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Date: 23 April 2021

Dear Ms St John Howe

**Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan Examination – Supplementary Education Statement in respect of primary education provision within Little Heath**

At the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) Examination in Public session regarding Little Heath (Stage 9 Hearing Session on 17 March 2021) a number of questions were raised regarding primary education provision in Little Heath. The Inspector has therefore requested clarification from the Education Authority as to the position of primary education provision in Little Heath.

Hertfordshire County Council can confirm that the information which was previously provided in response to the Stage 8 Hearing Session on Little Heath (provided on 17 September 2020) remains correct and is the most current position on primary education provision.

For completeness the previous response is set out below. This has been updated to include more recent school census data.

**Current and Forecast Capacity:**

At the local plan stage, Hertfordshire County Council currently calculates primary pupil yield based on a ratio of 1 Form of Entry (FE) of need arising from 500 dwellings. Therefore the 135 dwellings proposed for Little Heath in the submitted WHBC Local Plan would equate to 0.27FE of primary education need, which is approximately 8 children per year group.

Hertfordshire County Council forecasts primary education demand by Primary Planning Areas (PPA). Little Heath Primary School is within the Potters Bar PPA.

The other schools within the Potters Bar PPA include: St Giles' Church of England Primary, Cranborne Primary (The), Oakmere Primary, Ladbroke Junior Mixed and Infant, Pope Paul Catholic Primary and Wroxham (The). Between them all they offer 255 reception places, as outlined in Table 1 below.

The County Council forecasts demand for primary school places four years into the future. It is not possible to accurately forecast primary yield after four years as the children are not yet born. These forecasts are informed by the numbers of pre-school aged children registered with GPs as living in the area and take account of historic migration patterns as well as assumed pupil demand from an element of new housing expected to yield within the next 4 years.

Table 1 below sets out the latest forecast in relation to the Potters Bar PPA (published summer 2020). This also sets out the number of reception places available at each of the schools in the PPA.

**Table 1: Current Primary School Forecasts for the Potters Bar PPA (published summer 2020):**

15.2 Potters Bar										
School Code	School Name	Places Available 2020-21	Actuals				Forecast			
			2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2980	Cranborne Primary School	60	59	60	60	59				
2982	Ladbroke Junior Mixed and Infant School	30	30	30	30	30				
2985	Oakmere Primary School	60	42	48	39	43				
3975	Pope Paul Catholic Primary School	30	30	30	30	30				
5204	St Giles' CofE Primary School	15	15	15	15	12				
5206	The Wroxham School	30	30	31	30	30				
5207	Little Heath Primary School	30	30	28	30	30				
<b>Total Year R Pupil Demand</b>			<b>236</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Total Year R Places Available</b>		<b>255</b>					<b>255</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of Year R Places (No.)</b>							<b>40</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of Year R Places (%)</b>							<b>15.7%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of Year R Places (FE)</b>							<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>

This clearly shows that there is currently a surplus of reception places across the schools within the Potters Bar PPA and that this surplus capacity is forecast to continue for the next four years.

In line with and informed by these pupil forecasts, the latest GP registration data of the pre-school population indicates a decline in the number of 0-4 year olds living in the Potters Bar Primary Planning Area who will be seeking a reception place over the next four years.

Over the past three academic years, around 84% of the pupils attending Little Heath Primary School have lived within the Potters Bar PPA. A small number flow in from Ridgeway West and Hatfield PPAs, which both directly adjoin the Potters Bar PPA.

Over the last three years around 62% of pupils who live closest to Little Heath Primary School attend Little Heath Primary school. The majority of the remaining children who live nearer to Little Heath than any other school attend other neighbouring schools within the same Potters Bar PPA.

In the current 2020/2021 academic year there are 24 pupils for whom Little Heath Primary School is their nearest primary school. 20 of them were allocated a reception

place at Little Heath; whilst 4 expressed a 1<sup>st</sup> preference for another school and have been allocated a place elsewhere, such as for faith provision.

Based on admissions rules, with the exception of a Children Looked After or those with a particular Medical or Social need, allocations to primary schools where the Local Authority is the admitting authority are prioritised based on sibling links and then distance criteria. Apart from siblings, if you live nearer a school than anyone else applying, you are likely to gain a place. However, some parents living closest to Little Heath have chosen in the past to seek a school place elsewhere.

Families living in Little Heath will have priority for a place at Little Heath primary school based on distance above those children living further away.

There are places available in the other nearby schools within the Potters Bar PPA to meet the needs of the community in Potters Bar as a whole.

Therefore, the County Council is satisfied that there is sufficient capacity at reception in the Potters Bar PPA for the new families occupying the new homes proposed in Little Heath.

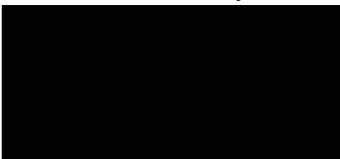
**Conclusion:**

To conclude, Hertfordshire County Council, as Education Authority, has a statutory duty to provide places for all children in the county. It is the County Council's view that, based on the latest available data and as set out above, there are sufficient places currently available in the Potters Bar Primary Planning Area to meet the anticipated yield arising from the proposed level of new dwellings allocated for Little Heath.

The County Council acknowledges that there may be future pressures arising from the growth proposed in Hertsmere Borough Council. However, the County Council will continue to engage with Hertsmere Borough Council through the development of its Local Plan to ensure that, at the appropriate time when the scale of growth and demand is known, sufficient school places are planned to mitigate the impact of any proposed dwellings within the wider Hertsmere area.

The County Council trusts that this information is of assistance. However, please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any clarification in relation to the information in this Statement.

Yours sincerely



**Antony Proietti**

Growth Area Team Leader (North East Growth Area), Growth & Infrastructure Unit