

Draft Education Contributions SPD Consultation

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places within the borough to meet the population's educational needs. However, we face significant challenges in providing school places due to a growing population caused by increased housing development and inward migration, condition issues within the school estate, and a growing cohort of children with special needs.
- 1.2. Although central government provides funding to support the supply of school places, this does not address all the challenges we are facing. Where housing development creates an unacceptable impact on school places, we will seek developer contributions to make sure there are adequate education provisions.
- 1.3. A draft Education Contributions supplementary planning document (SPD) has been prepared which clarifies how and when we will seek developer contributions. The purpose of this briefing note is to make members of the Development Plan Working Party aware of the proposed SPD.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1. In November 2019 (subsequently updated in August 2023), the Department for Education (DfE) published its guidance '[Securing Developer Contributions for Education](#)'. This guidance recommends local authorities seek developer contributions for school places where needs arise. This includes places for early years, primary, secondary, 16-18 years and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 2.2. Historically, we have not actively sought developer contributions towards education provisions. However, a number of planning applications are being received for large housing developments on sites which have not previously been identified as potential housing sites. It is anticipated that children will live on these new housing sites and will require access to education.

- 2.3. The emerging [Stockport Local Plan](#) will provide a robust and up-to-date policy approach to make sure sustainable development is delivered throughout the borough. It is proposed to include policies that seek to secure developer contributions towards education, in balance with a range of other required contributions such as towards affordable housing and opens space, which members will be aware of from existing, long-standing development plan policies.
- 2.4. Notwithstanding the emerging policy approach proposed through the Local Plan, there is a pressing need to create additional school places now as a result of new ongoing housing development taking place across the borough. Recent updates to the National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance have provided the opportunity to require developer contributions for education, without this being explicitly set out within the adopted development plan. This justifies the creation of an interim approach to support sustainable development and provide clarity to developers until the Local Plan is formally in place.
- 2.5. It is important to note that contributions sought from developers towards education must still consider viability and other established contributions required under adopted development plan policies such as those relating to open space and affordable housing. This means there may be cases where a contribution might be expected towards education but cannot be sought because it would make the development unviable or harm our ability to realise contributions under other established policy requirements. In implementing this SPD, decision-makers may also have to prioritise certain types of developer contributions on a case-by-case basis.

3. HOW AND WHERE S106 CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE USED

- 3.1. The draft SPD sets out that all major planning applications of 10 or more residential units will be assessed. The assessment will establish whether it will have an unacceptable impact on education provision in their place planning area, or adjacent place planning area when close to a boundary. The assessment will include the following types of education provision:

- Early years
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Post 16
 - Special schools/alternative provision
- 3.2. A mechanism to calculate the estimated number of pupils that will be generated for each of the educational phases from a proposed residential development is set out within the draft SPD. Using these figures, Pupil Place Planning Officers will assess whether the proposal would impact capacity within local schools. If it is concluded that a proposal would have an impact on a shortfall in the area for one or more of the educational phases, a contribution would be sought on that basis. The draft SPD sets out the formula to calculate the contribution using the estimated pupil yield and up-to-date build cost data.
- 3.3. Where new development creates additional demand for places, we will aim to mitigate these impacts by seeking contributions to ensure sufficient provision within the same planning area where feasible. However, where development is sat on the boundary of multiple pupil planning areas, we will make a judgement about where the financial contributions will be spent to help mitigate the impacts of the development.
- 3.4. Contributions will typically go towards the physical expansion of existing schools in the area. However, investment may also be made which does not expand the physical size of a local school(s) but facilitates the creation of additional school places through works to improve the condition of buildings to bring them back into use, or by remodelling/repurposing existing space.
- 3.5. The SPD also sets out guidance for instances where it is not feasible to expand facilities on existing nearby schools or where temporary solutions may be needed to meet educational needs. It also sets out the circumstances where the development of a new school may be the most appropriate solution.
- 3.6.

4. CONSULTATION APPROACH

- 4.1. The draft Educations Contributions SPD has been prepared following the processes set out in the council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. These set out that a draft SPD must be:

- Screened to determine whether Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
- Made available for public consultation for a 4-week minimum period (maximum 6 weeks).
- Be made available as an online copy and have hard copies available at the council's offices and deposit locations (libraries etc.)

4.2. The draft SPD has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening. These screening assessments have determined that a full SEA and habitats 'Appropriate Assessment' are not required. These screening opinions will be published alongside the draft SPD and will also be subject to public consultation. Before this screening opinion is confirmed as final the council are required to consult Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The first two of these designated consultation bodies have confirmed their agreement with the conclusions of the screening opinion; a response is expected from the Environment Agency by the end of August but is not expected to raise any issues of objection.

4.3. If necessary, the SEA and HRA screening will be refreshed when a final version of the SPD is published for adoption. This should only be necessary if there is a major change to the purpose or content of the draft SPD.

4.4. Commencing public consultation is a decision for the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing. This expected to be gained on 18th August (after papers for the Development Plan Working Party meeting will have been finalised), with the consultation planned for Wednesday 13th September to Wednesday 25th October. As part of the public consultation, it is intended that the following will be undertaken:

- A notice will be placed in the Manchester Evening News outlining the details of the consultation.
- A letter/email will be sent out notifying those who have subscribed to receiving Stockport Planning Policy updates.
- A report to Area Committees at the start, or slightly preceding consultation, to raise awareness.

- 4.5. Following the public consultation period, all responses received will be taken into consideration. A consultation statement will be prepared to outline any key issues highlighted through the consultation and how these have been addressed. Prior to active use, the final document will be approved for adoption by Cabinet. The work programme sets out that this will likely be either Tuesday 5th December or Tuesday 30th January dependent on the extent of consultation feedback received.
- 4.6. Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in planning decisions. If development proposals do not comply, the contents of the SPD may be used as a reason for the refusal of planning permission.

5. IMPACT OF ACADAMISATION

- 5.1. The council has an enduring duty to ensure there are sufficient schools places of quantity and nature to meet the future needs of its residents. To dispense its duties as the responsible commissioner it will continue to work with DfE, developers, and school leaders in Stockport regardless of their affiliations to coordinate and commission school places.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The Development Plan Working Party are asked to note the proposed Supplementary Planning Document and the intended period of consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment: Screening Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment are attached as background papers.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Hannah Mitchell on 0161 474 3771 or by email to hannah.mitchell@stockport.gov.uk