

CCBC Replacement Local Development Plan

Statement of Common Ground with CCBC Education Services

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) Strategic Planning Policy Service and CCBC Education Services who are the responsible body for the planning and delivery of education facilities and services in the County.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this SoCG is to set out an agreed position between the Local Planning Authority and CCBC Education Services in response to the potential impacts of new development proposed in the Conwy Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) on education services and provision in the County. This will provide a useful position for the Inspector by establishing what measures CCBC intend to take to ensure that the education provision can accommodate the growth planned for in the RLDP. This document should be read in conjunction with RLDP Background Paper 45: Population change, housing and education impact.

Overview of engagement

CCBC Education Services is a 'specific consultation body' in the Conwy RLDP preparation process and as such the two parties have worked in close collaboration throughout the different stages of RLDP preparation i.e. Strategic Options, Preferred Strategy and the Deposit RLDP. More specifically, from the outset of the earlier engagement stages of Plan preparation, the Council set up a RLDP Housing Population and Education Working Group.

The concerns have focussed on specific housing allocations in the Plan, but it is important to stress that the Plan as a whole will provide for housing growth over the plan area (parts of the County Borough outside of Eryri National Park) over the 15 year Plan period. The Conwy RLDP proposed growth option indicates a requirement for about 3,600 new dwellings over the Plan period (2018-33) or an average of about 240 each year (3,700 new dwellings including Eryri National Park). There is a contingency allowance of 20%, which means a total of 4,300 new homes are

planned for through completions, commitments, windfall and new allocations over the plan period.

Education Services statutory duties and involvement in the planning process

The Deposit RLDP will be accompanied by Background Paper (BP) 45: 'Housing and Education Impact'. This was jointly prepared by the Strategic Planning Policy Service and Education Services, who provided data and comments on education provision in the County, including their future strategy to be delivered through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

The planning system can assist with the provision of education facilities such as new buildings or the provision of land for new buildings in the form of planning obligations and allocation/safeguarding of land but cannot assist with the funding of staff or any recruitment issues. It also cannot be used to remedy any existing deficiencies.

It is important to note that CCBC Education Services have made representations at earlier Plan stages. There is no formal objection either to the level of growth to be provided over the Plan period, nor to specific allocations, subject to appropriate mitigation being provided. It is the Council's understanding that this was an intended position given the degree of collaboration that has taken place, and the approach and strategy for future education provision. Education Services have provided an updated summary position below on how they intend to address the population change in the RLDP and its implications both for education.

RLDP housing need and school impacts

The RLDP proposes an employment growth strategy (see Background Paper 1 for more details). The table below shows the estimated change to pupil numbers.

RLDP Proposed growth option and potential impact on Education

Sources: 2018-based projections, Conwy CBC; 2018 mid-year population estimates, ONS; 2018 household estimates, Welsh Government; jobs density figures, ONS.

Impact indicator	Totals 2018	Potential change/impact of preferred option 2018-2033
Projection		
Population	117,200	4,950
Households	52,750	3,350
Education		
Pre school age (0-4)	5,450	-400
Primary school age (5-10)	7,550	-850
Secondary school / FE places (11-17)	8,400	400

The projections estimate that there will be a significant decline in primary pupil numbers (850 fewer age 5-10 year olds), and an increase in secondary pupil numbers over the RLDP period. Background Paper 45 considers other data sources and uses the 5 year pupil projections produced from the Pupil Level Annual School Census for each school. These estimate changes at more localised level and show that some individual schools have projected increases in pupil numbers. Localised housebuilding could lead to an increase in pupil numbers at specific schools. A detailed analysis for each school is available in Background Paper 45.

A total of 4,300 new homes (including 20% contingency) are planned for across the RLDP area between 2018 and 2033. The new housing to accommodate this estimated growth in population will come from a variety of sources:

- sites already with planning permission;
- allocated sites;
- homes already built since 2018 (start of the RLDP period);
- windfall sites, which are sites estimated to come forward on unallocated sites during the Plan period.

The table below shows this for each RLDP strategy area. Details of individual housing sites and their estimated pupil numbers are available in Background Paper 45.

RLDP sources of housing supply

Source: Strategic Planning Policy Service CCBC

RLDP strategy area	Existing supply ¹	Allocations ²	Total housing
West	225	200	425
Creuddyn	915	410	1,325
Central	1,040	330	1,370
East	620	275	910
Rural	165	100	265
Total	2,965	1,330	4,300

¹ this includes housing built since 2018 (completions), large housing sites that already have planning permission (commitments) and other sites expected to be built over the remaining timeframe (windfall).

² this includes RLDP pipeline allocations (current adopted LDP allocations without planning permission) that are expected to contribute to housing supply, and new allocations proposed in the RLDP. Note - if these pipeline sites have not received planning permission by the time of the RLDP Examination in Public, they will not be included in the plan as allocated pipeline sites or counted as commitments.

It should be noted that the estimated pupil numbers for each site will include pupils who are already educated at CCBC schools. Not all will attend their closest catchment school. For example, they may choose Welsh medium education, faith schools or require Additional Learning Needs provision. They may not attend a CCBC school. Some parents may choose private schools, out of county schools, or home education.

RLDP policy approach and mitigation

The population and household projections from the growth options and associated residential development will have an impact on the capacity of education facilities.

CCBC has a continual priority of ensuring school capacity meets the demands from its population. Currently, across Conwy there are a number of challenges that Education Services aim to address in order to mitigate these pressures.

From a land use planning perspective CCBC will seek to secure Section 106 financial contributions where there are capacity issues and subject to the CIL Regulations and financial viability of schemes, to support the provision of education accommodation and facility requirements. To ensure compliance with the CIL Regulations any obligation sought must comply with three statutory tests;

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

New residential sites will be required to mitigate for the impact on school capacity through the following measures:

- Land for a new school will be allocated on part of the Llanfairfechan Strategic Site.
- Land adjacent to Ysgol Swn y Don will be safeguarded so that expansion to the current school site can take place if needed.
- For schools at or approaching capacity, a financial contribution will be required from residential sites in the catchment area (subject to the necessary evidence base and financial viability of the proposal).

Background Paper 45 includes details of specific mitigation required for each school and the evidence to justify this.

The RLDP will include a criteria based policy for new schools and expansion to existing ones, which will support applications subject to other RLDP policy requirements. Criteria will include a sequential approach to sites and will support the use of greenfield sites outside of settlement boundaries for new school provision, if no other appropriate sites are available within the settlement boundary. This policy will help support any proposals as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, or any other expansion project required.

Housing and School Standards

When considering new homes and school capacity, it is also important to look at school standards and whether any works are needed to improve these. This is in addition to capacity issues.

The backlog maintenance is calculated for each school and is broke down into three categories – Priority, Desirable & Essential, which allows officers to allocate works accordingly.

The cost of increasing capacity at any primary school based on Welsh Government calculations is £4,075 per m² (Figures are based on Welsh Government – Sustainable Communities for Learning, Annex 9, Cost standard Benchmark – build cost). This is without an indicative £2,104 cost per learner for Furniture Fixtures & Equipment and IT. These costs do not include Project Management/Consultancy costs. Building Bulletin guidelines are considered whilst developing Educational Assets.

Conclusion

With regards to supporting the implementation of education projects, including the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, a strategic approach is considered necessary.

Working collectively with all key stakeholders, mitigation measures have been identified within this paper to tackle any predicted capacity issues, or capacity issues which may arise during the RLDP plan period. These measures include the safeguarding of land for schools where there is an anticipated need, and also policies to seek S106 contributions towards education (new build, extensions, remodelling) as and when need arises throughout the plan area.

Additionally, CCBC Education Services acknowledge and agree that new RLDP policies will be generally supportive of new build facilities on suitably located sites, changes of use and improvements to existing education facilities.