Examination – Note for Inspector

Primary School Provision in Warlingham – November 2019

November 2019
1. Introduction

This note draws attention to the reasoning behind the actions the Council has taken in relation to education and is provided in response to the Examination Hearings (TED10 and TED12).

The Council has actively engaged with Surrey County Council as the education commissioner for school places in Tandridge (SDTC6). This engagement has resulted in the education allocations and the permissive policy identified in Our Local Plan 2033.

In its role as an education authority, Surrey has a duty to ensure that school places are of high standard with sufficient capacity to promote parental choice, diversity and fair access so that every child can fulfil their educational potential.

2. Need Arising

Strategic planning for future need for pupil places is ordinarily done on a three-yearly basis, and reviewed/updated as necessary based on the School Capacity (SCAP) survey which is a statutory data collection that all local authorities must complete each year. The latest version of Surrey’s planning for school places is available here and dates from January 2018:


When each new planning for school places strategy is produced it should reflect any demographic change, changes in demand for school places and changes to the condition of the education estate to ensure that all underlying assumptions remain both appropriate and relevant. As can be seen in the above-mentioned document, historically, Surrey has underestimated the need for primary school places by around 1% in Tandridge district.
In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 ("EIA") Surrey has a statutory duty to “secure that sufficient schools for providing— (a) primary education, and (b) secondary education are available for their area” as well as to “secure diversity and increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of school places” within its area.

In relation to Warlingham Village Primary specifically, it is understood by Tandridge District Council that Surrey County Council is seeking a new school site to allow for relocation from the existing site to allow for expansion from 1FE to 2FE Primary provision. The County Council has already tried and tested this method of providing provision elsewhere for example at Cranleigh, in Waverley District https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=32442. As such Tandridge District Council, in consultation with Surrey discussed education provision and this resulted in the allocation of a site at HSG15 in the emerging Local Plan at July 2018 and was further later confirmed by Surrey County Council in response to Tandridge following up as a result of Consultation responses received. At this point it was confirmed that there is a move away from providing 1FE primary schools in the interests of longer-term sustainability of the education estate and it is not desirable to have schools at 3FE or above for the same reasons. Indeed, it is not unheard-of schools to close, even where there is an acute shortage of school places or increased development occurring, particularly where the education estate is aging or in locations where a school is not rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Such a scenario is playing out in Waverley District and Tandridge District Council is keen to avoid such scenarios being played out within our district so far as is possible. See example: https://www.waverley.gov.uk/press/article/428/waverley_borough_council_opposes_school_closure. Further to this, the latest position from Surrey County Council is set out as an Appendix to this note.
In addition to the communication received from Surrey County Council, it is understood by Tandridge District Council, that whilst there remain a sufficient number of school places in the adjoining London Borough of Croydon to the immediate north of Warlingham/Hamsey Green currently this is forecast to reduce in the Croydon “South” school planning area by 2023/24 to around a headroom of 2% when ordinarily a headroom of 5% is standard practice nationally (The Audit Commission advises 5-10% headroom to allow for in-year admissions). This is an important point, as there is a considerable amount of cross-boundary movement in relation to services including education. The Latest details of the Croydon Council forecast are available in Appendix 1 of the Croydon Education Estates Strategy here: https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/g1875/Public%20reports%20pack%2019th-Sep-2019%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10

It should further be noted that new housing development tends to attract more young families than older housing, yielding higher numbers of pupils particularly in the pre-school and primary age groups, though this usually stabilises over time until the development resembles the mature housing stock. Thus, where there is a step-change in development coming forward it can be expected that a higher yield of pupils will occur early on.

It is important to note that a 5% headroom in school places is advisable by the Audit Commission to allow for flexibility in the system to respond to parental choice, unexpected changes in demand and pupil movement throughout the year. A higher percentage of surplus places is usually accepted in areas where pupil yield from planned housing developments could increase demand.
Furthermore, across Tandridge, the demand for school places is unevenly spread across school planning areas, with pressure in some areas and a little spare capacity in others. Shortages of places can exist at popular schools along with surplus places at less popular schools. Surplus places tend to be in schools judged as requiring improvement by Ofsted or located in areas that are more geographically isolated and not easily accessible by public transport.

3. Location for primary school

Tandridge District Council has taken a pragmatic approach to forward planning through Our Local Plan 2033 by way of allocating a site for a school at HSG15; identifying a “strategic opportunity” at HSG13 where the education commissioning authority are a landowner to enable flexibility to manage demand over the medium to long term; and by including a permissive policy to allow for expansion of existing schools in a Greenbelt Authority area. Noting that the Greenbelt is meant only to be altered as part of a Local Plan Review.

In the absence of taking a pragmatic and forward planning approach outlined above, the result is highly likely to result in an absence of available school places leading to a deterioration in access to vital services for both existing and future residents of the district. The adjoining authority of Reigate and Banstead has experienced a similar scenario, which has resulted in a school having to be provided outside of the Local Plan process and having to be built on a recreation ground, with the loss of this type of infrastructure, to provide Primary School provision (Lime Tree Academy). In addition, at Secondary School level, provision is having to be met by providing an entire school in temporary buildings for 3-4 years, where pupils are having to eat lunch in their classrooms owing to a lack on ancillary facilities. A link to the planning application in relation to this scenario is available here: https://planning.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/online-
Outline application Number 17/02890/OUT. Tandridge District Council’s position is to take a sensible and pragmatic approach to avoid such scenarios being played out in Tandridge to the severe detriment of our communities.
Appendix A

Tandridge District Council Local Plan

Note for Inspector on primary school provision in Warlingham (06/12/19)

This note is in addition to the observations already made by Surrey County Council in our response to the Local Plan dated 10 September 2018 and in the Statement of Common Ground dated December 2018.

Context

The opportunity for additional places to serve the Warlingham area needs to be considered alongside the wider residential development in Tandridge as outlined in the Local Plan currently under inspection, to ensure there are sufficient school and early years places to support growth in Tandridge.

Pupil Forecasts and Residential Developments in Tandridge District

Nationally birth rates have fallen and across Surrey the number of live births have reduced since a peak in 2012. The birth rate in Tandridge runs contrary to this trend and the number of births in the area for the 2018 year have risen to a high. Records from 1994 show 2018 to be the highest number of births, with 2015 and 2016 being the next highest. Further research into the demographics of this is needed, although anecdotally it is suggested that people are moving out of London to Tandridge as it is seen as a convenient commuter location.

The table belows show the number of children expected to come forward in this area in the primary sector over the next 10 years. These numbers are based on current pupil projections developed by EDGE (2019 version). The projected demand incorporates data on the birth rate, population estimates, and the effects of pupil movement trends (movements between schools, in and out of area etc).

The pupil numbers are compared with capacity numbers which are the number of places there are across all primary schools in the area and this shows a surplus or deficit of places.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projected demand (EDGE housing scenario)</td>
<td>6274</td>
<td>6389</td>
<td>6465</td>
<td>6484</td>
<td>6505</td>
<td>6585</td>
<td>6586</td>
<td>6548</td>
<td>6511</td>
<td>6513</td>
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<td>Projected surplus places</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>177</td>
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The EDGE demand forecasts also include a pupil product from new homes based on the returns provided by Tandridge District Council that include planned completions, housing permissions and completions for some planned sites in the existing Local Plan. In terms of the data used to develop this forecast, within the pupil forecast period to 2028/29 this includes some 2,944 new homes. The target for the local plan at 6,056 implies an additional 3,112 homes within the local plan period, over and above the homes included in pupil forecast. The additional 3,112 homes might be expected to yield approximately 780 additional primary aged pupils between now and 2033, in addition to the pupil demand generated by the current version of the EDGE forecasts.

Document Reference TED23:
Tandridge District Council – Primary School Provision in Warlingham – November 2019
The table below illustrates what the primary pupil forecasts for Tandridge might look like if this additional housing is factored in (and making some assumptions about how the additional development would be allocated across years). These forecasts suggest, based on current capacity, that there could be a deficit in primary places from 2024-25 onwards.

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<tr>
<td>Demand (with additional housing)</td>
<td>6279</td>
<td>6414</td>
<td>6527</td>
<td>6569</td>
<td>6582</td>
<td>6721</td>
<td>6801</td>
<td>6817</td>
<td>6823</td>
<td>6858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected surplus places</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-31</td>
<td>-111</td>
<td>-127</td>
<td>-133</td>
<td>-168</td>
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For practical purposes a working margin should be included in the planned capacity. This is to allow for in year growth, enhance parental preference and allow for additional unplanned bulges in pupil numbers. The table below shows the additional places that would be required for 5% spare capacity for primary schools in Tandridge.

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<td>6817</td>
<td>6823</td>
<td>6858</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projected surplus places (against a benchmark of 5% surplus)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-45</td>
<td>-134</td>
<td>-177</td>
<td>-221</td>
<td>-367</td>
<td>-451</td>
<td>-468</td>
<td>-474</td>
<td>-511</td>
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**Residential Development in Warlingham**

There are a number of identified developments in the Warlingham area including HSG 15 totalling 400 new homes. These additional homes are likely to generate in excess of 100 primary aged pupils and additional primary places are likely to be needed. Other developments that arise in the Warlingham area will also generate additional pupils.

Surrey County Council would welcome the opportunity to create new school facilities, allowing for the expansion of places to serve pupils in the community, arising from new developments and pupils from the Warlingham area. Creating up to date, modern purpose-built facilities for the latest education and curriculum would provide the best opportunities and future for children in the locality.
Creating a new school by expanding Warlingham Primary School\(^1\) from 210 places (one form of entry) to 420 places (two forms of entry) will provide a school with sufficient pupils for long-term sustainability.

Such an opportunity will require the necessary funding to be in place whoever provides the new school.

\(^1\) To note, Warlingham Primary School is the name of the school and the premise of expansion could include its relocation on a new site.