

Evolution Planning Comments on ECC's Response

This response has been prepared by Essex County Council. Comments from Evolution Town Planning instructed by Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker advised by Stephen Clyne of Education Facilities Management are identified separately. The comments that Stephen Clyne and Pigeon made in the previous joint education statement are unchanged by this statement. Further comments to this document are underlined in red.

Response to the Local Plan Inspector

Thank you for inviting comments on the communication received from the Head Teacher of Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School in respect of the joint primary education capacity statement submitted to the Inspector. The responses to the Head Teacher's comments are in the same order as they were made in the letter.

Net Capacity

Burnham-on Crouch Primary School's net capacity in all official documentation, including the Local Authority's annual returns to the Department for Education and the County Council's annual publication "Commissioning School Places in Essex" is 417 places. This has been the case since the completion of a project at the school in the school year 2011-12 when some re-locatable classbases were replaced with permanent teaching accommodation and a new hall and ancillary accommodation added.

Mrs Patrick, the Head Teacher of Burnham-on Crouch Primary School is correct in stating that she advised the Local Authority that, following the remodelling of the school's premises, the school was left with 13 rather than the 14 classbases required to enable it to operate as a two form of entry (admitting up to 60 pupils per year) school. This has been investigated and Essex County Council can confirm that this is in fact the case. This, in effect, reduces the school's capacity from 417 places to 390 places. This has not been a problem to the school since the remodelling work was undertaken as there is currently a small year group in the school that has been taught as a single class. As there are also other year groups that contain well below 60 pupils it will also be possible for these pupils to be taught in mixed aged classes.

The School Organisation Officer referred to in Mrs Patrick's letter who is dealing with this matter will be meeting with the Head Teacher in March to discuss how the school can best manage the situation until a 14th classbase can be added to the school's accommodation. This classbase is unlikely to be available until the start of the school year 2016-17 and would only be required if the new housing planned for the town comes forward.

Evolution Planning states: this however makes no difference to the housing capacity assessment for Burnham, as the provision of the additional classroom could be a developer obligation attached to a planning permission. The important

consideration is that the school can accommodate 420 pupils. The provision of additional school places could be dealt with by developer contributions as part of Section 106 Agreements associated with any planning permissions for development within the admissions area. It is important to note that this issue relates to only one of the local Primary Schools.

Admissions to Reception in September 2015

I have confirmed with the School Admissions Team that there are currently 56 first preference applications for admission to the school in September 2015. Of these 46 reside within the school's priority admissions area (paa) with the remaining 10 residing within Southminster CE Primary School's paa.

It is possible that the number of pupils to be admitted to the Reception Year at the school in September 2015 may rise to 60. However, it is also possible that some of the children who have applied for places may not take up the place offered to them from the start of the new school year in September 2015. It is also worth noting that there are two primary schools serving Burnham and the number of 1st preferences being expressed by parents should be viewed across both schools. Of the 79 first preference applications received across both primary schools 66 reside in Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School's paa and 13 from parents residing within Southminster CE Primary School's paa. These figures should be viewed in the context that there are 90 places available between the two primary schools in Burnham for the Reception intake in September 2015.

Mid-year admissions

Numbers on roll at schools are monitored by the Department for Education at three points during the school year; October (autumn term), January (spring term) and May (summer term). The number of pupils on a school's roll can vary during the course of the school year due to children joining and leaving a school. At the time of the October 2014 school census (the figures used for the updated pupil forecasts) there were 340 pupils on the roll of Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School. At the time of the January 2015 school census there were 339 pupils on roll at the school. It is accepted that if more children join a school than leave it then the roll will increase (added by Evolution Planning) "and vice versa". Future pupil forecasts would reflect any increase or decrease in numbers on roll.

Pupils being "pushed back" to Southminster

At the time of the October 2014 school census there were 340 pupils on roll at Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School. Of these 285 resided within the paa for Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School; 36 resided within the priority admissions area (paa) for Southminster CE Primary School and 17 resided within the paa's for St Nicholas CE (VC) Primary, Tillingham, St Cedd's CE Primary School, Bradwell, Maylandsea Primary School and Latchingdon CE (VC) Primary School.

There was a reverse flow of five pupils who resided within the paa for Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School but who attended at St Cedds, Maylandsea Primary or Latchingdon primary schools. The net inflow of pupils from these schools to Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School was, therefore, 12 pupils. This represents less than 4% of the school's total roll and cannot, therefore, be described as "a significant number of children".

Evolution Planning states: it does however represent an additional 40 family dwellings, which in the context of the debate over the number of family houses Burnham can accommodate, is a significant consideration. This highlights that there are potentially further opportunities beyond Southminster to educate primary children in the local area.

It is also worth noting that St Cedd's, St Nicholas, Latchingdon and Maylandsea primary schools are all currently operating at below capacity and are forecast to continue to do so. This would permit children to be "pushed back" to these schools at the point that Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School becomes fully subscribed with children residing within its paa.

Now that it has been possible to confirm that Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School has a capacity of 390 places and not 417 as previously indicated this will be reflected in the County Council's next annual return to the Department for Education and the next edition of the "Commissioning School Places in Essex" document. Given that there are fewer primary school places in Burnham-on-Crouch than previously indicated the County Council will be discussing with Maldon District Council and the housing developers how the additional places that will be required to enable Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School to operate as a two form entry primary school should be funded.