

## **Interaction between town planning and pupil place planning**

To a certain extent the process is a circular one, with the town planning process feeding onto pupil place planning and vice versa.

### **Planning for development**

In terms of town planning, the starting point for development planning for housing is the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for local planning authorities to make objective assessments of their housing needs. The result of this work is the setting of a number of dwellings needed to meet that need over a 15-20 year period.

In order to meet the government's aim to boost significantly the supply of housing, the NPPF is clear that Local Plans should take the need figure, and then provide land to meet those needs in full. Local Planning Authorities should

- identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements, and
- identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15

To discharge this duty, we annually update the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify sites for housing, and in making planning policy such as the Portsmouth Plan, we make allocations for housing drawing on the information from the SHLAA.

Portsmouth's Housing Market area extends beyond the city boundaries and therefore we work with neighbouring authorities in the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) to assess housing needs. As development land in Portsmouth is severely constrained, we also work with neighbouring authorities to see whether they can meet any of the Portsmouth need in their areas. Even once some of Portsmouth's need has been redistributed to other authority areas, the housing number for the city remains significant. The requirement in the last plan period was more than 500 units per year to 2027.

In the context of the limited supply of development land in the city, this means that the city is not in a position to prioritise more suitable sites over less suitable sites on the basis of infrastructure capacity. In an ideal world, if two equally good potential development sites were developable during the plan period, and one was near a school with lots of spare capacity and the other was near a school with no spare capacity, the city council might ideally identify the latter and reject the former from the potential supply list and/or land allocation policies. However, this would only be possible in an authority area with a very large supply of potential housing sites. The reality is that housing sites in the city are severely limited, and in order to meet the requirements of showing a housing supply for the first 5 years and beyond, all sites must be seriously considered. It is therefore likely that both sites would feature in the SHLAA and potentially be allocated for development.

As well as forward planning, the city council must deal with planning applications when they are made. Planning applications for housing development can be made by anyone, on any site and at any time. The local planning authority must consider each application on its merits and in the context of the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development in the NPPF (full wording at the end of this note).

It is extremely unlikely that development in the city would be refused on the basis that there is no school capacity in the local area. This is for a number of reasons:

- It would be difficult to demonstrate that any particular development would in itself cause sufficient harm to school capacity to justify a refusal. While very large developments such as urban extensions or new towns may be so large that they in themselves generate a number of pupils likely to require a new school, sites in the city are of a much smaller scale.
- Unlike some other forms of infrastructure, the city council has a direct obligation to make available sufficient school places to meet the needs of its population. This includes the population in new developments. (see Planning for Pupil Places below)
- The council has included 'School Places (primary and secondary schools)' on its 'Regulation 123' list. This indicates that the council will use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts as a means of funding school places needed as a result of development. The council is therefore not able to ask developers to enter into a S106 agreement to provide or contribute financially to school places.  
NB inclusion on the Reg123 List does not mean that the council has committed to use a certain amount of CIL to fund school places. CIL spend is allocated as part of the Capital Programme, and education must compete for a proportion of the funding against the other infrastructure needs the city has.

### **Planning for Pupil Places**

Officers in Planning and Education work closely together and share intelligence.

Planning provides detailed projections on where and when developments are likely to come forward, taking information from allocations in the local plan, planning applications, and officers' knowledge or predictions of other sites that may come forward in the future (eg from pre-application discussions or knowledge of possible future disposals of land or their own reviews of land across the city). Assessments are made of when each site may be completed, the size of units, the split between houses and flats, and between market and affordable units etc, as these factors can have a significant bearing on the number of pupils likely to be in a development and the resulting impact on schools.

Together with a host of demographic data (census; birth and child health data; migration), this data feeds into pupil number projections. PCC pupil number projections are very accurate (within 1.5%). A recent review of PCC methodology stated that "the range of data used to inform Reception projections is impressive".

The Act requires the Council to ensure that there are sufficient school places for local children (within 2 miles of the pupil's home for Primary and 3 miles for Secondary) who wish to attend a state school. The government provide "Basic Need" capital funding for additional school places needed to meet this requirements.

Given the size of the Portsmouth area, generally we are able to offer a school place within this radius, particularly at the primary level, as a large number of schools lie within the required radius of most homes. Basic Need funding is only allocated when there is a deficit of pupil places identified across the planning area. Only when this demand has been evidenced can a Local Authority make a case for capital funding.

To meet the demand for primary school places a number of primary schools across the city have expanded. Expanding existing schools where possible, enables the Local Authority to provide local school places at schools where standards are good. If pupil place planning found that the capacity issue was so severe that a new school was needed somewhere in the city, Planning and Education colleagues would work together to identify potential sites and deliver the school. Evidence at present does not suggest that a new primary school is needed anywhere in the city. A review of secondary provision is currently underway but has not yet been concluded.

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### ***Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (para 14 NPPF)***

*At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

*For plan-making this means that:*

- *local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

*For decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*