

A Place for Every Child

The Vision for School Organisation in
the City of Wolverhampton 2018-20



City of Wolverhampton Education Place Planning

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The main challenge that the City of Wolverhampton faces in relation to the organisation of school provision, is ensuring that sufficient high-quality school places are available to meet the needs of local communities across the City. Driven by a 24% increase in births between 2002 and 2016, levels of demand for school provision have increased significantly in recent years. In excess of 3,000 additional places have been commissioned since 2012 in primary schools and since 2017 in secondary schools, to cater for the demographic uplift. The recently witnessed increase in demand for primary provision in the City, has already started to impact on the City's secondary estate and significant additional capacity will be required to cater for future cohorts. This vision outlines anticipated levels of future demand and key policy decisions adopted by the Council to guide the ongoing development of the City's primary and secondary school estate.

1.1 Wolverhampton Context

Wolverhampton is a superdiverse City and this is another factor that can influence demand for school places. It is estimated that in recent years the number of non-UK born residents in Wolverhampton has increased (Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics (ONS)) and in 2016, 31.6% of births to Wolverhampton residents were to non-UK born mothers (ONS 2016). As stated by the ONS, 'over a quarter (28.2%) of live births in England and Wales in 2016 were to women born outside the UK, the highest level on record'. Also 'Despite an overall decline in the number of live births in England and Wales between 2015 and 2016, births to women born outside the UK increased by 2.1%' (ONS 2016).

As illustrated by both Census data and published Ward Profiles (available at insight.wolverhampton.gov.uk) the ethnic composition of communities varies significantly across the City. It should be noted that the ethnic makeup of communities in Wolverhampton is dynamic, analysis of Census information suggests that the proportion of White British residents of the City fell by 10 percentage points between 2001 and 2011. In contrast, the proportion of Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups increased.

There are considerable challenges with regards to deprivation in the City. In 2015 Wolverhampton was the 17th most deprived of 326 English Local Authorities, which meant it had worsened from 21st most deprived in the prior Indices of Deprivation release from 2010. For the purposes of measuring deprivation, Wolverhampton is split into 158 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Of these 158, 1 is in the top 1% most deprived nationally, and a further 15 are in the top 5% deprived band. The scale of the challenge with deprivation is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows that of all the 0 to 15 year olds resident in Wolverhampton in 2016, 61.8% of them live in an LSOA in the top 20% most deprived nationally.

Figure 1: Numbers of children aged 0-15 resident in a deprived area, defined as top 20% most deprived LSOA nationally



The health and wellbeing of our children is paramount to securing good outcomes; unfortunately, the health and wellbeing of children in Wolverhampton is worse than the England average. Despite a slight fall in the rate in 2012-14 Wolverhampton remains one of the Local Authorities with highest rates of infant mortality in England and Wales. 59% of the primary and secondary schools in Wolverhampton are in the most deprived quintile nationally as defined by Ofsted. There are no Wolverhampton schools classed as being in the least deprived category. 22% of all pupils are eligible for free school meals; for primary schools (including reception) the figure is 20.5% (the national average is 14.5%) and in secondary schools (including Academies) it is 19.7% (the national average is 13.2%).¹

¹ City of Wolverhampton Council Early Years Strategy 2017 – 2021, p16

1.2 Strategic Context

This vision is a key feature of the City of Wolverhampton Council's approach to meeting its statutory duties as an advocate for parents and families, supporting vulnerable children and championing educational excellence. It offers a framework to guide the future development of the school estate in the City.

Underpinning the Council's Corporate Plan, Wolverhampton's Children, Young People and Families Plan 2015-2025 and the Joint Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy this document details the basic need challenge facing the City and outlines the approach adopted by the Council to meet this challenge.

The City of Wolverhampton Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019 "prioritises economic development and regeneration to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses".² A significant part of the City's regeneration is the objective of directly delivering 1000 homes in the next five years which "will encourage more people to set down their roots in the City, further contributing to economic growth".³

The planned housing growth programme for the City has a target of delivering 10,000 homes in 10 years to accommodate need and demand, and support the economic aspirations of the City. This growth will see significant increases in new homes for certain neighbourhoods, which will inevitably create a pressure of additional resident expectations upon the school place provision in those localities.

Potential housing development sites and their estimated delivery timescales are subject to on-going change. In order to manage these pressures, consistent liaison between the Council's Housing and Education teams will provide advance information on the focus of planned development activity. This will permit a coordinated and planned approach, both to support the delivery of new homes with adequate school places, and to support school place planning with good information on the population increases anticipated from newbuild. The School Organisation Team carefully monitor anticipated future housing development on a quarterly basis to gauge likely pupil yields in each Wolverhampton City Ward to ensure alignment and inform annual pupil projections.

² City of Wolverhampton Council, Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019, p2

³ City of Wolverhampton Council, Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019, p4

Over the longer term the City's population is predicted to grow by 8.9% by 2037, to 273,300, with residents aged 19 and below expected to increase by 7%. Currently children and young people under the ages of 18 years make up 22.9% of the total population in Wolverhampton.⁴ Therefore pupil yield growth is likely to remain an issue in the medium to longer term and this will be taken into account when making longer term plans for housing development across the City.

We recognise the need for Wolverhampton's school estate to continue to develop to meet the changing needs of children in the City. This vision recommends that a longer term, estate wide approach to school place planning is adopted that both maximises the use of existing facilities and develops flexible provision. The development of flexible provision and facilities will ensure that the estate is ideally positioned to meet both fluctuating demographic requirements and the changing needs of students.

The Vision for School Organisation in Wolverhampton 2018-2020, aligned with the Council's School Improvement and Governance Strategy, seeks to secure sufficient high-quality school places to improve educational outcomes across the City. The vision recognises the Council's role in ensuring an appropriate number of school places and in influencing the quality of education provided regardless of how schools are organised or governed.

Our key principles are

- The right of every child to fulfil their potential
- The needs of local communities
- The value of partnership working
- To respond effectively to the dynamic demographic position
- To consider the sustainability of the school estate
- To ensure resources are used efficiently
- To improve educational outcomes in order to support the longer term development and prosperity of the City
- Promoting choice and diversity of provision.

⁴ City of Wolverhampton Council, Early Years Strategy 2017 - 2021, p14

1.3 Key Statutory Duties

Councils are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. The Schools Admissions Code states that "Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health"⁵. They must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

The Local Authority, in fulfilling its statutory obligation⁶, writes to parents/carers of children in Year 9 attending a school in the City of Wolverhampton annually to inform them of the opportunities available in relation to schools with atypical points of admission.

The correspondence encourages parents/carers to consider the options available to their child as they move into Year 10, providing guidance on the type of schools and context, specifically in relation to University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools. The letter informs parents on how to apply for a place at schools with atypical admission points that are within a reasonable travelling distance of the City of Wolverhampton, this includes West Midlands UTC and Health Futures UTC.

Primary Context

There is a legal requirement that any class containing infant aged children (five, six and seven year olds) will not exceed a maximum of 30 pupils with a single class teacher, other than when an additional pupil admitted fits the criteria for an 'excepted' pupil (as defined in the School Admissions Code).

In September 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) announced their intention to give summer-born children the right to start in Reception at the age of 5. Children usually start school in the September after they turn 4 but parents of summer-born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) can ask to delay entry into school for a year, they can also ask for early admission or delayed transfer to school (admission outside of normal age group).

⁵ Department of Education, Schools Admissions Code December 2014, (p. 25 para. 2.17)

⁶ School Information Regulations 2017

Secondary Context

In 2015, Central Government raised the age of participation to 18. Local Authorities are required to develop a local strategy against the following criteria:

- To work with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to ensure a sufficient local curriculum offer
- To provide careers advice from year 8 to year 13 – minimal statutory role focussing on supporting vulnerable learners
- To track and record young people's progression from education and training
- To identify numbers of NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) or "unknowns" on local Client Caseload Information Systems
- To provide additional support for young people with special needs (up to age 25); those in care; young offenders; young parents or those with specific support needs including mental health and substance misuse.

The Department for Education monitors progress against the above criteria and evaluates performance against national targets.

Aspiration

We will continue existing, and further expand, collaboration arrangements with educational establishments in the City including secondary schools/academies, the University of Wolverhampton and the City of Wolverhampton College.

1.4 Partnership Working

The Council recognises the value of sustaining an effective partnership with all schools regardless of their status or governance arrangements and we have established a strong working partnership with Free Schools, Academies, Trusts, the Department for Education, the Education Funding Agency, the Regional Schools Commissioner for the West Midlands, neighbouring Local Authorities, private sector partners and local Diocesan Authorities.

The City of Wolverhampton Council encourages partnership working across education in the City in order to provide the broadest curriculum possible. This can be achieved through the co-commissioning of Post 16 provision and the strengthening of other provision such as the curriculum offer from the West Midlands UTC.

Opportunity

Since 2013 four Free Schools have opened in Wolverhampton and have become part of the school community. We have embraced opportunities for Free Schools to expand in the City to meet basic need; however, introducing additional Free School provision in geographically appropriate locations and in a timely manner presents a significant challenge. To ensure that the needs of families and students in Wolverhampton can continue to be met effectively it may, on occasion, be necessary for the Council to adopt a more responsive approach to school place planning and to develop contingency plans to cater for external influences on the supply of school places.

Aspiration

We will:

- Work closely with Diocesan Authorities to ensure that an appropriate balance of denominational and community places are available
- Avoid the need for compulsory redundancy, where possible
- Promote equal opportunities and that particular groups of children are not disadvantaged.

1.5 School Size

We recommend that primary schools in the City provide a minimum of 30 places per year group (one form entry) and a maximum of 90 places per year group (three form entry). This will ensure the efficient use of resources, whilst avoiding the loss of a more personal primary ethos.

Admission limits will be managed in accordance with Infant Class Size Regulations and to promote the most efficient use of resources. This vision recommends that admission limits, which exceed a form of entry (i.e. 30 pupils), are either set as full forms of entry (multiples of 30) or half forms of entry (multiples of 15).

Larger primary schools (2 form entry and above) can potentially offer:

- greater opportunity for specialism
- a workforce that has a wider spectrum of experience and expertise
- increased opportunity to offer a broad and balanced curriculum
- greater flexibility to cover staff absence
- increased potential to provide strategic leadership succession opportunities
- the opportunity to use resources more efficiently
- an increased ability to respond to change more readily.

We recommend that to ensure the efficient use of resources and to support the longer-term viability of individual establishments, secondary schools in the City offer a minimum of 150 places per year group (Year 7 to 11).

Larger secondary schools can potentially offer:

- an increased opportunity to respond effectively to change
- greater flexibility to cover staff absence
- increased opportunity to provide leadership succession opportunities
- increased opportunity to use resources more efficiently.

Opportunity

The Vision for School Organisation in Wolverhampton 2018-2020 supports the development of larger primary or secondary schools, where appropriate.



1.6 The Autonomous School System

Central Government policy initiatives, including the establishment of Free Schools and University Technical Colleges coupled with the conversion of schools to academy status, have recently changed the landscape in which education and the Council's statutory responsibilities are delivered. Figure 2 illustrates the diverse range of education provision in Wolverhampton.

Figure 2: Provision of establishment types within Wolverhampton

PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
Establishment Type	Number	Establishment Type	Number
Infant School - Community	2	Academy - Secondary	14
Infant School - Voluntary Controlled	1	Community - Secondary	2
Infant School - Academy	1	Free School - Secondary	1
Junior School - Community	2	University Technical College	1
Junior School - Voluntary Controlled	1	Voluntary Aided - Secondary	1
Junior School - Academy	1	Total	19
Primary Academy	29		
Primary Community School	24		
Primary Free School	2		
Primary - Voluntary Aided	6		
Primary - Voluntary Controlled	5		
Total	74		

SPECIAL SCHOOL		PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT	
Establishment Type	Number	Establishment Type	Number
Academy - Special School	3	Academy - Pupil Referral Unit	1
Community - Special School	4	Community - Pupil Referral Unit	3
Free School - Special School	1	Total	4
Total	8		

Source: City of Wolverhampton Council, List of Educational Establishments June 2018
Please note The Royal School Wolverhampton is a free all through school.

Legislation dictates that, when considering the establishment of a new school, Free School/Academy proposals should be considered in the first instance and that Academy Trusts can apply directly to the Secretary of State to make significant changes to individual establishments.

The autonomous school system poses challenges concerning school place planning, and it should be noted that the Council is not in full control of all factors relating to the effective and timely supply of school places. In addition, Trusts can decide to admit above their Published Admissions Number and as a consequence, successful partnership working is of paramount importance in order to ensure that the needs of the City's communities can continue to be met effectively.

To enable a localised approach when developing solutions and reporting upon school organisation, the City has been divided into four planning areas for the primary estate (see Appendix A) and three planning areas for the secondary estate (see Appendix B). This approach allows the School Organisation Team to recognise the differing pressures facing local communities across the City. It should be noted that given the significant variations in both localised demand and the popularity of individual establishments, balancing levels of surplus across all schools is a significant challenge; adopting a planned, strategic approach to school place planning maximises opportunities to meet localised demand for school places and for individual establishments' positions to be considered.

1.7 Surplus Place Position

Surplus places are school places that have not been filled. A level of surplus is essential to offer increased opportunity for parental preference to be reflected in allocations, to allow for fluctuations in demand, to offer flexibility to cater for mid-year entrants and offers a level of protection to less popular schools. Too few surplus places can result in reduced opportunity for parental choice, increased travel times, and increased class sizes. However, too many surplus places can lead to the inefficient use of resources.

When allocating basic need funding to Local Authorities central government operate a level of 2% surplus. Historical patterns of in year growth have seen increases in pupil numbers in excess of this 2%. There is a balance to be found between investment in school places, supporting schools with low pupil numbers and meeting parental preference. Therefore, the aspirational level of surplus will operate towards the Department for Education funding surplus figure, which in turn will support those schools with low pupil numbers.

We recommend that a school place is available within a maximum walking distance of two miles (for a child under 8 years old) and up to a maximum of three miles (for a child over 8). To ensure that pupils can access a local school and that travel times are reasonable.

An annual dialogue continues between representatives of Education and Transportation to review school access routes and citywide transportation requirements.

1.8 Cross Border Movement

One of the key factors influencing demand for school places in the City, particularly in secondary schools, is the cross-border movement of students. It is essential that we monitor trends in the number of pupils educated in Wolverhampton residing outside of the City (imports) against those pupils educated outside of the City residing in Wolverhampton (exports).

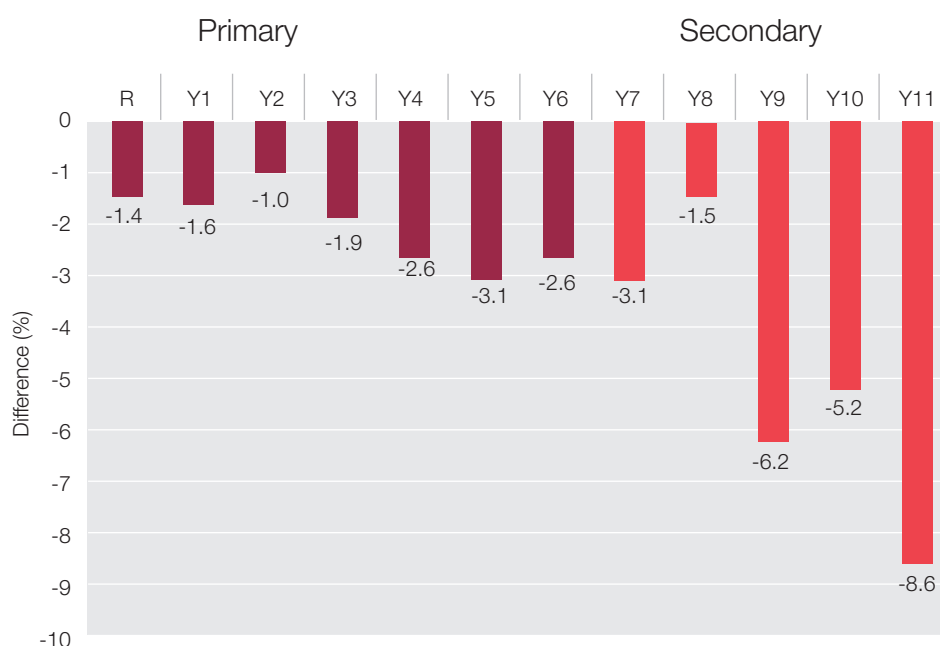
Over the last two years in Wolverhampton the difference between imports and exports to the City has narrowed. Although the City of Wolverhampton has remained a net exporter of pupils, the number of imports into the City has increased against a decreasing number of exports. This indicates that schools within Wolverhampton have become increasingly popular with pupils residing both within the City and outside of its borders. This shift is particularly prevalent within the secondary sector, with a significant reduction in the net exports since 2015.

In terms of the primary sector, between 2007 and 2015 the gap between pupil imports to the City and exports out of the City increased significantly, however more recently this trend has reversed with a 16% reduction in the gap in imports and exports from 2015 to 2017.

In January 2017, the City had 812 primary pupil imports and 1293 exports, remaining a net exporter with a difference of -481 (-2.1% of school population).

Overall, in terms of the secondary sector, from 2007 to 2015 the gap between pupil imports to the City and exports out of the City has gradually reduced, however since 2015 to 2017 this gap has grossly reduced by a significant 52%. In January 2017, the City had 1,670 secondary pupil imports and 2341 exports, remaining a net exporter with a difference of -671 (-4.7% of school population).

Figure 3: Difference between Imports and Exports by National Curriculum Year as a percentage of the school population (January 2017)



Source: Department for Education (2017)

Figure 3 illustrates the City's net exports per National Curriculum Year. The graph clearly indicates the narrowing of the gap between imports to the City and exports out of the City in the primary phase of education compared to the secondary phase. In January 2017, the City had a net export of -1.4 as a percentage of the total school population for the Reception phase and -2.6 for Year 6. However, in the secondary phase the gap between the imports and exports is significantly wider, with a net export of -3.1 as a percentage of the total school population in Year 7 and -8.6 in Year 11. This trend indicates less fluidity of movement out of the City during the primary phase.

If the difference between those imports into the City and exports out of the City continue to follow this trend, then levels of demand for school places within the City will increase the strain on resources and additional capacity would be required to cater for the demand.

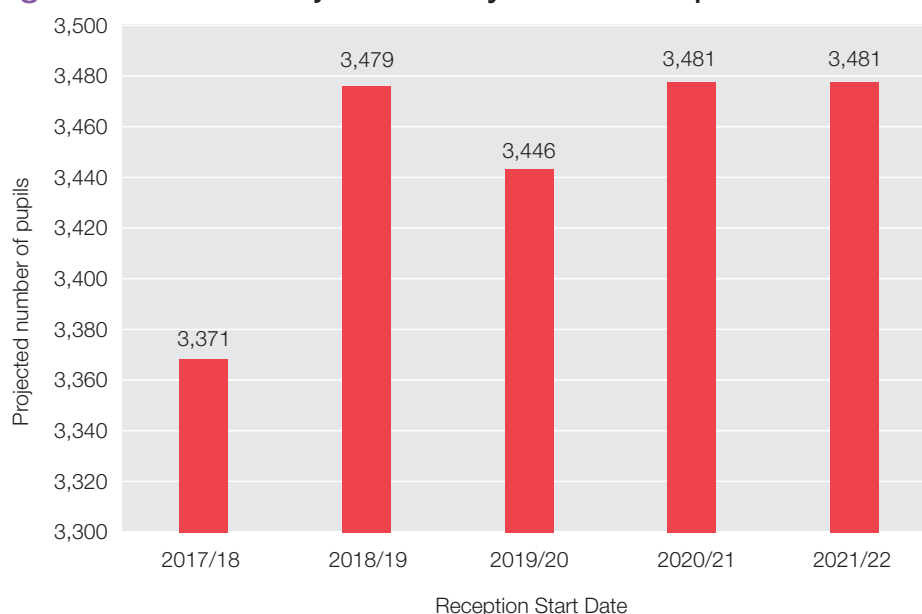
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Primary School Organisation

Levels of demand for primary school provision across the City have increased significantly in recent years, as illustrated in Figure 4. This upsurge has been primarily driven by an increase of 24% in the number of births to Wolverhampton residents between 2002 and 2016.⁷

To meet demand, the Council has recently invested heavily in the provision of additional primary school places in a number of areas of high demand across the City. Recent expansion schemes have been funded through a combination of both central capital funding and constrained Council resources. Since September 2012, Primary School Expansion Programmes have introduced an additional 2,715 additional primary school places across 21 existing primary schools. In addition, two Free Schools have opened (Nishkam Primary School Wolverhampton in September 2013 and The Royal School Wolverhampton in September 2016). There remains uncertainty in respect of future central government capital funding allocations to meet basic need in the medium term.

Figure 4: 2017 Projected Citywide Reception Cohorts



Source: City of Wolverhampton Council, School Organisation Forecasts 2017

⁷ Office for National Statistics

As demand has increased, the number of surplus school places has reduced and levels of surplus within some primary year groups are now constrained. Surplus places are school places that have not been filled.

Figure 5 illustrates levels of surplus in each national curriculum year group on a Planning Area and citywide level, and Appendix C highlights recent fluctuations in the size of individual cohorts. Levels of in-year growth have accelerated in recent years; anecdotal evidence suggests that this growth is also being experienced by neighbouring Local Authorities and is likely to be the consequence of migration rates.

Figure 5: Primary Surplus by National Curriculum Year Group (with Planning Area level)

National Curriculum Year Group (2017/18)	Number on Roll (Spring 2018 Census)	Planning Area 1	Planning Area 2	Planning Area 3	Planning Area 4	Citywide Surplus Places Against Admissions Limits (Percentage)
R	3338	26	38	49	84	197 (5.6%)
1	3547	23	12	29	62	126 (3.4%)
2	3644	15	14	31	33	93 (2.5%)
3*	3417	21	10	15	52	98 (2.8%)
4*	3291	18	30	20	60	128 (3.8%)
5*	3320	14	18	9	35	76 (2.3%)
6*	3248	10	12	5	19	46 (1.4%)

* Please note that in order to meet levels of demand in specific hotspots that a minority of primary schools in the City have introduced additional capacity by agreeing to admit significantly above their admission limits.

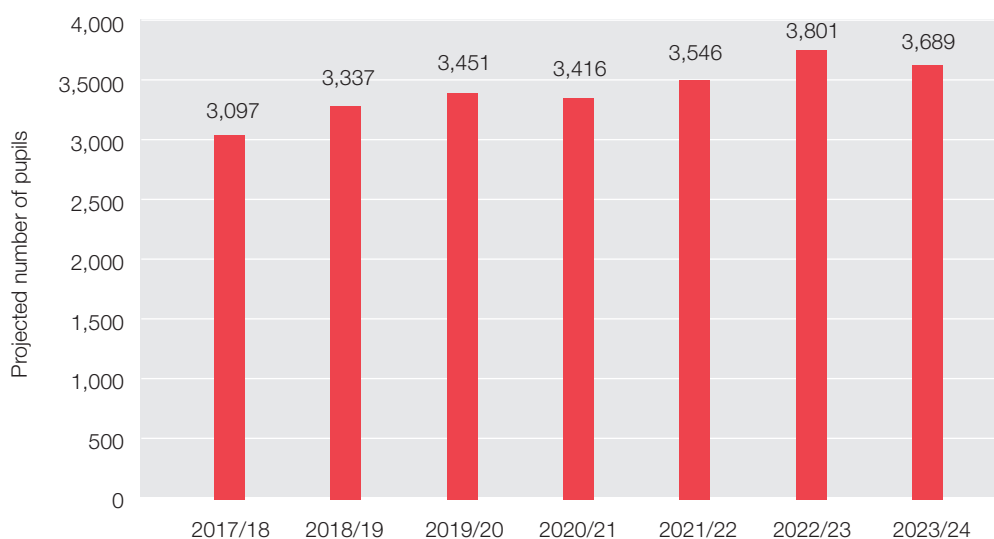
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Secondary School Organisation

As illustrated by Figure 6, levels of demand for secondary school provision in Wolverhampton are expected to increase significantly in the future as the bulge in pupil numbers in the City's primary schools moves through to the secondary estate. The Secondary School Expansion Programme 2017-2019 will provide 350 permanent places. In addition, 111 temporary places have been provided in Year 7 for 2017/18 and 130 temporary places in Year 7 for 2018/19 in secondary schools across Wolverhampton. Moreover the all-through school, The Royal Wolverhampton, opened in September 2016 and the West Midlands University Technical College opened in September 2015. The City faces a considerable challenge to ensure that sufficient high quality school places are available to meet the needs of local communities.

The recently observed growth in the size of younger secondary cohorts is expected to accelerate in the short to medium term and projections suggest that between 2017/18 and 2022/23 Year 7 cohorts are likely to grow by 23%.

Figure 6: Projected Citywide Year 7 Cohorts



Source: City of Wolverhampton Council, School Organisation Forecasts 2017

As evident in Wolverhampton's primary school estate, the City has recently experienced an acceleration in the in-year growth of some existing secondary cohorts (see Appendix D). Council representatives are closely monitoring fluctuations in the size of existing cohorts to ensure that incoming students can access educational provision within a reasonable distance of their home address.

As shown by Figure 7, currently the level of surplus in secondary schools remains above the 2% that this strategy recommends for secondary schools, however the number of surplus places varies considerably across year groups. It should be noted that in the coming years surplus places are expected to be constrained as existing primary cohorts progress through the education system.

Figure 7: Secondary Surplus by National Curriculum Year Group (with Planning Area level)

National Curriculum Year Group (2017/18)	Number on Roll (Spring 2018 Census)	Planning Area 1	Planning Area 2	Planning Area 3	Citywide Surplus Places Against Admissions Limits (Percentage)
7	3,068	49	151	N/A	200 (6.2%)
8	3,007	48	150	N/A	198 (6.3%)
9	2,932	87	124	N/A	211 (6.7%)
10	2,791	114	125	88	327 (10.6%)
11	2,608	236	185	89	510 (16.4%)

4

The Introduction of Additional School Places

To meet rising demand for school places the Council will continue to consider, where feasible, the expansion of existing schools across the City. To safeguard the sustainability of the school estate, the expansion of existing schools will be investigated in the first instance, prior to considering the introduction of new provision.

However, it should be noted that, given the scale of recent expansion programmes, there are a limited number of remaining opportunities available within the existing school estate. Based on this we would need to consider the cost effectiveness of expanding existing schools against the introduction of new schools.

All new schools or new refurbishments and expansions will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Any planning for school expansions or new schools will take account of the need to continue to align and balance planned housing development and future school place planning.





Factors we consider when prioritising potential school expansion schemes:

- Parental Preference - schools which are most popular with parents
- School Performance - schools judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted
- Attainment - schools whose results consistently exceed floor standards
- School Leadership - schools with stable and proven leadership
- Location - schools located within areas of high demand, taking into account local regeneration and housing development priorities
- Viability for expansion - schemes which can be most easily and efficiently implemented.

The Council is committed to ensuring the implementation of practical solutions to meet the basic need challenge and will work closely with schools and Academy Trusts to develop appropriate schemes that consider pupils' needs and support the effective delivery of the curriculum. When an expanding school is in the process of converting to academy status, the Council will seek to ensure that legal mechanisms are employed to ensure that the needs of the City are fulfilled and any approved investment is secured for the future. The Council's legal representatives will seek to include reference to the enlarged capacity within relevant Commercial Transfer Agreements and representations will be made to the DfE to request that Funding Agreements reflect the capacity post-expansion.

The expansion of a school can present challenges for schools and a school may require additional support from the School Improvement Team. This support will be reflected in the school categorisation and the time allocated to each school.

Parental Preference and Expansions

The Council's policy of prioritising popular and successful schools for expansion has proved successful.

Despite the significant growth in demand in 2017/18

- Primary 86% of on time applicants were offered a Reception place in their first preference school and 96% were offered a place in one of the preferred schools
- Secondary 78% of on time applicants were offered a Year 7 place in their first preference school and 96% were offered a place in one of the preferred schools.

Source: City of Wolverhampton Council, Capita ONE data

4.1 The Growth Fund

To support the needs of students in expanding schools and in line with the Education Funding Agency's recommended approach, the Council will seek continued support from Schools' Forum for a Growth Fund to support resultant revenue needs of schools which are required to provide extra places to meet basic need.

Schools currently qualify for funding through the Growth Fund in the following circumstances:

- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to permanently increase its admission limit to meet basic need
- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to provide a bulge class to meet basic need
- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to expand in-year to meet basic need.

It should be noted that secondary schools have not previously required support via the Growth Fund. Due to the need to introduce additional secondary school places in the City, there will be a demand for the Growth Fund as a result of the 2018-19 Secondary Expansion Programme.

It is recognised that school funding is currently under review by Central Government and that at present there remains uncertainty regarding future funding mechanisms.

Aspiration

We recognise the need for expanding schools to receive appropriate funding, in a timely manner, to meet students' needs.

4.2 Bulge Classes

In specific circumstances, where local demand is predicted to rise and then fall within a short period of time, the Council will consider the introduction of bulge classes. These are time limited expansions of the capacity of individual year groups within a school, for example, a temporary increase of a school's admission limit by one form of entry in an individual year group to meet demand. Bulge classes will only be considered when the permanent expansion of a school to meet demand would not be sustainable.

4.3 Additional Capacity in Existing Cohorts

As illustrated in Figures 5 and 7 some existing school cohorts have grown significantly and demonstrated in-year fluctuations, resulting in reduced levels of surplus. It is recognised that as demand increases and levels of surplus reduce, that the introduction of additional capacity into existing cohorts may need to be considered in the future. To ensure that pupils can access school provision within a reasonable distance of their home address, the Council has worked closely with schools to introduce additional capacity into existing cohorts to cater for rising demand as required.

We recommend that the introduction of additional capacity into existing cohorts is only considered in response to significant demographic challenges and to support the needs of local communities. We recognise that introducing additional capacity, at points other than standard years of entry, can potentially destabilise both individual cohorts and the wider school estate.

To support the needs of pupils in schools that introduce additional capacity into existing cohorts, the Council will seek continued approval from Schools' Forum through the Growth Fund to support the resultant revenue needs of schools.

4.4 Vertical Grouping

Vertical Grouping (or the employment of mixed age classes) is most commonly employed in primary schools with intakes of 45 or 75 and works successfully in many schools across the City. However, the use of this structure can increase the complexity of planning and delivering the curriculum.

When an opportunity or need arises consultation will be conducted with Headteachers and Governors to consider increasing or reducing admission limits in schools with existing 45 or 75 admission limits.

We recommend that the introduction of additional 45 or 75 admission limits only be considered once other practical solutions have been exhausted.

4.5 Temporary Accommodation

Across the school estate in the City a small proportion of schools' schedules of accommodation include temporary facilities. Whilst it is recognised that the quality of temporary accommodation has improved significantly in recent years, this strategy requires that the replacement of temporary accommodation is prioritised, where appropriate.

5

Removal of Maintained Provision / Discontinuance of Maintained Provision

In certain circumstances the Council will consider the removal of maintained provision.

We will consider the closure of a school if the school meets two or more of the following criteria:

- The school is judged Inadequate by Ofsted
- The performance of pupils at the school is unacceptably low
- The school has a significant number of surplus places
- There are significant suitability issues in respect of the school's accommodation and/or site
- Closure could be effected without denying any pupils access to at least one alternative school with available places within a maximum of two miles or three miles (walking distance of primary and secondary respectively) of their home
- The substantive Headteacher has left or is leaving.

Prior to initiating any statutory processes to close a school, the Council will consult with the school's Headteacher and the Chair of the school's Governing Board to discuss how the criteria may apply to their school.

As part of this process the Council will review and consult with schools' Governing Boards regarding:

- The likely impact of a school's closure on other schools in the local area, taking account of numbers on roll and the capacity of schools to enhance provision for children and families
- Projected levels of future demand
- The importance of the school to the wider community
- The condition, suitability and sufficiency of school facilities.

5.1 Intervention

The Council will consider proposing the adoption of structural solutions (including both federation and sponsored academy status) to improve standards in underperforming schools (federations only in primary).

5.2 Change Management

It is recognised that making significant changes to individual establishments can have a disruptive effect on the delivery of education. This vision requires that any school reorganisation or development scheme seeks to minimise disruption and avoid any longer-term detriment to students.



5.3 Federations

Federations offer schools the opportunity to share best practice and support one another. The term federation is used to describe the creation of formal shared governance structures, which enable schools to raise standards and enhance provision by sharing resources, staff, expertise and facilities. There are a variety of federation models that allow schools to choose which model best suits their needs.

Regardless of the federation model adopted, individual schools retain their identity, continue to receive individual school budgets, have separate Ofsted inspections and report on performance individually.

Federating schools can have many benefits, including:

- Providing a structured way for schools to learn from each other and share best practice
- Offering opportunities for improved teaching and learning through increased specialism
- Building capacity across the federation
- Saving on planning and administration time
- Offering better support and development opportunities for School Governors
- Providing broader career opportunities across the federation
- Extending curriculum entitlement.

5.4 Sponsored Academies

In certain circumstances, the Council will facilitate the sponsorship of schools to become academies or support eligible schools to convert to academy status. Such steps will only be taken to support the overall improvement of education in the City, including the raising of pupils' attainment and progress.

Where appropriate, the Council will work with other agencies to identify locally sourced sponsors to support the conversion of schools.

We recommend the adoption of structural solutions (including federations and sponsored academy status) and seek to influence the implementation of effective governance arrangements that promote school improvement and advance the quality of education across the City.

6

All-through Schools

An 'All-through school' is a school which provides both primary and secondary education.

Opportunity

To improve the diversity of the school estate in Wolverhampton the introduction of all-through schools will be explored, where appropriate.

Successful all-through schools can offer many benefits including:

- Reducing the number of transitions children face and reducing the risk of delayed learning at the start of secondary school
- Extending opportunities available to primary pupils; all-through schools can offer primary age pupils early access to specialist subject teaching and facilities
- Providing an additional opportunity to fully utilise the whole school estate to meet the anticipated future primary basic need challenge
- Providing school staff with wider career development opportunities
- Offering cost savings through economies of scale.

The introduction of all-through provision will only be considered where there is a demonstrable need for additional capacity in the local area and all-through provision would be an appropriate solution.

7

Specialist Provision

In January 2018, there were eight special schools in Wolverhampton:

Establishment	School Type	Age Range	SEND Designation
Broadmeadow Special School	Academy	2-7	Physical Disability Severe Learning Difficulty
Green Park School	Community	3-19	Severe Learning Difficulty Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
Northern House School (City of Wolverhampton)	Academy	7-16	Speech, Language and Communication Social, Emotional and Mental Health Physical Disability Moderate Learning Difficulty
Penn Fields Special School	Community	5-19	Specific Learning Difficulty Speech, Language and Communication Autistic Spectrum Disorder Moderate Learning Difficulty Severe Learning Difficulty
Penn Hall School	Community	3-19	Physical Difficulty
Tettenhall Wood School	Community	5-19	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Westcroft School	Academy	5-19	Moderate Learning Difficulty Severe Learning Difficulty
Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre	Free School	16-18	Specific Learning Difficulty Visual Impairment Hearing Impairment Speech, Language and Communication Autistic Spectrum Disorder Social, Emotional and Mental Health Moderate Learning Difficulty Severe Learning Difficulty

In January 2018, there were eleven mainstream schools with resource base provision:

Establishment	School Type	SEND Designation
Aldersley High School	Academy	Speech, Language and Communication
Bilston Nursery School	LA Nursery	Severe/Complex Needs Significant Difficulties
Castlecroft Primary School	Community	Visual Impairment
Colton Hills Community School	Community	Physical Disability
East Park Academy	Academy	Hearing Impaired
Low Hill Nursery School	LA Nursery	Severe/Complex Needs Significant Difficulties
Palmers Cross Primary School	Academy	Speech, Language and Communication
Springdale Primary School	Community	Speech, Language and Communication
Smestow School	Academy	Visual Impairment
St Matthias School	Community	Hearing Impairment
Windsor Nursery School	LA Nursery	Severe/Complex Needs Significant Difficulties

Local Authorities are required to keep their local offer of services and provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) under review, in consultation with parents, young people, schools and other institutions. The Council recommends that the commissioning of specialist educational provision is informed by the production of an annual SEND Commissioning Intentions document which outlines both the current and anticipated future needs of students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). This needs analysis will provide increased transparency and be used to inform the development of an effective graduated response. The timely determination and publication of commissioning requirements will support providers to effectively plan and meet students' needs.

We recommend that the development of provision for students with SEND is guided by the following principles:

- Local solutions are developed to support a reduction in the required number of out of City placements
- The number of transitions experienced by children with SEND should be minimised wherever possible
- Solutions should be developed to offer opportunities for students with SEND to attend mainstream provision, unless doing so would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children.





Early Years Provision

Early Years provision has a legal duty to generate a report on Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and is organised into four localities, split into eight areas, detailing current supply and demand of registered childcare. The Local Authority offers support, advice and guidance to registered childcare providers who work within the Early Years Statutory Framework. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides details of legislation on welfare requirements and learning and development. Support is also offered to families through programmes such as Home learning, Bookstart and the Parent Champion programme⁸.

City of Wolverhampton Council have published an Early Years Strategy for parents and professionals. The strategy is based on the assumption that parents are the first educator and to ensure that there is a robust system in place to support them in this vital role. The Local Authority is committed to:

- Putting the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making
- Taking a holistic approach to the wellbeing of a child
- Working with children, young people and their families on ways to improve wellbeing
- Advocating preventative work and early intervention to support young children and their families ensuring they are appropriately safeguarded
- Believing professionals must work together in the best interests of the child.

⁸City of Wolverhampton Council, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017

The Early Years Strategy has four work plans; Parental Engagement, Workforce Development, High Quality Education and Good Family Health. These are live documents that highlight areas of development to support in providing good quality experiences for families across the City, contributing to improving children's outcomes for learning. An identified key area for development is to ensure children are ready for school, to support this, a school readiness definition has been agreed⁹:

The Early Years Strategy states that “as a child starts full time schooling within Wolverhampton, there is an expectation that children feel prepared and ready to start school socially, emotionally and physically. Children will be able to express their needs, feelings and wants. A school will ensure that children feel heard and understood by their practitioners. Leading to children being excited, enthused and demonstrate a curiosity to learn both inside and outside of the classroom.”

The City continues through the work of the Early Intervention Service, School Improvement and Standards team to strive to ensure that schools, settings, childminders and all early year's providers are delivering high quality early years experiences. The Ofsted ratings for the City continue to rise annually; the figures for all providers within the City demonstrate this¹⁰.

⁹City of Wolverhampton Council, Early Years Strategy 2017-2021, p.9

¹⁰City of Wolverhampton Council, Early Years Strategy 2017-2021

9

Infant and Junior School Provision

We recommend that whenever the Headship of a school becomes vacant in an infant or junior school, the Council invites responsible bodies (e.g. Governing Boards) to consider their merger or amalgamation. For merger to be considered, the leadership of the establishment that is proposed for expansion must be at least 'Good'.

Bringing infant and junior schools together offers many advantages, including:

- Reducing the number of major transitions that pupils face
- Reducing the likelihood of lost learning at the beginning of Key Stage 2
- Increasing the opportunity for specialist teachers to work with a wider range of pupils
- Providing the opportunity for a consistent approach to the curriculum to be adopted
- Ensuring the continuity of teaching, learning and achievement
- Cost savings through economies of scale.

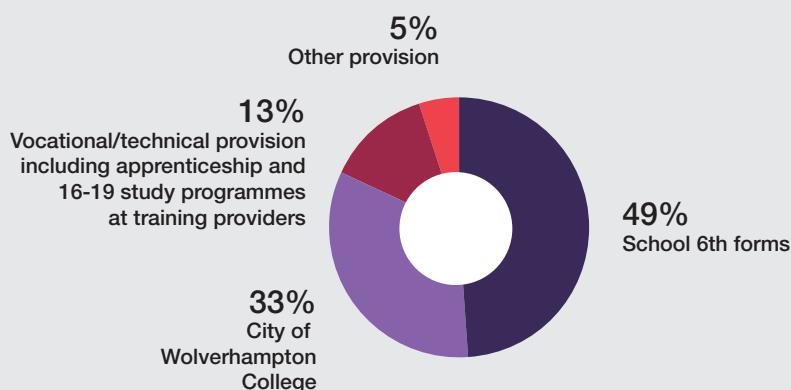
Please note that, in this context:

- The 'merger' of infant and junior schools is the process of joining the schools together by discontinuing one establishment and expanding and altering the age range of the other
- The term amalgamation relates to the process of joining the schools together by discontinuing both establishments and creating a new school.

10

Post-16 Provision

The Post 16 landscape is made up of 24 organisations;



10.1 Current Places and Funding

Across the City of Wolverhampton there are a variety of post-16 providers, offering a mixture of qualifications to 16-19 year olds.

In 2017-18 there were 5,475 funded Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) places within the City. Post-16 provision varies significantly from the secondary education phase due to a breadth of provision offered by specialist academic and technical providers.

Post 16 provision is based on lagged, (historic) learner numbers, the current allocation does not include capacity to grow or infrastructure development of existing settings.

Effective collaboration between schools and City of Wolverhampton College will be key to successful implementation of the governments skills plan. The vision for School Organisation recognises the aspirations of schools to have efficient and successful 6th form provision, and the need to balance provision and its success between 6th forms and City of Wolverhampton College. With regard to this, the impact of co-commissioning of post 16 courses and any rationalisation of available space will be considered when exploring any future secondary school place planning activities.

10.2 Cross Border Movement

In Key Stage 4 and 5 the City exports more learners than we import. The table below shows that in the academic year 2016-17 more Wolverhampton residents aged (16-19) left the City compared to the numbers from neighbouring Local Authority who travelled into Wolverhampton. In this academic year there was a net loss of 628 learners.

Figure 8: Post 16 Cross Border Movement 2016-17

Source: DFE ESFA Data Sets

Figure 9: Post 16 Cross Border Movement of pupils to Wolverhampton from neighbouring Local Authorities

Local Authority	Export	Import	+/- migration
Dudley	933	208	-725
Sandwell	244	159	-85
Staffordshire	300	355	+55
Walsall	382	315	-67

Sufficiency needs are currently met in Wolverhampton due to the number of learners exported and capacity within the existing Post 16 settings. However due to the forecasted bulge in Year 7 from 2016-17 to 2023-24 and a projected future growth in Post 16 numbers as a consequence, the City could have a shortage in capacity of around 1,855 young people in 2028-2029.

11

Alternative Provision

Alternative provision is recognised by the Department for Education as,

“...education arranged by Local Authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.” (DfE 2013).

In January 2018, there were four Pupil Referral Units in Wolverhampton:

Establishment	Age Range
Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)	14-16
Northern House School (City of Wolverhampton) Primary PRU	4-11
The Braybrook Centre (Key Stage 3 PRU)	11-13
The Orchard Centre (Home and Hospital PRU)	5-16

This strategy recognises the invaluable support that pupil referral units provide to vulnerable students.

A review of alternative provision is currently being undertaken which will inform the development of an appropriate continuum of provision, coupled with effective supporting practices.

12

Estate Management

We recommend a long term approach to the management of educational assets in order to ensure that fluctuations in demand can be effectively and efficiently catered for. Where appropriate, sites should be reserved as contingency to cater for anticipated increases in demand, such as that resulting from new housing developments.

However, it should be recognised that adopting a longer-term approach will result in short-term budgetary pressures for Corporate Landlord as sites must be secured and maintained.

Any reserved sites that are included on the Council's Disposal Programme will impact on the Council's ability to achieve its capital receipt target.

Where circumstances arise that present the opportunity to use existing school accommodation in different ways, this strategy would require that priority is given to the provision of statutory school places.



13

Strategy Review

The strategy is subject to review on a biennial basis.



14

Resources

City of Wolverhampton Council, Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=10312&p=0>

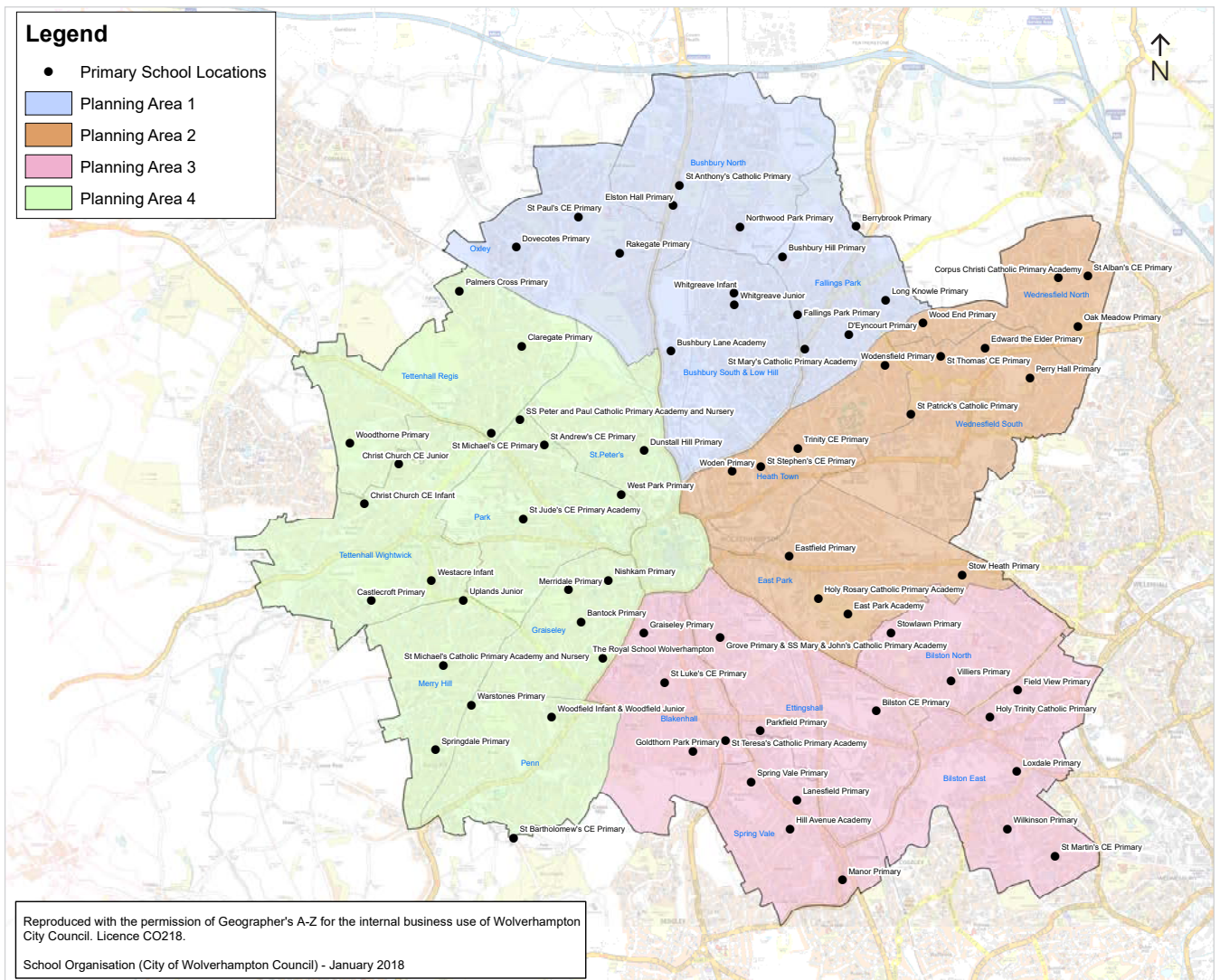
City of Wolverhampton Council, Early Years Strategy 2017 – 2021
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=11544&p=0>

City of Wolverhampton Council, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14604&p=0>

Department of Education, Schools Admissions Code December 2014
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf

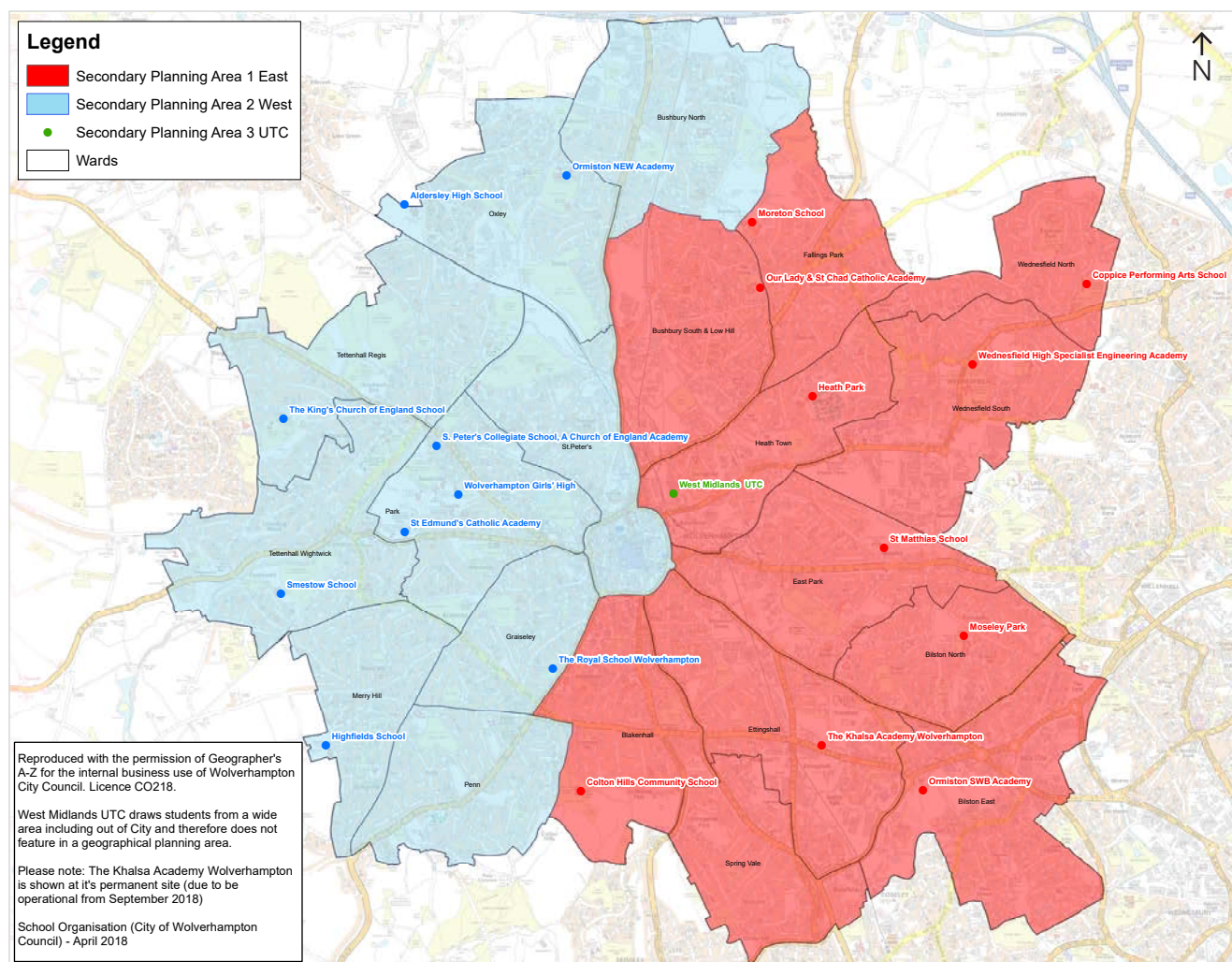
Appendices

Appendix A: Primary Provision Planning Areas 2018



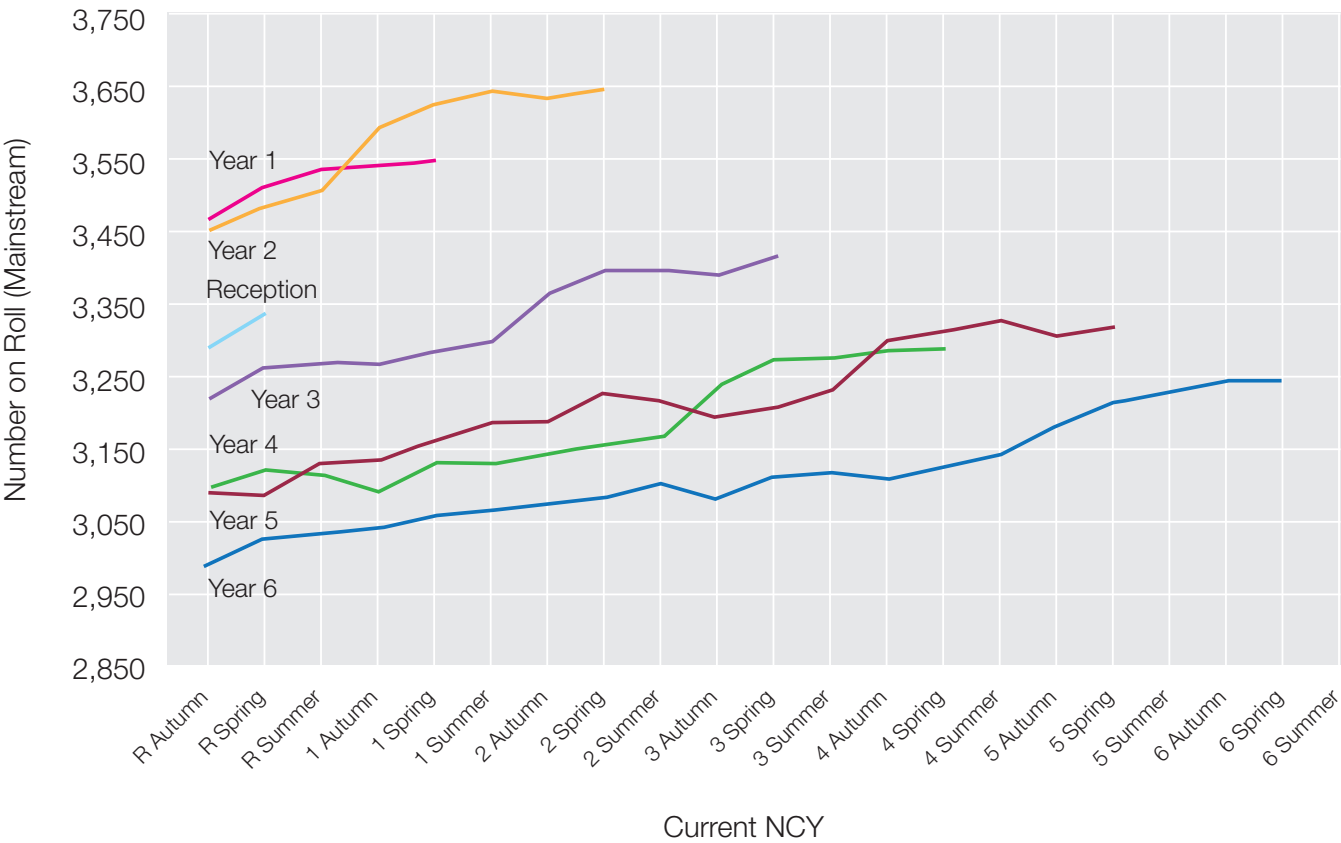
Appendix B:

Secondary Provision Planning Areas 2018



Appendix C:

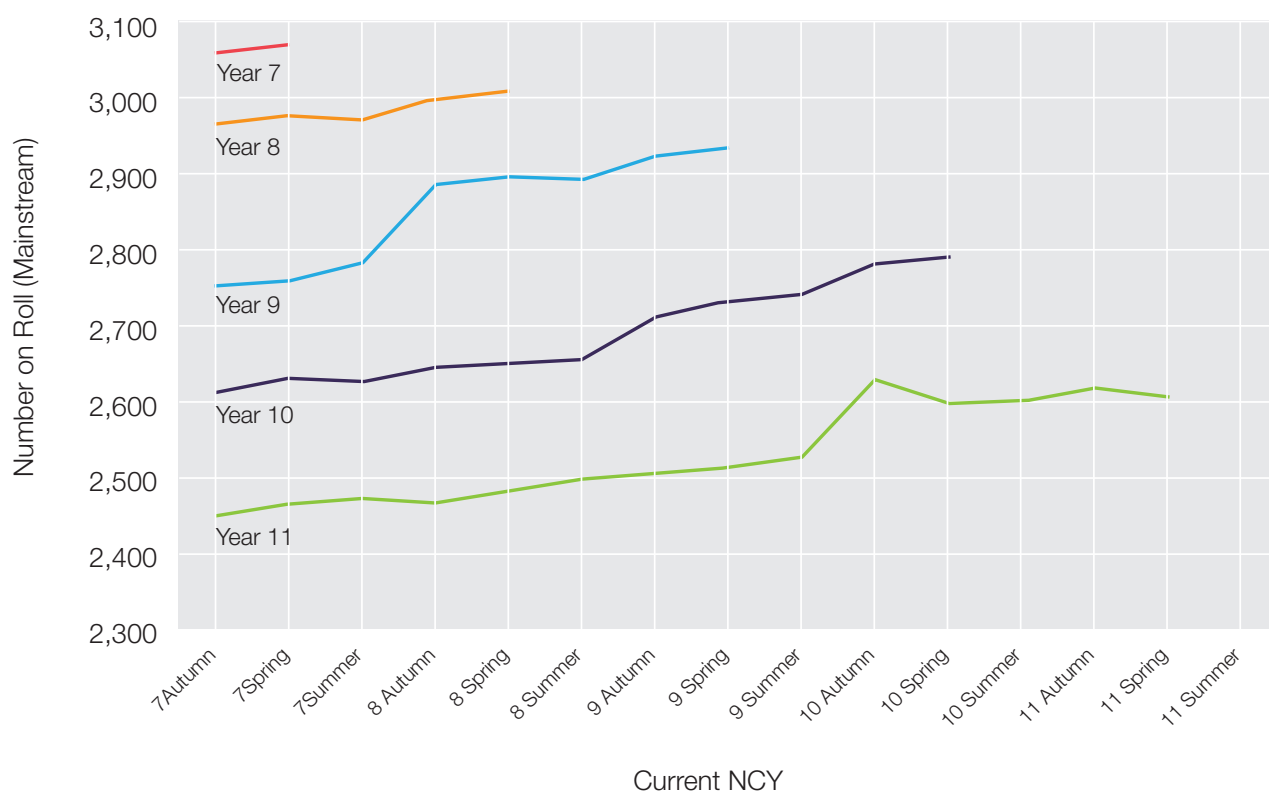
Primary Cohort Fluctuations (Autumn, Spring and Summer census data)



Appendix D:

Secondary Cohort Fluctuations

(Autumn, Spring and Summer census data)



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