

Children & Lifelong Learning Directorate

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Please ask for: Keith Cackett

Mr A Yendole
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My ref: KJC/AM/SC

Your ref:

Date: 6 June 2008

Dear Alex

Stafford Borough Local Development Framework

The Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate appreciates the relationship with Stafford Borough Council officers and values the opportunity to continue to input into the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.

In your letter, dated 6 February 2008, you requested information about the specific implications for educational needs arising from potential strategic housing locations in the Borough. At the meeting between you and Tracy Haycock on 21 May 2008, it was explained that it would not be possible to be precise about the implications on provision for individual schools. This was for a number of factors: uncertainty about which sites will be approved (more sites are identified than will be utilised); the final size determined for each development; when build would start and the phasing of development; and the breakdown of housing types.

The County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the sufficient supply of school places. A change in any of the above factors would generate a different educational requirement for local schools. It is, therefore, not possible to provide you with the exact information requested.

You have indicated previously, the requirement for around 7,000 new dwellings in Stafford and around 3,000 dwellings in Stone and rural areas. Using the County Council's standard formula of three pupils per school year group per 100 houses, this would equate to an additional 1,470 primary-aged pupils, 1,050 secondary and 420 post-16 students in Stafford, with the remaining 3,000 dwellings generating an additional 630 primary-aged pupils, 450 secondary and 180 post-16 students.

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The possible range of educational requirements could involve the necessary reorganisation of a number of nursery, primary and secondary schools. Section 106 contributions will be necessary from all sites to ensure the sufficient supply of school places, and could require:

- expansion and changes to the infrastructure of existing schools;
- additional land to expand an existing school beyond its current boundary;
- relocation and expansion of current schools onto new sites; or
- additional land and building for new schools.

Our current policy could require the building of a new primary school for developments in an area totalling around 1,000 houses. Our preference for much larger sites would be the provision of a single, large primary school, rather than a number of smaller schools. If there are a number of large developments across a wider area, this could necessitate a reorganisation of current educational provision, which could include new secondary schools. Where a need has been identified for a new school, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires a competition which invites proposers to submit their own proposals to establish the new school.

Clearly, new developments will impact on a range of services, such as libraries, recreation, leisure and community facilities, which could be co-located on school sites. The County Council's strategy for Community and Learning Partnerships gives schools an important role in delivering adult, family, leisure and community services to local residents.

One of the Council's aims is to ensure that children and young people are healthy and safe in order that they are able to enjoy, achieve and make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live. Schools are a key element in achieving our objectives.

Multi-million £ government funding programmes, such as Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the Primary Capital Strategy (PCS), when combined with other funding streams will help to achieve educational transformation across Staffordshire. The delivery of RSS will have a major impact on educational provision and could radically alter the future pattern of education and, therefore, contributions from the developments will be necessary. Whilst some schools may have surplus places, the cumulative effect of RSS will necessitate a contribution from all developments in a collaborative approach, which is fair and transparent. Therefore, we must work in partnership with local stakeholders and organisations, including borough and district councils and the community sector.

Our assessment of educational needs, necessitated by a new development, will be based on the latest available school and demographic data. Parental preference is key when planning school places, and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to promote choice and diversity in school provision and to

respond to parental representations. The School Organisation Plan, which is published on Staffordshire's website provides a historic snapshot of data and useful background information.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you throughout the RSS allocation and LDF process.

Yours sincerely

Keith Cackett
Deputy Corporate Director
(Quality Assurance and Resources)

Cc:
Cllr Robert Simpson
Cllr Peter Beresford
John Giacomelli
Tracy Haycock
Jim Brady
Russ Sheldon
Tony Lovett