondary age children will rise by approximately 2,300 pupils from 2020 to 2026, followed by a decline resulting in about 2,400 pupils below the 2020 level to 2043.

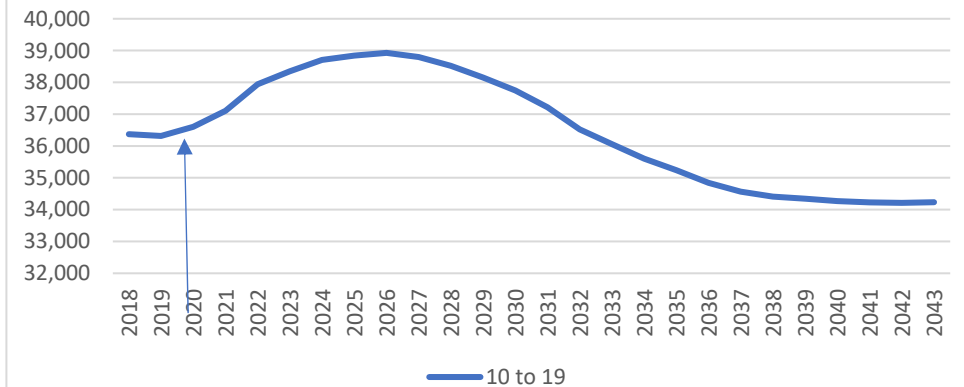
This graph shows number of Wirral pupils 10 to 19 from 2018 and projected to 2043 with an increase to 2027 and then steady decline to 2043 (ONS 2018).

Wirral pupils aged 0 to 9 from 2018 and projected to 2043 (ONS 2018)



This graph shows number of Wirral pupils aged 0-9 from 2018 with a decline to 2030 and then slow increase to 2043

Wirral pupils aged 10 to 19 from 2018 and projected to 2043 (ONS 2018)



WIRRAL SCHOOL PROFILE

There are 125 schools in Wirral. This includes 94 primary schools, including infant and junior schools and 20 secondary schools. There are 10 special schools, 5 primary and 5 secondary.

■	Community and VC Church of England primary schools
+	Catholic and VA Church of England primary schools
◆	Secondary schools
+	Catholic secondary schools
■	Special primary schools
◆	Special secondary schools
●	Nursery schools
▲	Independent schools and post-16 colleges



This map shows the location of school by type including primary, secondary, special, nursery and independent schools and post 16 – colleges.

Primary (including maintained nursery)

There are 79 primary schools and 12 standalone infant or junior schools. Wirral has 3 maintained nurseries.

	Primary	Infant/Junior	Nursery
Community or voluntary controlled	45	8	3
Voluntary aided	23	2	0
Academy	11	2	0
Foundation	0	0	0
Total	79	12	3

Secondary

There are 5 secondary schools which provide education for pupils aged 11 to 16 and 15 schools which provide education for pupils up to 19.

	Secondary 11 - 16	Secondary 11-19
Community or voluntary controlled	0	1
Voluntary aided	0	0
Academy	3	13
Foundation	2	1
Total	5	15

Special

There are 10 special schools in Wirral: four catering for Complex Learning Difficulties, two are primary and two are secondary; two cater for Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Condition (one primary and one secondary), one caters for Specific Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Condition at primary and three cater for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (one primary and two secondary).

	Special Primary	Special Secondary	Hospital
Community or voluntary controlled	5	5	1
Voluntary aided	0	0	0
Academy	0	0	0
Foundation	0	0	0
Total	5	5	1

In addition, there is a Hospital School.

There are 12 resource bases in primary schools and 4 in secondary schools. These are all operated in very different ways and were established by the local authority to promote inclusive opportunities for children and young people.

School status

The school provision in Wirral incorporates faith, selective, single and mixed sex schools including a single sex primary school.

	Primary (Incl. infant)	Secondary	Special
RC	19	4	0
Co-Education	12	0	0
Single Sex	1	10	1
Selective	0	6	0

The Local Authority retains a responsibility to plan school places for children aged 5 to 16 within its area – this includes all state-funded schools regardless of type or control.

Private and independent schools are not state funded. The closure of two private schools over the last few years has created increased demand for mainstream school places.

STRATEGIC VISION

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of the Wirral Pupil Place Planning Strategy is to set out a framework for the review of school planning areas which will enable the council to meet its statutory duty and ensure the provision of suitable and sufficiency places for school aged pupils. The Strategy sets out how we will work with key partners to shape education provision through a transparent and equitable approach which will lead to supported decision making.

Fundamental to the Strategy is:

- A clear vision and principles to maintain integrity of pupil place planning review
- Identified forecasting methodology which predicts future demand for places
- Wider factors which influence demand
- Key influences which must be considered as part of our approach to sufficiency
- A strategic approach within a transparent review and consultation process, ensuring that key stakeholders are engaged throughout
- Identified priority areas, aligned to relevant 'trigger points' which will be the focus of reviews over the next 12-24 months
- Ambitious, yet realistic review timetable

The Strategy is to be shared and supported across the education and local government landscape as well as with parents, pupils and the community to ensure there is borough-wide support and acknowledgement for plans and aspirations. Stakeholders recognise that this Strategy sits within a wider context and the need to continue to promote high standards of education and inclusion for all.

What is not covered by the Strategy?

Early years settings

This Strategy does not intend to incorporate the statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure there is enough childcare for families in the area. The responsibility for meeting this duty is carried out within a separate framework and outlined as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report 2021-2022. This report indicates that there are sufficient childcare places available and accessible across the borough to meet the current and projected needs of children of all ages.

It is proposed, however, that considering recent changes to funding for early years providers that the borough's-maintained **nursery school** provision is included within the scope of this Strategy. National changes to the funding rate for early years providers has meant that all childcare providers, including the private and voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, maintained nursery schools and nursery classes that are part of schools, are funded equitably on a locally agreed universal base rate. It is expected because of this and given that nursery schools have higher running costs than the PVI sector, nursery school budgets will be significantly impacted in the coming years.

Given the above, it is valid to examine the current nursery provision within this Strategy and how the needs of the community could best be met. The three nursery schools that would apply in this regard are: Somerville Nursery School in South Wallasey, which is federated with Somerville Primary School; Leasowe Early Years Centre in Leasowe, which is federated with Castleway Primary School and Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre in Woodchurch.

Post-16 provision

Post-16 place planning is not a duty for the Local Authority and will not be specifically examined in the Strategy, however, when considering secondary provision, the impact of any change on the availability of post-16 educational places will be considered.

Special School Provision

Previous and ongoing reviews of high needs places for pupils is continuing and will complement this Pupil Place Planning Strategy 2021 – 2026. The development of a Special School Sufficiency Strategy will sit alongside this Strategy and will explore and understand complex pupil forecasting for special school places as well as the wider factors which influence demand for places e.g. parental preference.

This Pupil Place Planning Strategy will consider and review the specific additional needs of pupils within the local planning area with the view to maintaining a focus on inclusion and seeking to meet the needs of all pupils within mainstream provision.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

VISION FOR PUPIL PLACE PLANNING

Our vision is **“to ensure that Wirral’s children attend local schools that provide high quality education, are efficient, viable and provide the best possible educational standards to meet their needs”**

PRINCIPLES

1. We will be fair, thorough, and respectful in our approach to Pupil Place planning reviews
2. We will follow and adhere to all legal requirements, seeking relevant advice and guidance where this is applicable
3. We will work with partners, and involve key stakeholders in pupil place planning where this is relevant and necessary
4. We will consult with schools, parents, and local communities as part of the pupil place planning process
5. We will utilise robust insight, intelligence, and data to underpin a robust methodology and analysis
6. We will always consider how our efforts will improve educational outcomes for children and young people
7. We will consider the efficiency and effectiveness of education provisions as part of pupil place planning
8. We will prioritise and focus on inclusion, ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities are at the forefront of considerations throughout

We will use the principles to guide what we do in reviewing pupil places in Wirral. Our focus will be maintaining integrity, support and commitment to ensure that children have access to a school place.

Supporting Wirral’s 2025 Plan: The Pupil Place Planning Strategy seeks to support the vision and pledges of the council and partners, particularly ensuring that we can provide brighter futures for our young people and families. Equally this strategy supports the creation of safe and vibrant communities in which education provision creates environments for parents to want to live and bring up their children.

STRATEGIC INFLUENCES

Planning and housing developments

Wirral Council Local Plan will set out an approach and detailed policy for development across the whole Borough for the period up to 2037. The Local Plan will shape how the Borough develops, attracting and guiding investment in the Borough from the private sector, the Council itself, and other public bodies. Such investment will include new homes, new offices and employment opportunities, colleges and schools, shops and leisure centres, and health facilities as well as improvements to existing infrastructure including green infrastructure.

Wirral Council has a housing requirement of 14,450 dwellings over the 17-year plan period, 800 per annum. The preferred option is to deliver these homes through an urban intensification strategy including the creation of new neighbourhoods as part of the regeneration of the Birkenhead Core area including those at Wirral Waters, Hamilton Park, Birkenhead Waterfront, Central Birkenhead, Hind Street, Scotts Quay and Kelvinside and Seacombe Riverside. Although predominantly higher density development, the intention in these areas is to promote inclusion of a mix of housing types, including for families. In addition, several former employment sites in Bromborough are now proposed to be allocated for residential development, likely to be mainly family housing at lower densities than Birkenhead.

There is a requirement to demonstrate that the Local Plan proposals are deliverable, especially in the first five years, and this includes the provision of necessary infrastructure, including schools. The Council can secure contributions from developers and additional grant funding for transformational projects around school assets so that our education sector can meet new demand. Any strategic approach undertaken moving forward must consider and take opportunity to review infrastructure and current provision to provide the modern, vibrant, and sustainable environment for families wishing to settle in new conurbations.

Schools Capital Programme

The Council receives Capital grants from the Department for Education to carry out improvements to school buildings. The type of grants Local Authorities receive from the DfE include:

- **Basic Need Capital Allocations:** Basic need capital allocations are made to local authorities to help them fund new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and by establishing new schools.

Capital allocation decisions made by the department are based principally on data collected from local authorities via the annual Schools Capacity Return (SCAP). The department collects information through the SCAP collection, in each pupil place planning area of every local authority, on the capacity of schools and local authority's own forecasts of pupil numbers for several years ahead.

Basic Need capital funding is allocated based on a comparison of forecast pupil numbers with school capacity, with shortfalls in capacity attracting funding this is for pupil place planning i.e., to support Capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing schools and establishing new schools. This Capital funding is un-ring fenced and is not time-bound.

The development may comprise short-term fixes such as year on bulge classes whereby an individual school or number of schools may be requested to take additional pupils for a short time depending on the year group. This usually has a negative impact on financial aspects and development opportunities. The more beneficial option is to plan medium to long term by identifying areas of the borough that require a high demand of pupil places. This approach can then be developed over time and across funding years to ease the burden on the Capital budget.

- School Condition Allocation [SCA]: is for Local Authorities to maintain and improve the Condition of the School Estate and includes Devolved Formula Capital which sits in the School allocation/budget.

The principal funding allocations are Basic Need and School Condition Allocation. These two Capital allocations form the basis of our School Capital Programme to deliver additional teaching space in schools and to continuously maintain the school estate.

National capital allocations are supplemented where possible with council capital, either borrowed or by the use of capital receipt from the sale of surplus council assets. In addition the schools capital programme is partially funded by ring fenced capital agreed with The Secretary of State from the disposal of former school sites.

Educational standards

Wirral's focus over the next 5 years is ensuring 'Brighter Futures' for children and young people. With most primary and secondary schools rated as outstanding or good by Ofsted, Wirral prides itself on maintaining high standards of education across all key stages. The harnessing of system leaders to promote high standards in all areas has resulted in positive attainment result in many key stages.

The developing School Improvement Plan for Wirral seeks to build on this achievement, particularly in earlier key stages where a focus on driving change across the sector is a key priority. The importance of educational continuity between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is key to ensuring the building blocks for learning are in place.

School provision and infrastructure plays a major role in supporting these priorities by creating the sustainable environments with robust support which will enable children to reach their potential.

At the forefront of this Strategy will be recognition of the wider Wirral ambition to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children and the development of pupil place planning reviews will have regard and promote this in all areas so that the council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and drive quality in standards of education.

Promoting inclusion

One of the Strategy priorities is to focus on creating a culture of inclusion where Wirral's mainstream schools can meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

The local area SEND Strategy 2020 -2024, as approved by the Council in December 2020 sets out an ambitious plan for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

In reviewing school place planning, it is essential that we consider the educational needs and the provision required for children and young people with SEND. This means exploring options where children can be educated in mainstream settings with adapted, relevant, and bespoke support that ensures they can learn.

Predicting the numbers of pupils requiring special school places in Wirral more challenging than applying a standard methodology. Whilst it is expected that the special school population will grow as new housing is built and birth rate trends change, forecasting these pupil numbers needs to be undertaken separately from mainstream schools due to the smaller numbers involved and the greater level of variation and impact of external factors.

There are also additional factors that affect the number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, such as the protocol and definitions of SEND, as well as a different process for admission to Special Schools that is linked to needs assessments and placements.

This Strategy will explore opportunities to focus on inclusion, considering how mainstream schools will continue and furthermore meet the educational needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. A Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Strategy is being developed to manage demand for places for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

School size and viability

There are currently 15 primary schools with more than 25% surplus places in Wirral. By 2026, in line with the pupil forecasting methodology and predictions, there are likely to be 27 schools in this position.

One of the challenges with having surplus places is the national funding associated with each child's place, with smaller schools with less children on roll having access to less resources. This can have an impact on the ability of schools to use resources directly on children's education, given the overall budgetary requirements of running a school. E.g. cleaning, heating and lighting costs.

Schools with more pupils on roll, generally have more flexibility to spend money on additional resources such as classroom assistants, books, and equipment. These schools also generally perform better in terms of inspection outcome and standards.

In Wirral, evidence suggests that schools that have fallen into one of the Ofsted categories of concern have generally been among the smaller schools. This arises because there is an inevitable requirement on individual staff in small schools to take on wider burdens of responsibility.

There is a recognised requirement by law to address both deficit and surplus across the school estate. It is essential to consider how to organise schools for the efficient and effective delivery of education and to maintain a focus on high quality education and create a culture of high performing schools. Previous reorganisations and reduction in the number of schools has resulted in more focused use of school funding, both that allocated by pupil as well as lump sum allocations. Any financial additionality which results from significant change to the estate is redistributed through the schools funding formula.

The Pupil Place Planning Strategy sets out a framework through which consideration of small schools, their educational standards and their financial viability to ensure that future provision and sufficiency is based on evidence-based understanding leading to sound decision-making.

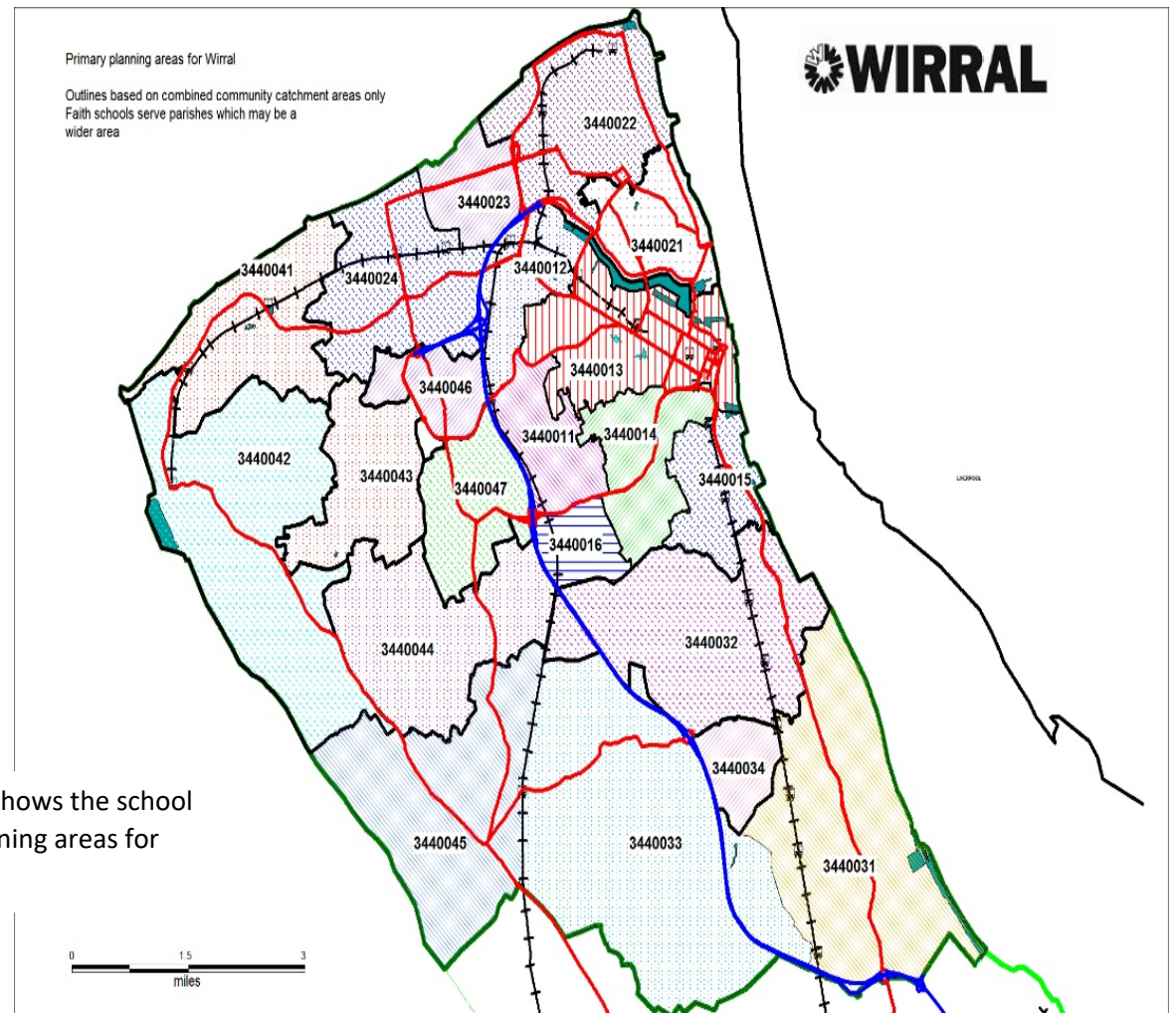
STRATEGIC APPROACH

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING AREAS

All local authorities are required to identify place planning areas.

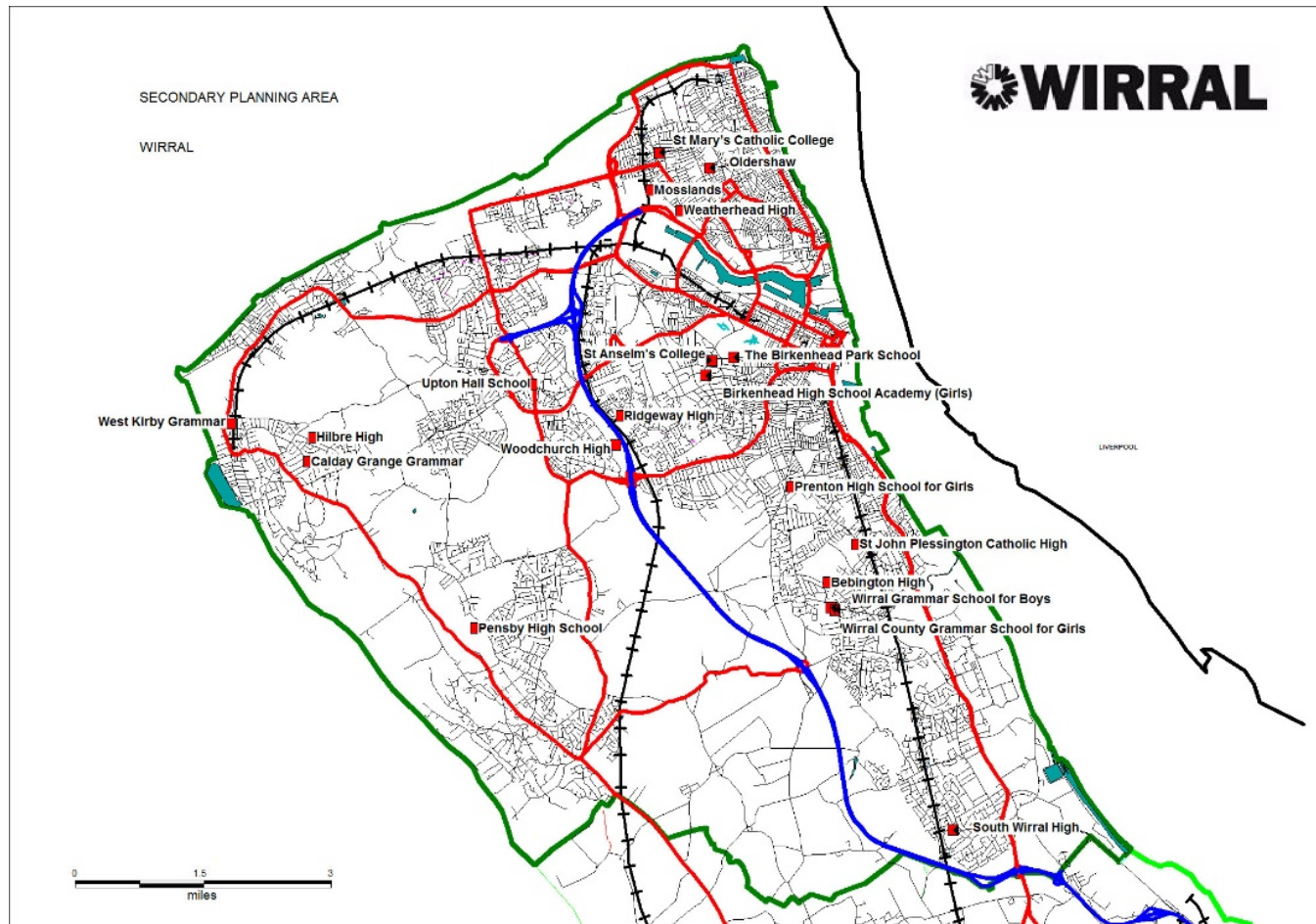
For **primary school** place planning purposes, Wirral is divided into small planning areas as set out in the former School Organisation Plan.

Planning area code	Area
3440021	South Wallasey
3440022	North Wallasey
3440023	Leasowe
3440024	Moreton
3440041	Hoylake/Meols
3440042	West Kirby
3440043	Greasby
3440044	Pensby/Thingwall
3440045	Heswall
3440031	Bromborough
3440032	Bebington
3440033	Thornton Hough
3440034	Spital
3440046	Upton
3440011	Noctorum
3440012	Beechwood
3440013	North Birkenhead
3440014	Central Birkenhead
3440015	South Birkenhead
3440016	Prenton



This map shows the school place planning areas for primary

For secondary schools, Wirral is a single planning area.



This map shows Wirral as one school place planning area for secondary and the locations of secondary schools

These planning areas form the basis of reviews of pupil places.

PUPIL FORECASTING

Planning future education provision and predicting future demand of school spaces is a complex process. To do so, a local authority uses a range of information including population forecasts, local demographic data, migration data and information regarding planned housing developments. By analysing all this data, we can review trends in pupil numbers, and this helps with effective future forecasting of pupil places.

Primary Schools

In forecasting future demand for places in primary schools, the **sources of data** used are:

- the percentage of live births which appears in Reception
- actual pupil numbers taken from the January School Census
- live birth figures obtained from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) historical information relating to the school's intake figure.

The percentage of the Wirral live birth figure entering the Foundation 2 year in Wirral primary schools is checked annually and a rolling three-year average is produced. The three-year average is applied to the live birth figure to produce an authority wide total.

This is currently operating at +3.6%. *

A projection is then made for each individual school intake, based on the intake of the previous three years at the school, adjusted to consider the authority wide total and local factors. For primary age pupils net migration (into and out of Wirral) is net neutral.

**This figure is accurate at time of writing (March 2021)*

Secondary Schools

For secondary schools, the source of data is:

- the January School Census
- historical information relating to the school's intake figure
- actual staying on rate for the school at Year 12, 13 and 14 assessed from the January School Census.

For secondary age pupils, there is a net migration gain – this is called ‘the Year 6/7 uplift’. This uplift is largely due to out of borough resident pupils travelling to attend Wirral’s grammar schools and movement from independent schools.

The Year 6/7 uplift is calculated on a rolling three-year average of the difference between Wirral school Year 6 and Wirral school Year 7 from the Census and is updated for each forecast period. This is currently operating at +2.9%. *

The uplift is applied to each existing Wirral primary year groups (F2 to Year 6) and to projected F2 intakes for younger years. This provides a Wirral-wide target figure for each secondary entry year group for not only the next 5 years, but an additional four years (not published).

A projection is produced for each individual secondary school Year 7 intake, based on the intake of the previous three years at the school, and adjusted to meet the target for Wirral.

Years 8 to 11 are based on the May Census, rolled forward for each year group. For Year 12, the actual Year 11 figure is multiplied by a staying on rate for each individual school; the same principle is applied for actual Year 12 moving to Year 13, and for actual Year 13 moving to Year 14.

** This figure is accurate at time of writing (March 2021)*

Accuracy of the projections

The accuracy of the projection methodology for Wirral is checked year on year.

Secondary projections over five years are on average between -0.1% and -0.6% of actual. Overall, the methodology tends to estimate slightly above the actual figure – on average by ~33 pupils/year group.

Primary projections over five years are on average between -0.1 to +1.1% of actual. Overall the methodology tends to estimate slightly below the actual figure – on average by ~23 pupils/year group.

OTHER FACTORS CONSIDERED WITHIN PROJECTIONS

Account is taken of local factors which may result in changed patterns, for example significant developments in housing provision.

Religious preferences

Wirral has both faith and non-faith primary schools and 1 in 3 Wirral parents choose to send their child to a faith school (Catholic or Church of England). Projections for individual schools take this into account.

Housing developments

There are several substantial housing developments in parts of Wirral which are yet to take effect. However, the actual pupil yield from housing developments is lower than is often thought. In Wirral, the figure of 4 to 6 pupils per year group per 100 homes has generally been quoted based on national figures, with a proviso that flats, and retirement housing generate few children. A 2019 analysis of all residential property in Wirral has provided a lower actual yield. Current Wirral residential property (all types) generates on average 2.4 pupils per year group per 100 homes.

This may be dependent on the property type:

- Flats/maisonettes and bungalows generate fewer than 1 child per year group per 100 homes
- Semi-detached and detached properties generate between 2 and 3 children per year group per 100 homes, with a higher yield from semi-detached than detached houses
- The highest yield is for existing terraced houses which generate 3-4 children per year group per 100 homes

	Yield range per year group	Total primary children per 100 homes
Old formula	4 to 6	28 to 42
Wirral all residential	2 to 3	14 to 21
Wirral flats	<1	2 to 7

Single sex vs mixed sex - There are more single sex girls' schools in Wirral than boys. Parental preference for single sex (girls or boys) or mixed sex schools is factored into the projections based on historical patterns of parental preference.

Selection - Wirral has six selective schools, for which entry requires achieving a standard on a selective assessment. Parental preference for these schools is factored into the projections based on historical patterns of parental preference.

PUPIL PLACE PLANNING REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Review framework

The Pupil Place Planning Strategy sets out a robust process and framework for ensuring that Wirral meets its statutory duty and ensures sufficiency of school places, addressing any deficit or surplus. Pupil place planning reviews will be the main vehicle for driving change across the school estate, surrounded by robust governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement and political support.

Pupil place planning reviews will consider a wide range of data and insight and will consider the influencing factors which may impact on future demand for school places. Reviews will use a detailed appraisal framework to determine actions and recommendations for change to be put forward for formal agreement through council governance arrangements. Reviews will be underpinned by the principles set out within this Strategy to ensure integrity of the process.

1. Initiation

For a pupil place planning review to take place, a working group will be convened of key officers from across the local authority including representatives from planning, assets, finance, HR, legal, school admissions, education and insight. A stakeholder group will be convened in parallel to the review group consisting of, where necessary, representatives from schools, diocesan and academy trusts. The Schools Commissioner and/or the Education and Skills Funding Agency may also be engaged in reviews, where this is necessary.

The review will look at the whole planning area and consider the pupil predictions in line with forecast methodology as applied. The review will consider a range of information and insight and a range of outcome models, all aligned to the appraisal and outcomes framework.

2. Appraisal

Review considerations	Purpose	Methodology	Source
Pupil predictions/forecast methodology	To understand anticipated demand on school places in that area	DfE methodology for SCAP	Admissions Manager
Educational standards	To consider current standard and emerging trends of educational attainment over 5 past years for schools within the area	Attainment standards data	Schools Insight
Inspection outcomes	To consider current inspection outcomes and emerging patterns, trends	Inspection outcomes data – trend data	Head of School Effectiveness
Financial considerations	To assess current financial circumstance, trends and current/future pressures	School financial information	Finance
Planning/housing developments	To consider current and planned housing developments and impact on demand for places	Local planning developments by planning area	Local Planning Officers
Current asset infrastructure and capital plans*	To consider current and future programme of asset development within area	Capital Assets programme (schools) Building condition information	Strategic Assets
Other – Personnel pressures	To consider any additional pressures/influencing factors e.g. senior leadership vacancies	School information	Schools

** additional considerations may also include looking at the availability (or otherwise) of available assets/buildings, such as the Kingsway Academy, within the relevant review phases*

There is no specific weighting to the factors identified as part of the review and not all may be considered for every review.

3. Possible outcomes

- **Non-significant changes to existing schools** - There are several different alterations that can be made to school provision. This could include proposals to increase the size of schools, construct building work or add on resources or bases to a mainstream provision. These require minimal or no additional formal consultation or legal process.
- **Significant changes to existing maintained schools** – This could include prescribed alterations, such as to a school’s age range, other actions such as school closures or amalgamations. These require formal consultation procedure as set out within published guidance.
 - [Opening and Closing Maintained Schools](#)
 - [Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools](#)
 - [Making significant alterations or closure to an Academy school](#)
- **New schools – the Academy/Free School presumption** - Section 37 of the Education Act 2011 requires Local Authorities to seek proposals for the establishment of an Academy or Free School whenever they identify a need for a new school; the “Academy/Free School presumption”. There is a process for seeking proposals, which must be assessed. The Local Authority must provide the required site and the funding required to establish the new school, and state a preference for the preferred bidder, however the ultimate decision rests with the Secretary of State.

If no proposals are received, the Local Authority can ask for permission from the Secretary of State to operate a competition process to establish a new maintained school. There are some limited exceptions to this – for example, consent is not required to establish a new Voluntary Aided school, or a primary school resulting from an infant and junior amalgamation, or because of a reorganisation of existing faith schools.

[New Schools guidance](#)

- **Federations** – Federated schools continue to be separate schools with separate budgets and Ofsted inspections. Schools within a federation can agree to pool some or all of the school’s budgets as long as there is a clear audit trail. The staffing structure of a Federation might include an executive head across two or more schools, with an assistant headteacher in the individual schools, or the headteacher of one of the federated schools may also act as the executive headteacher.

Federation does not of itself produce financial efficiencies or resolve the issues faced by a small primary school and may be inappropriate where schools are too small or have falling rolls, making one or more schools educationally unviable, or where arrangements may be predatory, leading to resource from one school being used to subsidise another.

[Federation guidance](#)

4. Consultation

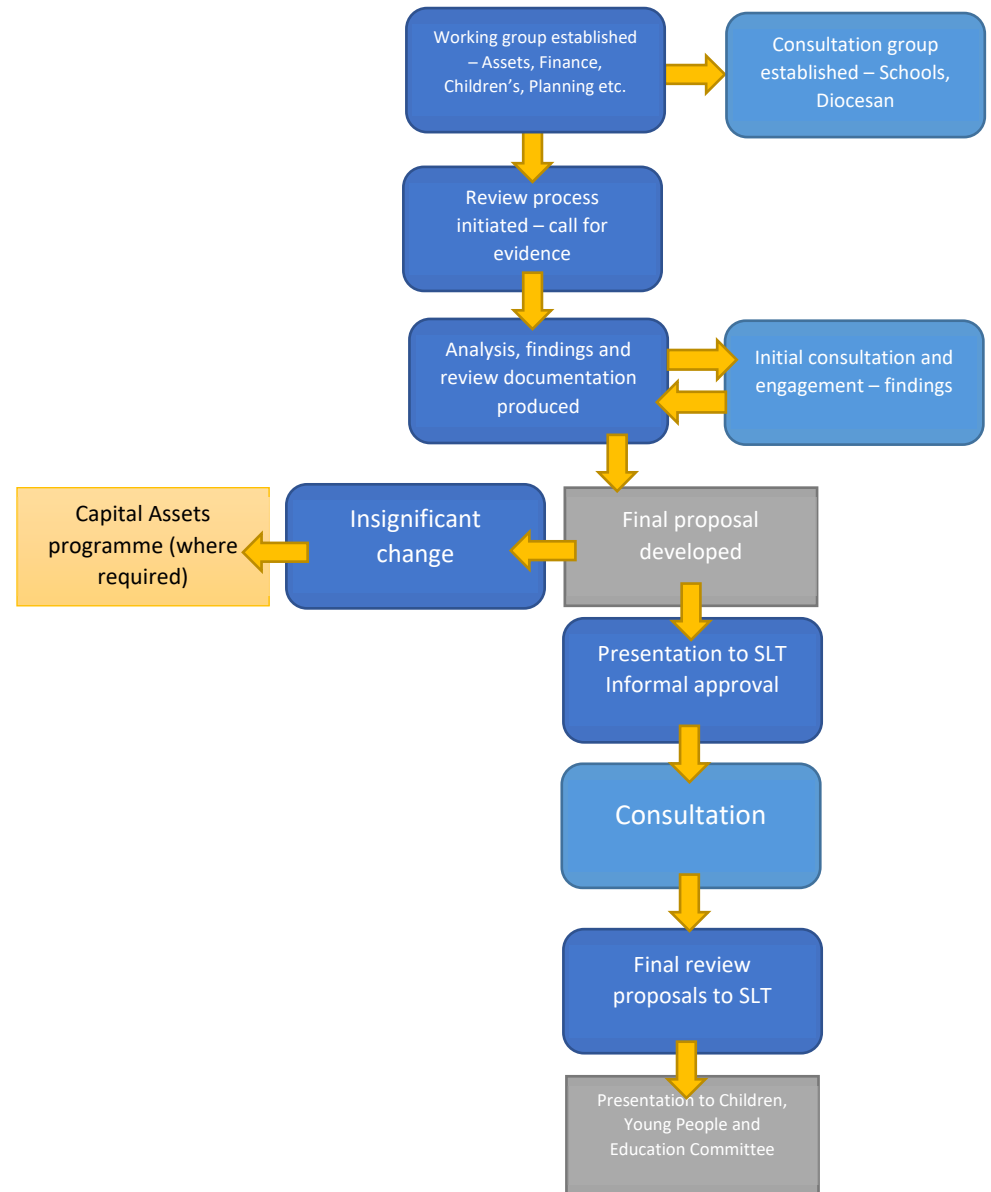
Informal engagement with key stakeholders will be integral to the pupil place planning review approach. Their views will feed in wider contextual factors which need to be considered as part of the appraisal and will help shape actions to be taken.

All recommendations and decisions will be made regarding the legal framework for consultation and engagement with adherence to any expected timescales for feedback and influence over decisions.

5. Decision - making

Proposals which result in insignificant change will be agreed by a Strategic Governance Group with responsibility for reviewing all proposals made because of pupil place planning reviews.

This group will present significant proposals to the Children’s Council Strategic Leadership Team and the Children, Families and Education Committee where this is required.



LEARNING

Following the approval of the School Organisation Plan in 2003, a series of reviews were carried out between 2006 to 2010. These reviews resulted in the development of two new schools and multi-million investment in other schools to ensure they were fit for the future. They also resulted in a reduction of surplus places, where this was required. The consolidation of places in fewer schools ensures best use of the schools delegated budget, both the pupil unit led elements and any remaining school lump sum allocations as well as better long-term use of other funding e.g. maintenance investment.

Case study

In 2006 Cabinet agreed to carry out consultation on options relating to phase 3 review which had taken place in the Pensby and Thingwall, South Wallasey and Leasowe planning areas.

Based on these responses and additional suggestions put forward during the consultation process, the outcome was the closure of once school and the amalgamation of an infant and junior school to form an all-through primary school.

This proposal ensured an improved offer of provision with investment in the school estate, local community and importantly for the children and young people in that area.

PUPIL PLACE PLANNING REVIEWS

It is proposed that pupil place planning reviews take place in the following order:

	Local Plan Area	Small Planning Areas
Phase 1*	Birkenhead (Suburban and Commercial)	Beechwood; Central Birkenhead; North Birkenhead; South Birkenhead; Noctorum; Prenton
Phase 2	Bromborough & Eastham	Bromborough/Eastham; Spital; Thornton Hough; Bebington
Phase 3	Wallasey	North Wallasey; South Wallasey
Phase 4	Mid-Wirral	Greasby ;Leasowe; Moreton; Upton; Woodchurch
Phase 5	West Kirby and Hoylake; Heswall	Heswall; Hoylake and Meols; Pensby and Thingwall; West Kirby

*In addition to the above, a Wirral-wide review of secondary school provision will be undertaken alongside Phase 1 to identify and establish sufficient school places in the sector to meet the needs of the increasing Year 7 intakes expected up to 2024.