

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**30 MARCH 2021**

**QUESTION 1** in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Rob Bishop to ask the Chair of the Committee:

**Pupil Product Ratio**

With reference to my attached note, can the council please provide an update on the 2013 Pupil Product Ratio used to calculate new pupil places, considering that Brighter Futures for Children recognised back in 2019 that the formula it was using then, may not be representative of Reading and that a survey may be needed ?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee**

I invite Councillor Pearce, the Lead Councillor for Education to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Councillor Pearce, Lead Councillor for Education:**

Brighter Futures for Children Performance and Data team has adopted the Cognisant model to calculate pupil yield for forecasting pupil demand but it is not as simple as just using the table because to calculate pupil yield as there are factors such as social housing, deprivation etc. that may influence the calculation.

The basic table is below:

	Education Level			
	Pre School Children	Primary School Children	Secondary School Children	Post 16
1-Bed	0.09	0.02	0	0
2-Bed	0.32	0.19	0.05	0.02
3-Bed	0.33	0.35	0.2	0.06
4+Bed	0.34	0.41	0.25	0.08

The Cognisant ratios are in line with those quoted from other LAs but not in line with the RBC PUPIL PRODUCT RATIO FOR NEW HOUSING (READING BOROUGH COUNCIL SPD 2013 quoted in the paper. RBC Acting Planning Manager, Julie Williams, has confirmed that The SPD was adopted in 2013 prior to the council using the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure mitigation funding from development to go towards infrastructure projects including education provision. Therefore, this part of the SPD is out of date and it has not been replaced to date.

Point 4 in the paper refers to:

The document "*Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), School Place Planning*" dated 16th June 2019 states, "***BFFC is considering commissioning a housing yield figure survey .... because, .... the formula is based on national pupil yield which may not be representative of Reading.***"

The extract from the attached 'School Place Planning' report dated 16 July 2019 presented to ACE on 19 July 2019 states:

*'BFFC is considering commissioning a housing yield figure survey given the amount of new build homes including social housing because, although housing yield data is taken into account, the formula is based on national pupil yield which may not be representative of Reading.'*

The housing yield survey was not carried out.

The new guidance from the DfE will include guidance on how local authorities should calculate housing yield which will be factored into the SCAP 2021 return to the DfE and the related Place Planning Report.

As this planning application has not been passed: there is no date for the commencement or completion for each phase of any potential build. The SCAP 2021, submitted to the DfE in July, will provide a forecast of the primary population for the next five years and be factored into School Place Planning.

It is worth noting here Reading's past accuracy in predicting the number of school places needed for children in the Borough. In 2019 Brighter Futures for Children received a letter from Lord Agnew at the Department for Education, praising the accuracy at both Primary and Secondary level in predicting the level of school places needed across a one and three year period.

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**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**30 MARCH 2021**

**QUESTION 2** in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Rob Bishop to ask the Chair of the Committee:

**Primary School Places**

With reference to the example of planning application 210018 in my attached note, does the Council agree that there will be a shortfall in primary school places, regardless of what multiplier is used ?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and Education Committee**

I invite Councillor Pearce, the Lead Councillor for Education to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY** by the Councillor Pearce, Lead Councillor for Education:

Local authorities were not required to submit a SCAP return in July 2020 due the Covid-19 pandemic; the last full school place planning forecast was completed in July 2019.

The extract from the SCAP Commentary submitted to the DfE in July 2019 refers to the North Primary Planning:

<b>a.</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>NAME: North</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The low birth rate which was first reported across all primary planning areas in 2014 has stabilised in the North Planning Area</li><li>• Forecasts for academic years 2019-20 to 2023-24 show little variation in pupil numbers entering Reception class (429 to 434 over the five years)</li><li>• The low birth rate is working through the schools to year 6 therefore the predicted numbers in year 6 for the academic year 2019-20 (421) will reduce to 401 in 2023-24</li><li>• Schools in the North remain very popular</li><li>• There is now some spare capacity in classes due to the introduction of the Heights temporary school with 50 places which is now has year 6 children.</li></ul>
<b>ID: 8700001</b>	<p>Caversham, which comprises the bulk of this planning area, continues to be popular amongst parents and despite the dip in numbers for September 2019 we are predicting a slow rise in pupil numbers fully justifying the new</p>

	<p>Heights Primary Free School permanent build now planned to open in September 2020. For September 2019 forecast data shows a total surplus capacity is about 10% and year R surplus is 9%.</p>
	<p><b>Actions (current and planned) to address shortage/excess of places. Include the number of places to be added or removed in each school and by what date.</b></p>
	<p>St Anne's and St Martin's Schools (under one Executive Head Teacher) have seen a decline in popularity, and their numbers fall, which appears to be related to the performance of both schools. It may be necessary to consult on reductions in published admission numbers at these schools or consider a closure. Otherwise schools in Caversham carry little capacity in Year R going forward, and upper year groups reflect the increase in pupil numbers over the last 7 years.</p>
	<p><b>Please indicate relationship with issues and solutions in other planning areas (including identification of the planning area)</b></p>
	<p>Should it become necessary to create new places then the LA can make them available through modular buildings. Parental preference rarely sees pupils moving out of area north, and only then to schools in neighbouring Oxfordshire.</p>
	<p><b>Overview</b></p>
	<p>Pupil numbers in this planning area shows that although Demand forecast Year R numbers remain relatively constant, this yields about 8% surplus capacity and 2.4% year R capacity</p>

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**30 MARCH 2021**

**QUESTION 3** in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Rob Bishop to ask the Chair of the Committee:

**Emmer Green Primary School**

With reference to the example in my attached note, Emmer Green Primary School is next door to the proposed development, classroom windows will be open to aid ventilation (because of Covid-19) and pupils will have to put up with 5 years of construction fumes, dust and noise - a health hazard and detrimental to their learning. can you please explain what mitigation measures will be acceptable to the Council and, if none can be provided, will this Committee make their objection to the proposed development known to the planning officers ?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee**

I invite Councillor Pearce, the Lead Councillor for Education to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Councillor Pearce, Lead Councillor for Education:**

The planning application for this site is yet to be determined by the Council, and the impacts of potential disturbance during construction will need to be considered as part of that process. Where a major development that is otherwise acceptable is to be granted planning permission, the Council will generally expect a Construction Method Statement to ensure that the impacts on neighbouring uses are mitigated in terms of matters such as noise, dust and vibration, to be secured by planning condition. This could involve particular solutions for the circumstances, such as temporary fencing or netting. The Council would also expect the applicant to submit a S61 (Control of Pollution Act 1974) which will mean that they will have to follow best practice to control the noise and vibration.

However, as we know from other sites; dust, noise and vibration will not be removed completely. As the site is an open site it will be harder to control these impacts. So, we would also expect the applicant to manage the residents' and school's expectations. The Council would expect developers to liaise with the school and residents about issues and particular noisy/dusty works and would expect the applicant to look at offering quiet periods in the day taking into account the school day. This is something the Council would typically look to include in the S61.

The above is standard practice for all sites within Reading, and the Council will certainly ensure that it is applied in particular to large development sites with sensitive uses nearby and sites with longer timescales.

**QUESTION 1: WITH REFERENCE TO MY ATTACHED NOTE, CAN THE COUNCIL PLEASE PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE 2013 PUPIL PRODUCT RATIO USED TO CALCULATE NEW PUPIL PLACES, CONSIDERING THAT BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN RECOGNISED BACK IN 2019 THAT THE FORMULA IT WAS USING THEN, MAY NOT BE REPRESENTATIVE OF READING AND THAT A SURVEY MAY BE NEEDED?**

**QUESTION 2: WITH REFERENCE TO THE EXAMPLE OF PLANNING APPLICATION 210018 IN MY ATTACHED NOTE, DOES THE COUNCIL AGREE THAT THERE WILL BE SHORTFALL IN PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES, REGARDLESS OF WHAT MULTIPLIER IS USED?**

**QUESTION 3: WITH REFERENCE TO THE EXAMPLE IN MY ATTACHED NOTE, EMMER GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL IS NEXT DOOR TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, CLASSROOM WINDOWS WILL BE OPEN TO AID VENTILATION (BECAUSE OF COVID) AND PUPILS WILL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH 5 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION FUMES, DUST AND NOISE – A HEALTH HAZARD AND DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR LEARNING. CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE COUNCIL AND, IF NONE CAN BE PROVIDED, WILL THIS COMMITTEE MAKE THEIR OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT KNOWN TO THE PLANNING OFFICERS?**

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## **CAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS NORTH OF THE THAMES HANDLE THE EXPECTED PUPIL GROWTH?**

### **1. New pupil generation north of the river cannot be absorbed by local primary schools**

In the Local Plan, the largest site north of the river is CA1b (90 to 130 homes on the site of Reading Golf Club). This and other in-fills will create a demand for new pupil places which local primary schools will **NOT** be able to absorb. This will be exacerbated by the recent Planning Application 210018 to build double the homes (compared to the Local Plan) on site CA1b, namely 257 homes. This is **NOT** about the application per se, but rather about the wider education issues and it is only used as an example.

### **2. Present-day capacity of local primary schools in the study area**

The Council has already referred to shortages, *“The Reading Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>19</sup> (2018), any development likely to result in child yield, in the east and the town centre and possibly the north west of the Borough is going **to add to the existing problem of under-provision** of school places in these areas”*. North west in this case is roughly the Emmer Green and Caversham areas.

In the case of the 210018 Application, the applicant states that they will only consider in their study area, *“State funded primary schools – 3.2 km / 2 miles walking distance from Site within the North Reading Catchment Area for primary schools and within the two adjacent wards in SODC, Kidmore End and Whitchurch and Sonning Common.”* The applicant further states, *“Across the 12 primary schools within the Study Area there is a total capacity for 1,331 pupils. Together the primary schools have 1,094 pupils attending, with a surplus of 237 places.”*

Using the **same** consideration, we found 9, not 12, schools with a surplus of 147, as follows:

Information source: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

Type	School	State school	Capacity	Pupils	Surplus	Date of last pupil count	Postal address
Community	Caversham Park Primary	Y	210	195	15	10-Mar-21	RG4 6RP
Community	Caversham Primary	Y	420	418	2	11-Mar-21	RG4 7RA
Community	Emmer Green Primary	Y	420	415	5	19-Jan-21	RG4 8LN
Community	Micklands Primary	Y	420	383	37	02-Feb-21	RG4 6LU
Voluntary aided school	St Anne's Catholic Primary	Y	237	201	36	03-Mar-21	RG4 5AA
Voluntary aided school	St Martin's Catholic Primary	Y	210	154	56	24-Feb-21	RG4 6SS
Community	Thameside Primary	Y	420	403	17	08-Feb-21	RG4 8DB
Community	The Hill Primary	Y	420	448	-28	21-Jan-21	RG4 8TU
Voluntary aided school	Kidmore End CoE Primary	Y	210	203	7	29-Nov-19	RG4 9AU
<b>Total surplus</b>					<b>147</b>		

It is arguable that Kidmore End Primary School should not be included because, although it is exactly 2 miles distant, it cannot be accessed by walking because the only road to it is narrow and has no footpath. But it is kept in because it accounts for only 7 surplus places. The Heights Primary School has been disregarded because, by this or next year, the school will have moved to its new location on the Mapledurham Playing Fields which is more than 2 miles distant.

There are **only 147 surplus places, not 237** as the applicant claims!

### 3. Future Primary School pupil requirements

In Reading Borough Council's "Supplementary Planning Document, Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Transport, Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Education, Other Contributions DRAFT REVISED SPD 2013", it states in "Table 5: The **Pupil Product Ratio** for Houses in Reading":

PUPIL PRODUCT RATIO FOR NEW HOUSING (READING BOROUGH COUNCIL SPD 2013)				
	2-bed house	3-bed house	2-bed flat	3-bed flat
Primary including Rising Fives (4-10)	0.66	0.87	0.29	0.4

"In calculating contributions, the Council will apply the figures for the 3-bedroom house for all houses of 3 bedrooms and over."

Applying the Council's **own Pupil Product Ratios (PPR)** to the proposed (Application 210018) mix of housing provides the following primary school places results:

CALCULATION OF NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS USING READING BOROUGH'S OWN PRODUCT RATIOS			
Type of home	Total	Children 4-10 per home	4-10 total
1 Bed apartment/maisonette	32	0	0
2 Bed apartment/maisonette	26	0.29	7.54
2 bed houses	40	0.66	26.4
3 Bed houses	78	0.87	67.86
4 Bed houses	81	0.87	70.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>		<b>172.27</b>

For the proposed 257 homes, the applicant states, “In the absence of a response by RBC, we have used average family sizes from the 2011 Census to calculate population yield.” Later on, the applicant states, “This equates to **60 new primary places** and 60 new secondary places required.” The applicant appears to have used a **PPR of 0.234** to arrive at their claim of an additional 60 places and there seems to be no basis for such a low PPR. This is a massive difference compared to 172.

#### 4. Pupil ratio forecasting

The Government publication “SECURING DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EDUCATION, November 2019” states, “New housing tends to attract more young families than older housing, yielding higher numbers of pupils particularly in the pre-school and primary age groups ....” The applicant seems **NOT** to have taken account of this.

The document “Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), School Place Planning” dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2019 states, “**BFFC is considering commissioning a housing yield figure survey .... because, .... the formula is based on national pupil yield which may not be representative of Reading.**”

#### 5. PPR survey

Research into other local authorities have revealed a PPR ranging from 0.31 to 0.45. A sample of 6 authorities is in the Appendix. However, regardless of the variation, one thing is very clear: the number of only 60 additional primary school places claimed by the applicant is a long way off the 172 places using the Council’s PPR of 0.67. As a cross check, using other local authorities as a comparator, it would result in a range of 83 to 115 new primary school places.

#### 6. The applicant’s admission of school place shortages

The developer states that, “Reference to school capacity forecasts for 2018/19 to 2022/23 published by the DfE identifies that there will be a **deficit of primary school places** within the Site’s catchment area (North Reading Primary) will continue into the immediate future up to 2023 ..... and excess demand for primary school places which is expected to lead to the **continued deficit of school places.**”

The developer states, “The increased population .... is expected to **add additional pressure on to primary schools** within the catchment area.” This based on the developer’s false premise of 60 new primary places, whereas the true figure is higher.

It is astonishing that the applicant is **ADMITTING TO A MAJOR PROBLEM** and even more so when

considering that it is based on data that is excessively optimistic!

## 7. Additional developments

In addition to the pupils generated by the Fairfax-proposed development, there are also an additional 92 primary school places generated from other developments. This is according to the applicant's own assessment, *"A high-level assessment of the likely requirement for school places generates the following numbers of places (the cumulative schemes and the Proposed Development combined): 152 primary school places."*

## 8. SODC observation on Planning Application 210018

Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager, SODC wrote on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, *"The proposed development ..... lies closer to a number of schools within Reading Borough Council, and it would be expected that families would seek places at these schools rather than Oxfordshire schools. Reading Borough Council should, therefore, ensure that sufficient school places are available for the resulting additional population."*

## 9. Conclusion

The applicant has seriously **over-estimated** the number of surplus school places. The actual is 147 versus the applicant's 237. The applicant has also seriously **under-estimated** the number of new pupils generated by developments (their own 210018 development plus the others). The actual is  $172 + 92 = 264$  versus the applicant's  $60 + 92 = 152$ .

According to the applicant, there will be 85 left-over places, even after all the developments go ahead. In reality, there will be a **shortfall of 117 places**. Furthermore, the BFFC has commendably stated, *".... must also work within a 5% leeway to ensure sufficiency of places rather than working to capacity."* In other words, the **shortfall is 123 places**. Even if the Council's PPR from 2013 is ignored and the lowest PPR from other local authorities is used (0.31), there is still a **shortfall of 36 places**! However, using a PPR as low as that would mean that, out of 257 homes, 180 would have not any children. For a new estate, promoted as a home for young families, that is **NOT credible**.

**In the absence of any mitigation to the large shortfall, Application 210018 should be refused.**

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## APPENDIX

### Gloucestershire

Source: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2093765/gloucestershire-county-council-ppr-report-703.pdf> Done in 2019, covered 5 areas by tenure, dwelling type, etc. The PPR varied from 0.23 to 0.56 = average of 0.45. Applied to the RGC development, that equates to 115 pupil places.

### Peterborough

Source: <https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s42815/5.%20Appendix%201%20-%20Child%20Yield%20Multipliers.pdf> Done in 2020 on 3 areas, most relevant is 'The Hamptons',

similar to the RGC site but bigger. Not an average PPR but a range of 0.44, 0.41 and 0.43 = average of about 0.42. Applied to the RGC development, would equate to 110 pupil places.

### **Swindon**

Source: [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5282/swindon\\_school\\_place\\_planning\\_study.pdf](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5282/swindon_school_place_planning_study.pdf) Done in September 2020, an average PPR of 0.37 which, if applied to the RGC development, would equate to 95 pupil places.

### **Staffordshire**

Source: <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Schoolsandcolleges/PlanningSchoolPlaces/Information-for-developers/SEICP-March-2021-version-1.pdf> Done in March 2021. It does not provide an average, only a low PPR of 0.3 and a high PPR of 0.45. If averaged it would result in 0.37 which, if applied to the RGC development, would equate to 95 pupil places.

### **Wiltshire**

Source: <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s107284/Report%20-%20School%20Places%20Strategy%20-%20Appx%201.pdf> Covers 2015 to 2020, “... there are 41,100 houses [which] roughly equates to 12,500 primary school places...”. This results in a PPR of 3.3 which, if applied to the RGC development, would equate to 85 pupil places.

### **Bedfordshire**

Source: <https://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s73004/170711%20CS%20OSC%20Item%2010%20App%20A%20Pupil%20yield%20report.pdf> Done in 2015, covered 3,361 homes. Breakdown by number of bedrooms. The PPR averages at 3.1 which, if applied to the RGC development, would equate to 83 pupil places.