PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES
Position Statement Summer 2019

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION?

After several years of growth in the primary sector, the Authority is starting to see primary numbers stabilise in Torquay and Brixham. A programme of expansions which began in 2012, and which will be fully realised in September 2019, has enabled the Council to meet demand and created sufficient surplus to accommodate parental preference, in-year admissions and future growth.

In contrast, however, Paignton remains an area of growth. The Council, in line with the Adopted Local Plan, continues to invest in the local infrastructure, businesses and amenities in and around Paignton, particularly in the western corridor. This, alongside the type of housing developments being delivered quicker and in greater quantities, has made the area attractive to young families. As a result the Council is facing significant pressure for places in Paignton, not just in the admitting year but across all year groups with some cohorts now at full capacity. This pressure has been recognised by the Department of Education (DfE) which is funding the opening of a new primary, St Michaels Primary school, to serve the area. This will be the first new primary school to open in Torbay since the Council became a unitary authority in 1998.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DEMAND?

Birth rates are a significant factor which influence demand. The latest data up to 2016/17 shows that numbers appear to be stabilising; this helps to provide some certainty around projected numbers for the Reception intake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIRTH RATES</th>
<th>Torquay</th>
<th>Paignton</th>
<th>Brixham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
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<td>2008/09</td>
<td>771</td>
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<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>499</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>491</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>809</td>
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<td>156</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Developments, the completion rate, type and size of developments all influence demand. The current Adopted Local Plan 2012-30 sets out the following housing requirements:

- 400 dwellings per year 2012-16
- 495 dwellings per year 2017-21
- 555 dwellings per year 2022-29
- Plus meeting a backlog and a 5% buffer.
This means a 5 year requirement at 2017/18 of around 650 dwellings per year, although actual completions will be driven by what the market will accommodate. Historically, Torbay has seen 350-450 dwellings being built per year, with more than 50% of these being in large new estates attracting young families.

Going forward the largest area for housing growth over the next 5 years will be the Western Corridor of Paignton; this includes sites at:
- Great Parks
- Preston Down Road
- Yalberton Road/Yannons Farm
- Collaton St Mary
- Devonshire Park
- White Rock (Phase 1)

About 600 dwellings with planning permission are likely to be built in this area during this period with a further 800 homes post 2024. In addition, there are some sites/planning applications pending that are not included in the Adopted Local Plan but if approved will see a further 450-500 dwellings built within the next few years.

As well as Paignton, the Local Plan identifies 500-600 dwellings in the Torquay Gateway Masterplan at Edginswell. This is forecast for post 2024 but could be delivered sooner.

Local Plan Review, December 2020
There is a legal requirement to review Local Plans every five years. Torbay’s Plan is due to be reviewed by December 2020. Nationally there is still a strong housing growth agenda with high expectations being imposed by central government. There is a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that requires use of a standard methodology for calculating minimum housing delivery numbers. In Torbay the minimum figure using the methodology is 615 dwellings per year (before adjustments). As a small peninsular authority Torbay has a limited amount of available land left and is, therefore, likely to struggle to meet the standard methodology figure. Any available land is often very controversial with both international and national ecology constraints. The Local Plan Review will need to set out how Torbay expects to deliver these housing targets.

The impact on school places is that with these housing targets there is expected to be a continuous increase in the demand for school places. Particularly where there are large, distinct developments there may need to be some consideration of the need for a new school to serve that community. It is often difficult to identify a school site within the master planning for these developments as the developer may claim that the contribution is unaffordable. Torbay has had a policy of increasing the size of existing schools wherever possible and securing smaller S106 developer contributions to support this. Moving forward there will be a more strategic consideration of the location of developments and how they relate to existing school catchment areas. Whilst the more long term developments cannot be included in the Council’s pupil projections until planning has been submitted and there is some certainty that they will proceed, the developments are considered to be areas of significant growth and will impact on the future demand for school places across all year groups.

Paignton in particular has seen developments being delivered much quicker and in greater quantities than originally anticipated with a high number of starter homes. It is evident from admissions data and in year admissions that this is attracting more families to the area and as a result there is growth in all ages. Unlike the birth rates this inward migration places pressure across all year groups especially where there are siblings who want to be placed in the same school.
WHAT DO THE LATEST FORECASTS SHOW?

Numbers for the Reception intake in **TORQUAY** have stabilised and there is sufficient capacity to meet demand for the next 5 years, with an average of 10% surplus during this period.

Demand for places in **PAIGNTON** remains high. In response a new primary is opening which will increase the number of Reception places available from 507 to 537 from 2020. The new school ensures from 2020 there is sufficient capacity to meet demand and create a surplus of 8%.

Reception numbers in **BRIXHAM** are stable and the current capacity is sufficient to meet demand and create sufficient surplus to meet parental preference and accommodate any in-year admissions.
IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIONS

There is sufficient primary capacity in TORQUAY and BRIXHAM to meet demand and provide a working margin to meet parental preference and in year admissions, therefore, no actions are proposed for these areas at this time.

PAIGNTON:

- As a short term solution, the Council secured agreement from a popular local primary to increase its admitting number by 15 for September 2018. This enabled the Council to meet demand in the admitting year, however, the Council continues to face pressure placing pupils in older year groups where there is little or no capacity available until the new school opens.

- St Michaels C of E Primary School: The DfE have approved this new “free school” for Torbay. Works are underway to implement the opening of this new one form of entry primary school which will be run by the LAPSW Trust. The school will provide 210 new primary places, with 30 places in each year group and a 26 place nursery. The target opening date is September 2020.

- Windmill Primary School: The DfE has conditionally approved an application from COAST Academies for a two form of entry primary school with nursery in Paignton. The approval remains dependent on a number of large housing developments achieving planning permission. If planning is not forthcoming within an agreed timeframe then the approval will be withdrawn. This second free school for Paignton will only be needed if these large developments are delivered, without them demand can be met through delivery of the first free school alone.

NEXT STEPS

Forecasts and Implications will be reviewed at the following points:

- Autumn Term 2019 following actual admissions for September 2019
- Spring Term 2020 following school census
- As new planning applications for large housing developments are received and approved
- When the outcome of the Local Plan Review is available, December 2020.

FURTHER INFORMATION?

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