

Children, Families and Adults Services

School Organisation Plan 2012

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Forward

As the Strategic Commissioner of School Places, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to review provision within its area and to establish future demands. This School Organisation Plan¹ drives the overall School Organisation Framework and provides Cheshire East Council's strategy for ensuring the provision of sufficient and suitable school places for all the children and young people resident in the Borough. This Plan should be considered within the context of the Local Authority's 'Children Families and Adults Plan' 2010-2013, which is the single strategic overarching plan for all services delivering outcomes for children and young people. The Local Authority's vision is that we work together with children, families and adults in Cheshire East ensuring that everyone thrives. The Local Authority values education and learning as a means to achievement recognising that all children have something to offer. A copy of the Children and Families Plan 2010-2013 can be viewed online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk.

The 2010 Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, sought to reform the schools system by freeing schools from Government constraints, reducing bureaucracy and placing teachers at the heart of school improvement. The Education Act 2011 takes forward the legislative proposals in the Schools White paper and supports the Department's commitment to radically reform the schools system by removing unnecessary legal requirements on governing bodies, teachers and local authorities. Under the Education Act 2011, local authorities continue to have a strategic role as commissioner of school places with responsibility for ensuring that all children resident within their area have access to a suitable school place. The new requirements involve local authorities responding to demand through their commissioning role and not as the provider of school places, and working alongside a wide range of partners in meeting future demands.

The Local Authority's Corporate Plan 2011-2013, which is available online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk, recognises the benefits of partnership working to facilitate a shared understanding of the needs and issues in Cheshire East and to enable a more effective use of public money through a co-ordinated provision of services. In order to ensure effective communications and consultation with local people and partners in respect of school place planning, the Local Authority will engage with its seven Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) of Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton and Wilmslow.

This School Organisation Plan, together with the Local Authority's overall School Organisation Framework, has been subject to consultation with key stakeholders including headteachers and school partnerships, ward members and diocesan authorities.

The Local Authority will only commit to policies and practices which will eradicate discrimination and promote equality for all, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion and belief, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation. This policy will be subject to an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews.

¹ All data and references to Council policy, statutory requirements and Government guidance are correct as at the time of writing (October 2011 – Sept 2012).

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KEY ISSUES

Overview

The Local Authority recognises that an effective working relationship with schools is an essential prerequisite for discharging its statutory responsibility in terms of ensuring the provision of school places and is committed to ensuring that every parent or carer ('parent') can choose an excellent school for their child.

The Government has made clear that the wishes of parents should be taken into account when planning and managing school places. Places should be allocated where parents want them, and as such, it should be easier for successful and popular schools to grow to meet parental demand. The role for the Local Authority of encouraging good schools to expand and of commissioning Free Schools or Academies in response to increased demand informs this School Organisation Policy.

The delivery of the Dedicated Schools Grant to local authorities is based on pupil numbers, with higher pupil numbers continuing to deliver increased funding. Changes to local funding formulas are planned by The Department for Education for implementation from 1st April 2013. The direction of travel will be the delivery of funding via pupil led factors wherever possible. Changes for 2013/14 are envisaged to prepare local authorities and schools for the implementation of a National Funding Formula from 2015/16.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011) shows an annual growth of 2.4 per cent in the number of live births for England and Wales. During the period 2001 to 2011 the number of live births has risen by 22 per cent despite a small fall between 2008 and 2009, which has implications for local authorities in terms of school place planning.

In response to the more recent data published by the Office for National Statistics, which shows that previous projections for population growth were underestimated and that by 2020 there will be 21% more primary aged population than in 2010, it was announced in November 2011 that additional Government funding was being issued to local authorities with the greatest demographic pressures. These projections are based on the Office for National Statistics principal assumptions about levels of fertility, mortality and migration and their impact on the school-aged population. Cheshire East has been identified as one of those local authorities to receive additional funding. Further information is available from the DfE website (<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/strategy/laupdates/a00200040/education-capital>)

Demographic pressures nationally can impact on existing patterns of cross-border movement. Cheshire East is classed as a 'net importer' of pupils, which is derived from a comparison between the number of children resident in other authorities attending a Cheshire East publicly funded school and the number of Cheshire East resident children attending the same category of schools in other authorities. The proportion of parents and carers currently accessing school places in neighbouring local authorities may change as unused (surplus) places reduce in those authorities and create an unknown additional pressure.

In Cheshire East, European Migration has contributed to pupil mobility in relation to schools in some areas. Migration can affect all year groups unlike rising birth rates, which are more likely to move through year groups progressively.

In the academic year 2010-2011, 6020 pupils changed schools during the course of the year. This included pupils moving between Cheshire East schools, Cheshire East pupils leaving for schools in other authorities and new admissions into Cheshire East schools of pupils not previously on roll at a Cheshire East school. This 'in year' mobility can only be facilitated where there is a level of unused (surplus) places across the Authority. The Local Authority recognises the need for effective school place planning to deliver sufficient school places to optimise parental preference, but is also aware of the conflict between having too few unused (surplus) places and the negative impact that this could have on 'in year' movement and parental preference, and on schools and their ability to manage budgets effectively, if too many unused (surplus) places are provided resulting in increased competition and uncertainty.

New housing developments are recognised as an obvious potential source of increased demand for school places. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (2008) set out the strategic planning framework for development in the North West, which included an additional 20,700 homes to be developed in Cheshire East over a fifteen year period. Uncertainty about the point at which school places will be needed as a consequence of new housing developments presents a major source of risk in the process of planning and providing sufficient school places.

Primary School Places

The number of Cheshire East primary aged pupils over the period 2011 and 2016 is forecast to increase by just below 800 pupils representing a 3% increase over this period.

Population forecasts indicate that the increased number of primary pupils will continue over the ten year period 2009-2019.

The numbers vary from one Local Area Partnership (LAP) to another with the biggest increases in the number of pupils being in Congleton and Crewe. The area with the highest percentage increase over this period is Nantwich with the area forecast to have an additional 4.2% pupils in 2016 compared with 2011.

The largest percentage increase from year to year is forecast for September 2013 with approximately 44% of the overall increase occurring at this time.

The areas with the highest increase in pupil numbers for September 2013 are Congleton and Crewe.

The main areas of concerns are the Wilmslow and Crewe LAPs, which for 2010-2011 indicated only 1% unused (surplus) places in Wilmslow falling to -3% by 2016 and for Crewe, 7% falling to only 3% for the same period.

Secondary School Places

Forecasts indicate that between 2011 and 2016 there will be 1500 less secondary aged pupils.

The biggest fall is forecast for the Congleton LAP with it having 49% of the total overall decrease of 1531. This represents a 9.6% fall in the number of pupils for this area.

The pattern of unused (surplus) secondary places across the seven LAPs is quite different to that for the primary phase, with all areas showing an increase in the number of unused (surplus) places across this period.

For the Wilmslow and Poynton LAPs, the number of unused (surplus) places is low but with forecasts indicating a reduction in the number of pupils for the period 2011-2016.

The growth in the number of primary aged pupils will, of course, impact on the secondary sector as those pupils transfer to high schools.

Special Educational Needs

In 2010, the Local Authority began the process of reviewing its arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). One of the priority recommendations emerging from the SEND review was the identified need to establish local specialist provision for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) between the ages of 4 to 19. Subject to member approval, the Local Authority plans to undertake all necessary statutory procedures to establish a new school with a preferred implementation date of September 2013.

Population Figures – To Note

The 2011 Census figures for Cheshire East suggest that the population is much higher than previously thought, with the 2011 Census figures being 6,300 higher than the previous year's estimate. As a consequence, the population estimates and predictions used in this report should be treated with caution as they are based on previous population figures, which are now known to be incorrect. Once the 2011 mid year estimates have been produced, these will inform school place planning procedures. This 2011 population data will be available during 2013.

Additionally, two sets of predictions about the future population are used – projections provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and locally produced forecasts. The projections assume that recent population trends will continue into the future, unconstrained by factors such as the availability of housing. The locally produced forecasts use similar recent trends, however, they do take into account the anticipated future housing supply. The ONS projections are considered as 'policy off' predictions, whereas the local forecasts are 'policy on'. Due to this difference in methodology, the predicted population estimates for these two methods will be different. Caution should be exercised when comparing these two sets of figures.

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Summary of Key Policy (Priorities)

School places will be monitored on an area basis using Local Area Partnerships and, at a more local level using planning areas or school clusters.

Bi-annual reviews of pupil forecasts will be implemented to ensure demand and supply of school places are closely aligned and in accordance with the targets set out on this Plan. The implications of a movement to October rather than January Pupil counts dates, as referenced in the recent funding consultation, will need to be considered when determining the timing of these reviews, particularly with respect to any associated funding implications.

Maintaining a sufficient level of unused (surplus) places is important to allow for parental preference. Increased demand for places in the primary sector requires changes in some areas due to low levels of unused (surplus) places and insufficient places in some year groups to meet demand. At secondary level, current unused (surplus) places need to be protected so that they will be available when they are needed, as primary growth feeds through.

It is prudent to plan for additional capacity over the derived need on the basis that all indications are that demand will continue to grow beyond 2015/16. A figure of between 5 and 10 per cent is suggested by the Audit Commission, with 10% considered realistic. (The Audit Commission, 2010). The Local Authority will aim to achieve a target level of no more than 10% unused (surplus) places overall and with a minimum target of 4% at a more local level based on school clusters/planning areas.

New schools will be established, where possible, as Free Schools or Academies in line with statutory requirements.

The general presumption will be that any new provision will be primary, secondary special or all-through.

Priority will be to provide primary schools with single aged classes wherever possible. It may be necessary to have mixed aged/vertically grouped teaching arrangements in some schools because they are rural schools or due to the wishes of the local community.

Any school built as 1 form of entry (FE) should, if possible, have a site and infrastructure suitable for development to 2 FE. Only in very exceptional circumstances should primary schools be built or developed beyond 2 FE (420 places).

Primary schools should have a minimum roll of 90 or more pupils.

New secondary schools should have a minimum intake of 180 pupils with a site suitable for expansion to a 210/240 intake.

Any proposal to reduce or reorganise provision will involve consideration of a number of factors, including:

- The extent to which a school actually admits pupils from the community (designated catchment or local area) generally served by the school;

- Whether the community is sufficient to sustain the school;
- The physical condition of the school premises;
- The nature of the site, accessibility to it and scope for expansion;
- The school's ability to deliver a full range of curriculum and social experiences.
- The pattern of parental preference (popular schools)
- The latest Ofsted inspection reports (successful schools)

Any proposed reorganisation involving a small or rural school will also include consideration of:

- The community importance of schools
- The additional costs involved in running small schools;
- The difference between strong demand for places at a particular school and the evidence of usage by pupils living in a school's designated catchment or local area.
- In all cases, where it is identified that changes are necessary, the first consideration will be to the benefits of collaboration and federation.

The Local Authority's Capital Strategy sets out the capital investment priorities for Children, Families and Adults Services.

Developer contributions will be sought to fund additional provision arising from new housing as outlined in the Local Authority's agreed Section 106 policy.

The pupil yield arising from new housing developments will only be included in pupil forecasts when Section 106 agreements have been signed to ensure effective planning and implementation to meet future demand. However, all pupil yields generated from developer enquiries and planning applications will be taken into account in the order they are received when calculating subsequent developer contributions due to their cumulative effect on the demand for school places.

The Organisation and Capital Strategy Team will maintain a database of all potential and approved housing developments within each Local Area Partnership to inform planning.

Statutory consultation on proposals for change will be implemented in accordance with DfE guidance and statutory procedures

Proposals will always be referred for advice to the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.

Decisions on School Organisation proposals will be made in accordance with the Local Authority's agreed procedure.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cheshire East Local Authority has a statutory duty to commission sufficient school places for children resident in its area. The Education Act 2006 requires local authorities to promote fair access to educational opportunity, high standards and pupil achievement, to increase opportunities for parental choice and respond to parental representations and secure diversity in the provision of schools when planning the provision of school places.
- 1.2 On 24 November 2010, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, introduced the schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, which outlined the Government's priority for local authorities of focussing on the supply of enough good places rather than removing unused (surplus) capacity. The Government's role for local authorities of encouraging good schools to expand and of commissioning Free Schools or Academies in response to demand informs this School Organisation Policy.
- 1.3 This five year Plan drives the Local Authority's approved Capital Strategy, which is published on the Local Authority's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk. The Policy provides the strategy out of which discussions can take place and decisions can be made and acted upon by the Local Authority, the Diocesan Boards of Education, other promoters and individual schools. The Local Authority's agreed procedure for decision-making in respect of school organisation proposals is referred to within this Policy, including the procedures required by law or Government guidance for making changes such as opening, closing or expanding schools.
- 1.4 To contribute to the Local Authority's five year pupil forecasting, the overall School Organisation Framework provides specific information about Cheshire East publicly funded schools including special schools, the pupil referral unit (PRU) and the maintained nursery school. This includes the number of school places available and the number of pupils on roll. In addition, it includes data on population, live births, housing (anticipated and forecasts) and cross border movement.
- 1.5 To enable the Local Authority to comply with its duty to commission sufficient suitable school places and to ensure that the standard of provision in schools meets national requirements and the needs of its residents, it will engage with schools and local communities across Cheshire East via the seven Local Area Partnerships (LAPs). This is to ensure the delivery of cost effective quality provision and the best opportunities for children and young people at a local level in line with the Local Authority's Corporate Plan.
- 1.6 Through the coordinated admissions process, parents and carers express preferences for schools of their choice and this, together with oversubscription in some schools, can result in movement within local areas and between them. The purpose of focusing on LAPs is to identify future demand for each area and not to restrict this pupil movement. It is also recognised within the overall Framework that schools form planning areas or clusters driven by their location and the pattern of demand from parents and carers for school places.

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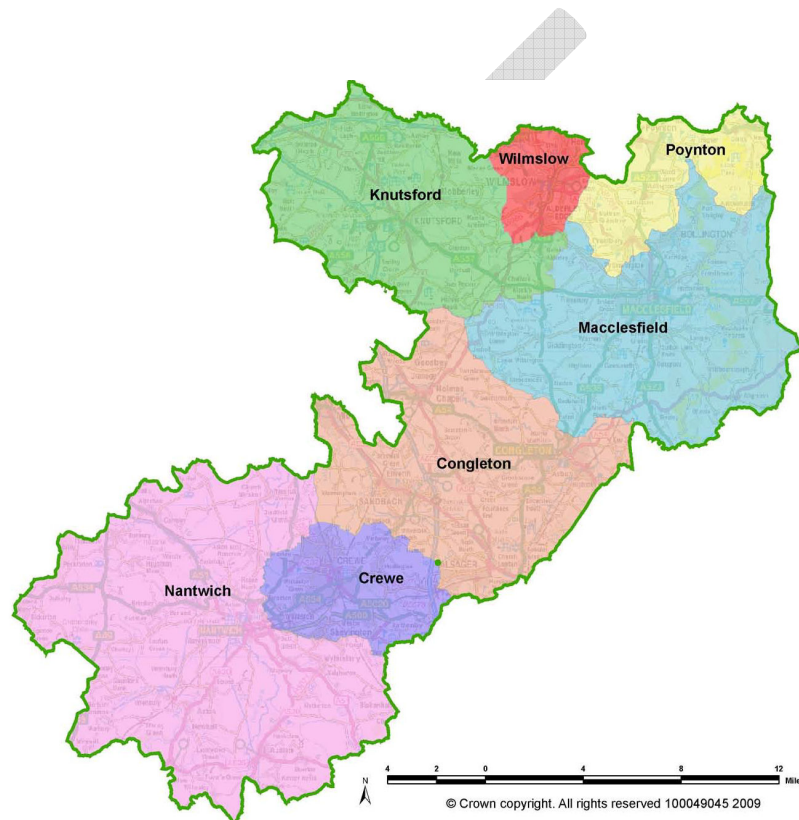
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2 Cheshire East Borough Council

2.1 Background Information

- 2.1.1 Following local government reorganisation of the seven Cheshire councils, Cheshire East Borough Council came into existence on 1 April 2009 as a unitary authority comprising the former borough councils of Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich and Macclesfield, and the former Cheshire County Council. It is surrounded by 10 neighbouring authorities along with its newest neighbour of Cheshire West and Chester Council, which was also created following the Cheshire area reorganisation.

Map 1. Cheshire East Borough Council



- 2.1.2 Cheshire East is located in the north-west of England and is the third largest unitary authority in this region. It has an area of 1,116km², an electorate of over 280,000 and a population of approximately 364,300 (January 2011).
- 2.1.3 It is a predominantly rural area as can be seen on the map attached as **Appendix 1**. However, the majority of the population reside in the Borough's urban areas with just over 78% of the population living in areas designated as urban settlements with a population greater than 10,000 (Table 1 below).

Table 1. Cheshire East Rurality

AREA	TOTAL	%
Hamlet, Isolated Dwelling	19120	5.3%
Town and Fringe	31880	8.8%
Urban plus 10K and Less Sparse	283250	78.1%
Village Less Sparse	28450	7.8%
Total	362700	

Source: 2009 mid-year population estimates, Cheshire West and Chester Council.

- 2.1.4 The majority of the Cheshire East population is concentrated in the areas in and around the 10 towns of Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow. Table 2 below shows the total population for these predominantly urban areas and this represents 67% of the total population of 362,700.

Table 2. Population by LAP

LAP	AREA	TOTAL POPULATION
Congleton	Alsager	12230
	Congleton	26520
	Middlewich	13800
	Sandbach	17820
	Total	70370
Crewe	Crewe	50320
	Total	50320
Knutsford	Knutsford	12580
	Total	12580
Macclesfield	Macclesfield	50040
	Total	50040
Nantwich	Nantwich	14440
	Total	14440
Poynton	Poynton-with-Worth	14200
	Total	14200
Wilmslow	Wilmslow	30870
	Total	30870
	Overall Total	242820

Source: 2009 mid-year population estimates, Cheshire West and Chester Council.

2.2 Population

- 2.2.1 Nationally, the population of all Government Office Regions is projected to rise over the ten year period 2008 to 2018. The East is projected to be the fastest growing English region over this period with the projected to increase by 10 per cent over the decade to 2018, rising by over 0.5 million to 6.3 million. **(see Appendix 2)** Over the same period, the population of five other regions (London, Yorkshire and The Humber, South West, East Midlands and South East) are also projected to increase by 8 per cent or more. In contrast, the North West and North East are projected to have the smallest percentage increases in population between 2008 and 2018.
- 2.2.2 The 2009 Cheshire East population of 362,700 was forecast to steadily increase over the 20 year period (2009-2029) to over 380,000 (see Table 3 below). This represents a 6% increase in the total population over this period. The number of people aged 65 or above will increase by over 50% from 68,400 in 2009 to over 108,500 in 2029; the number of people aged 85 or above will more than double over the next twenty years, increasing from around 9,300 in 2009 to over 20,000 in 2029. The base for the forecasts is the 2009 mid-year estimate of population produced by the Office for National Statistics.

Table 3. Population Forecasts

	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
Population (thousands)	362.7	365.8	369.8	376.5	384

Cheshire East, Population Forecasts, Jan 2011

- 2.2.3 In contrast, the number of children (between the age range 0-15) will decrease by approximately 4% over the next twenty years. However, as the number of children in each age group fluctuates reflecting past birth rates, the changes will vary within each age group with the largest overall decrease of 7% being in the 11-15 age range and the largest increase of 3% over the next 10 years being in the 5-10 age range. This increase is forecast to start around 2011 resulting in greater demand for school places over this period. **(Appendix 3)**

Table 4 Population Forecasts by Age Range

	Population (thousands)			% change	
Age range	2009	2019	2029	2009-19	2009-29
0-4	20.0	18.5	18.9	-8%	-6%
5-10	23.9	24.6	23.9	+3%	+0%
11-15	22.0	21.3	20.5	-3%	-7%
0-15	66.0	64.4	63.3	-2%	-4%

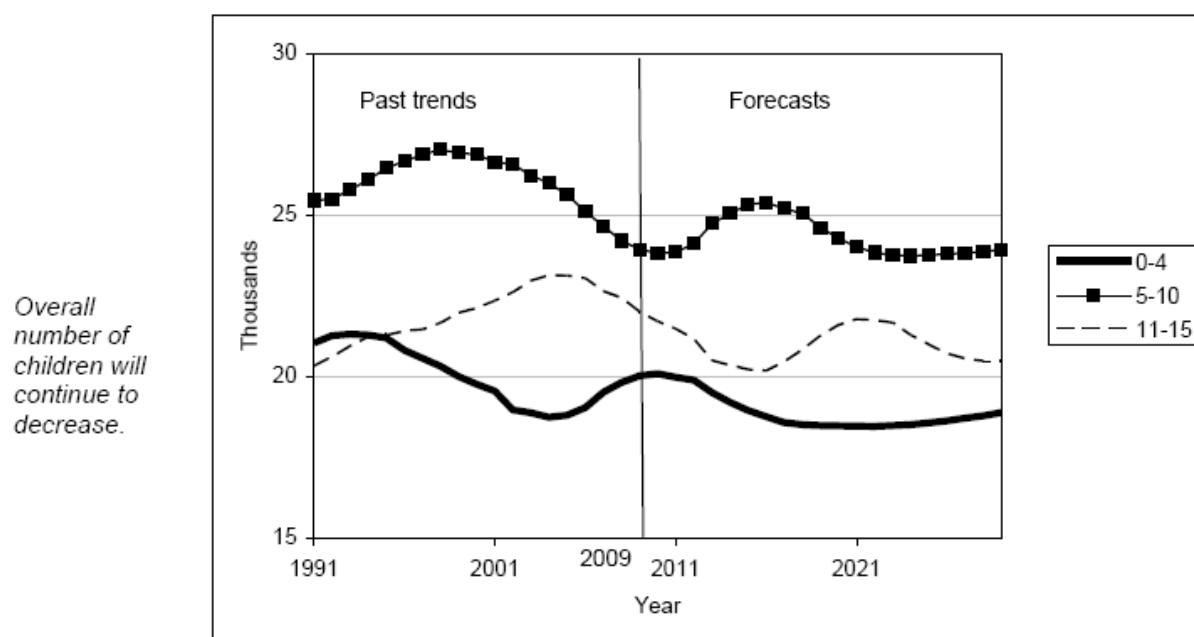
Cheshire East, Population Forecasts, Jan 2011

- 2.2.4 After 2016 forecasts indicate a return to decreasing populations within the 0-15 age range with a return by 2029 to the same number of Cheshire East 5-

10 year olds as there were in 2009 and 4% less children within the age range 0-15 overall.

- 2.2.5 Graph 1 below illustrates the overall pattern of decline between 1991 and 2029 in the number of children within the age ranges 0-4 years and 5-10 years. The pattern for children within the 11-15 age group illustrates that numbers forecast for 2029 are comparative with those in 1991, but with a continuation of the general pattern of a downward trend.

Graph 1. Past Trends and Forecasts by Age Range



Cheshire East, Population Forecasts, Jan 2011

- 2.2.6 Population estimates, based on the Office for National Statistics 2007 to 2016 mid-year estimates, are shown below by Local Area Partnership (LAP) and include all ages. The data shows that the increase in the population over this period will be in the Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Nantwich local areas with a small increase in Wilmslow.

Table 5 Population Estimates by LAP

Local Area Partnership	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2007 - 2017 change
Congleton	92,600	93,000	93,300	93,600	93,900	94,200	94,500	94,700	94,900	95,100	95,400	2,800
Crewe	82,100	82,400	82,700	83,000	83,200	83,400	83,700	83,900	84,200	84,400	84,600	2,500
Knutsford	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	24,900	24,900	24,900	24,800	24,800	-200
Macclesfield	67,600	67,900	68,100	68,400	68,700	69,000	69,300	69,600	69,900	70,200	70,500	2,900
Nantwich	34,500	34,800	35,100	35,400	35,600	35,900	36,100	36,300	36,600	36,800	37,000	2,500
Poynton	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,800	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,700	23,700	0
Wilmslow	35,200	35,300	35,300	35,300	35,400	35,400	35,500	35,500	35,500	35,500	35,600	400
Cheshire East	360,700	362,100	363,200	364,400	365,500	366,700	367,700	368,600	369,700	370,500	371,600	10,900

Data source: Population Forecasts produced for Cheshire East by Cheshire West and Chester

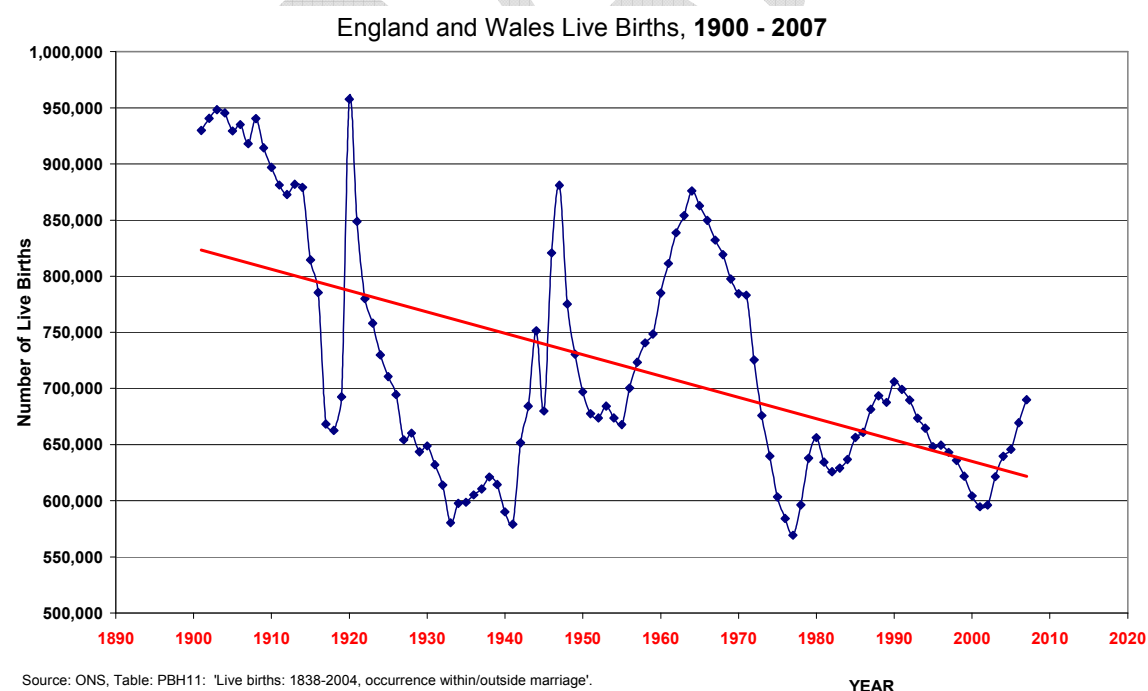
2.3 Ethnicity

- 2.3.1 The school population has seen an increase in the number of ethnic minority groups (EMG) over this period with a noticeable increase between 2007 and 2008 from 3936 EMG pupils to 5747. The total overall increase across the period 2007 to 2011 is 1288 with the numbers decreasing after 2008 and rising again in 2011 to 5224. **(Appendix 4).**
- 2.3.2 In 2007, the proportion of ethnic minority groups attending all Cheshire East schools was only 7.8%, which is much lower than the percentage for England at this time of 20%. By 2011, Cheshire East saw an increase to 10.4% compared with 24.3% nationally and therefore less than half the national level. However, for some areas, demographic changes have been significant. For example, Crewe and Wilmslow LAPs have seen the biggest change with Crewe having 16.8% EMG in 2007 but increasing to 23.8% in 2011, which is comparative with the national level. Wilmslow has also seen an increase from 10.2% in 2007 to 18.1% in 2011.

2.4 Live Births

- 2.4.1 Demographic data provided by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) illustrates a steady, long-term national decline over the last 100 years in England and Wales in the overall number of live births, with a number of peaks and troughs across the decades. This is shown in Graph 2 below.

Graph 2. Live Births 1900-2007



- 2.4.2 More recently, the number of live births nationally has been steadily increasing, as illustrated in Table 6 below, with an increase over this period of 83444 live births representing a 13% increase nationally.

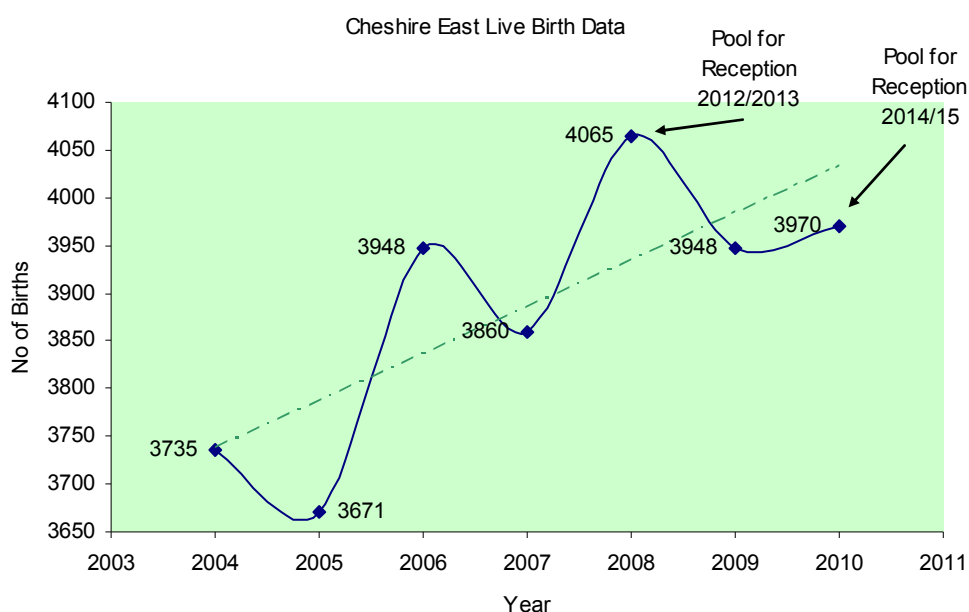
Table 6. National Live Births 2004-2010

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
National	639,721	645,835	669,601	690,013	708,711	706,248	723,165

Data Source: Live Birth Data ONS

- 2.4.3 As there is a strong relationship between the number of live births and the subsequent level of demand for school places, any change in trends can have significant implications for the Local Authority in its strategic role as Commissioner of School Places. Graph 3 below shows the potential increase in demand for reception class places by September 2012 using Cheshire East live birth data, with approximately 400 more pupils than for September 2009. Whilst the graph illustrates that after 2012 the numbers will fall, the overall trend is for numbers to rise again for 2014 and possibly beyond.

Graph 3 Live Birth Trends 2004-2010



- 2.4.4 **Appendix 5** illustrates the increasing pressure on primary school places from 2010 due to reduced school capacity across the Borough, primarily between 2006 and 2010, and the increasing demand for school places over the same period. Whilst the overall impact on Cheshire East will be an increase in the number of primary aged pupils between 2006 and 2012, there is a difference in projections across the Local Authority's area with live births increasing more in some localities than in others as illustrated below. All of this has implications for the Local Authority in planning school places to meet demand over the period of the Plan 2011- 2016.
- 2.4.5 It is interesting to note the variance between pupil forecasts for 2008 to 2012 and the actual reception class pupil numbers and revised forecasts based on the birth rate admission pool. This data illustrates the anticipated pressure on reception class places from 2010. Further analysis involving historical trends to predict longer term forecasts is therefore essential to ensure sustainable provision for the future.

- 2.4.6 When compared to the national picture of a 13% increase over the period 2004-2010, Cheshire East birth rates represent only half this at just over 6%. However, the number of live births varies from one district to another with Crewe and Nantwich seeing an increase of 14% over this period compared with Congleton, which has seen a reduction at -3.9% (see Table 7 below).

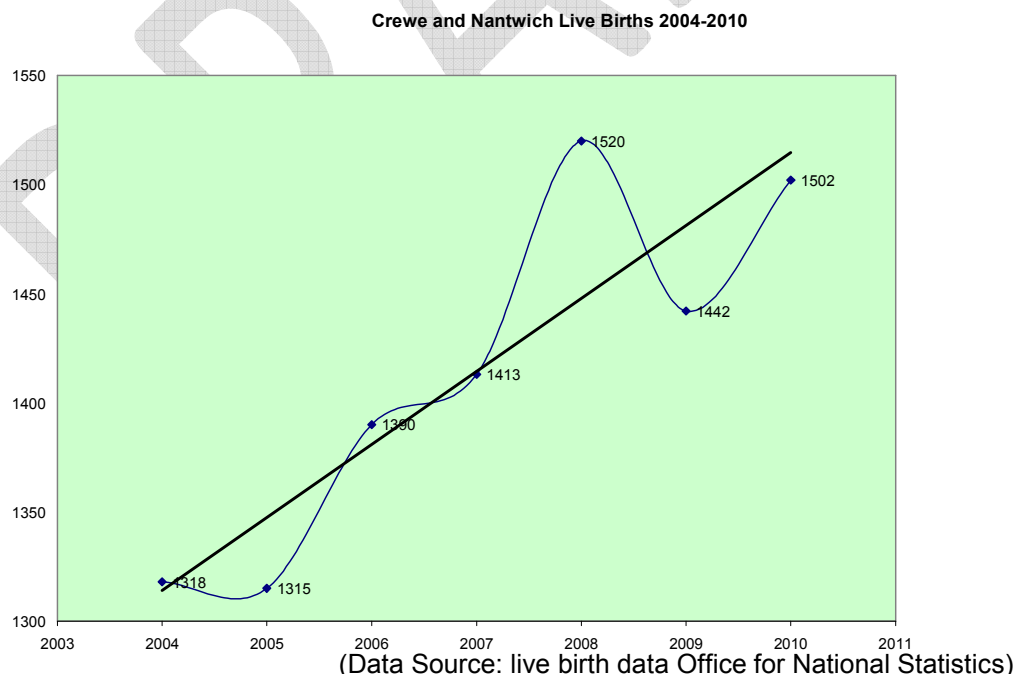
Table 7. Live Birth Data by Former District Council

Former Districts Live Births	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change 04 -10	% change 04 – 10
Congleton	873	866	931	898	907	885	839	-34	-3.9%
Crewe and Nantwich	1318	1315	1390	1413	1520	1442	1502	184	14.0%
Macclesfield	1544	1490	1627	1549	1638	1621	1629	85	5.5%
Cheshire East	3735	3671	3948	3860	4065	3948	3970	235	6.3%

Data Sources: live birth data Office for National Statistics

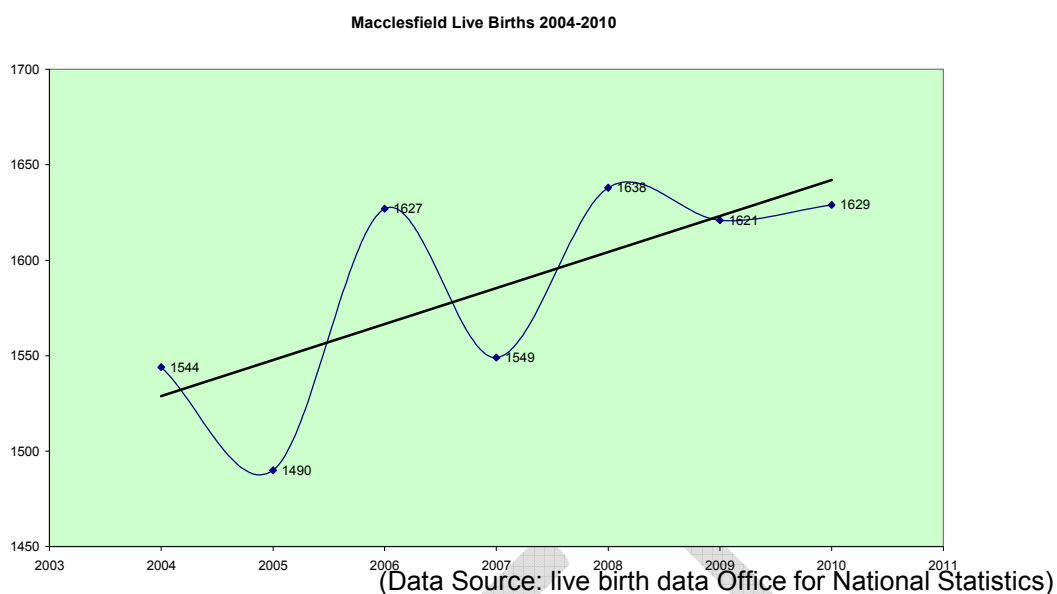
- 2.4.7 Graph 4 illustrates the changes over this period in the number of live births for Crewe and Nantwich, which has seen an increase above the national level of 13% at 14%. This increase represents 78% of the total increase for Cheshire East.

Graph 4 Crewe and Nantwich Live births 2004-2010



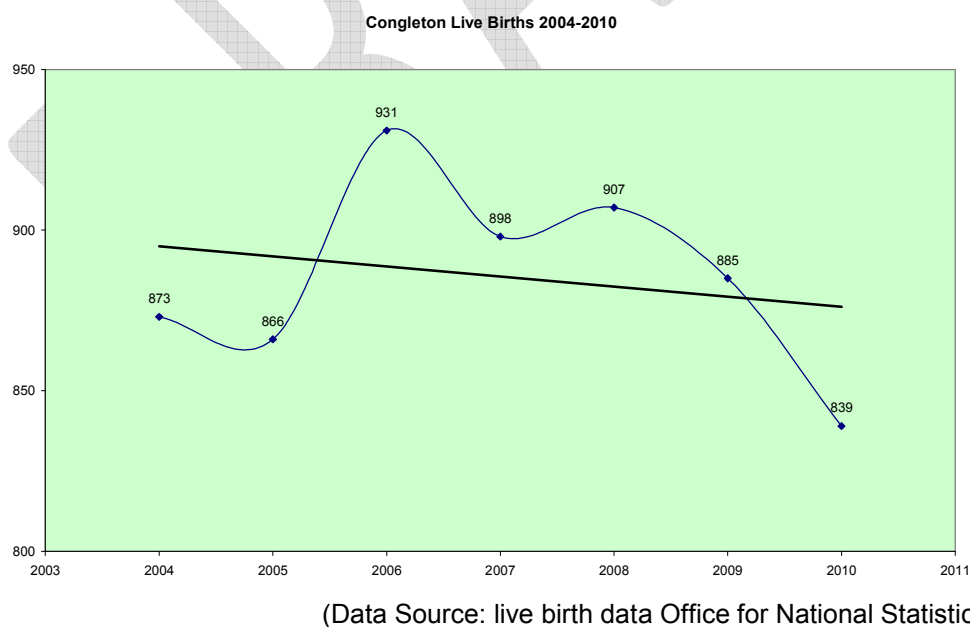
- 2.4.8 Macclesfield has also seen an increase at 5.5% with an additional 85 live births over this period. This represents 36% of the Cheshire East net gain of 235 live births. (Graph 5)

Graph 5 Macclesfield Live Births 2004-2010



2.4.9 By contrast, for Congleton the position is the reverse with a fall in the number of live births by 3.9% between 2004 and 2010. This reduction means that whilst overall there is a net gain across Cheshire East of 235 live births over this period, the actual increase for Macclesfield and Crewe and Nantwich combined is 269.

Graph 6 Congleton Live Births 2004-2010



3 Policies and Strategy

3.1 The Corporate Plan 2011-2013

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Plan recognises the benefits of partnership working to enable a more effective use of public money through a co-ordinated provision of services. In order to ensure effective communications and consultation with local people and partners in respect of school place planning, the Local Authority will engage with its seven Local Area Partnerships of Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton and Wilmslow. A map illustrating the schools within each Local Area Partnership is attached as **Appendix 6**
- 3.1.2 The purpose of LAPs is to help improve services, to ensure that local people are able to influence decision making, and to actively engage and empower communities. LAPs bring together a wide range of partner organisations and individuals from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and; by working together, they focus on delivering improved outcomes for local people and places. Information about LAPs is published on the Local Authority's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk .
- 3.1.3 Each Local Area Partnership (LAP) holds 4 Assemblies a year to engage the wider community and local partners in the work of the LAP. Area Assemblies are open to and involve anyone who has an interest in making the area better. The purpose of the Area Assemblies is to:
- Engage the wider community in the work of the LAP
 - Engage a wide range of local partners
 - Listen to community issues to inform future work
 - Develop local priorities
 - Set course of action which is detailed in the Area Plan
 - Capture local concerns requiring an immediate response
 - Receive and discuss up-dates from current projects and working groups
 - Act as a body for consultation about local issues and developments.
- 3.1.4 Across these local areas, where school partnerships have been formed, these will serve as the focus for discussion with schools and for consultation on school place planning matters to ensure that local needs are considered and high quality cost effective measures are proposed to meet changes in demand.

3.2 Children and Families Service Plan (2010-2013)

- 3.2.1 Following local government reorganisation and the establishment of Cheshire East Council in 2009, the Local Authority's service for Children and Families was formed. The Cheshire East Children and Families Service Plan (2010-2013) is the Authority's overarching strategy, which includes key priorities and identifies actions necessary to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cheshire East. This Plan sets out the Local Authority's vision for Children and Families in Cheshire East to have:
- A place where all children and young people are supported well to maximise their life choices

- Responsive, locally based services, that make sense to children, young people and their families, that address their needs early
- A place where no child is left behind because organisations do not work together.

3.2.2 The School Organisation Plan contributes to this by demonstrating how the Council will ensure that sufficient and suitable school places in good schools are available for all the children and young people resident in the Borough.

3.3 Children and Families Capital Strategy

3.3.1 In the Autumn of 2010, the Government launched a comprehensive review of all capital investment in schools, early years, colleges and sixth forms. The objective of the James Review; led by Sebastian James, Group Operations Director of DSG international plc, was to provide a guide for future spending decisions over the Spending Review period 2011-12 to 2014-15. Key issues included how best to meet parental demand; how to make current design and procurement cost-effective and efficient; and included an overhaul of how capital is allocated and targeted.

3.3.2 An interim Capital Strategy, which is published on the Local Authority's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk, sets out the current priorities for Cheshire East Council's Children, Families and Adults Service. This Strategy will be superseded by a new Strategy informed by the outcome of the James Review.

3.4 School Performance

3.4.1 The Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* highlighted the role for local authorities of ensuring that the school system works for every family by promoting a good supply of strong schools and with local authorities expected to identify and work with sponsors and partners who will take over weaker schools and transform them into Academies. The Education Act 2011 introduces these new priorities from February 2012.

3.4.2 The Local Authority's agreed School Improvement Strategy will inform process to ensure that outcomes and improvement targets identified in the strategy are not undermined.

3.4.3 Raising achievement for all learners is one of the key policy priorities for Cheshire East Borough Council. This is done by:

- working with schools to improve the quality of learning, teaching and provision of a personalised curriculum;
- supporting and challenging schools in the setting of demanding but realistic targets;
- encouraging schools to collaborate in raising expectations, sharing good practice and innovating.

3.4.4 Any proposals for the review of the number of places in an individual school or in a group of schools will take into account Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection reports. There will be prompt intervention in schools providing poor quality education and the Local Authority has developed triggers for the identification of such schools.

3.5 School to School Support

- 3.5.1 Most schools are able to develop as successful and improving organisations with relatively little external help. Recent changes to national initiatives has highlighted the need to create highly effective School to School support programmes which are being led through the National College for School leadership (NCSL).
- 3.5.2 Central to this initiative is the emerging role of Teaching Schools who have been identified to lead of a wide range of school improvement programmes. Cheshire East currently has 3 Teaching Schools which the Local Authority is working closely with these Schools to deploy and broker packages of support.
- 3.5.3 There are, however, a small number of schools which experience particular difficulties and become a cause for concern. The Local Authority uses the monitoring data (described in its School Improvement Strategy) to anticipate where there might be cause for concern. The Local Authority provides support and challenge and intervenes in these schools within the guidance set out in DfE's statutory guidance on Schools Causing Concern (SCC).
- 3.5.4 In Cheshire East, our SCC policy is called Improving Outcomes Programme and the overall objective of this programme is to reach the position where there are no schools requiring special measures or with a notice to improve in Cheshire East. The Local Authority will consider a range of information (key data) to identify schools which would fall into special measures or require a notice to improve if they were inspected, in order to act to prevent failure at the earliest possible stage.

3.6 Increasing Diversity

- 3.6.1 Cheshire East is committed to pursuing diversity in the provision of school places in order to:
- enhance parental choice of schools and maximise the number of places in popular schools;
 - raise standards of achievement and attainment;
 - enhance investment in education from a variety of stakeholders.
- 3.6.2 *The Importance of Teaching* (2010) set out the Coalition Government's aim of increasing the autonomy of schools and promoting collaborative working driven by school leaders and teachers. Collaboration is seen as the key to narrowing the attainment gap between deprived pupils and others.
- 3.6.3 Local authorities, as champions for parents, families and vulnerable pupils, are seen as having a strategic role in the process of increasing diversity, promoting educational excellence by ensuring a good supply of high quality school places, co-ordinating fair admissions and developing their own school improvement strategies to support local schools. Schools will themselves be able to choose how best to develop having autonomy and new freedoms to manage. They are encouraged to develop their own distinctive identity, such as through Specialist School status, increasing diversity across an area.

- 3.6.4 Under The Education White Paper, conversion to Academy status is available for the best schools, subject to collaborative working with less successful schools to help them improve. However, all schools will be able to become Academies by joining federations, Academy chains or multi-school trusts. Where teachers, parents and charities identify gaps in provision, they will have the opportunity to open new schools where there is a clear demand.
- 3.6.5 Where local authorities identify the need for a new school, legislation will require that, in the first instance, Academies should be established. The process for commissioning new schools will therefore involve the implementation of a procedure for seeking bids from Academy sponsors.

3.7 Federations

- 3.7.1 Under sections 24, 25 and 26 of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies of maintained schools are entitled to collaborate in different ways, ranging from joint committees and joint governing body meetings to federations under a single governing body. Closer collaborative working between schools is part of the Coalition Government's drive to increase freedoms and flexibilities and encourage joint working between providers of education. Guidance on the federation regulations is available on the Department for Education's website at www.education.gov.uk
- 3.7.2 The guidance indicates that a federation can be two or more schools with a formal agreement to work together to raise standards, or where there is a joint governing body as specified in the Education Act 2002
- 3.7.3 The Local Authority cannot oblige schools to federate but it can suggest this as an option to secure the sustainability of several schools. Federations can be a popular choice for governing bodies when their schools are facing challenges of size or sustainability with immediate benefits for the pupils, staff and community.
- 3.7.4 Federations fall into four major groups:
- **Hard Governance Federations** - a single governing body shared by all schools and often a single headteacher.
 - **Soft Governance Federations** - each school has its own governing body but the federation has joint governance/ strategic committee with delegated power.
 - **Soft Federation** - each school has its own governing body the federation, however, has joint governance/strategic committee without delegated powers.
 - **Informal Loose Collaboration** -each school has its own governing body and the group of schools meet informally on an ad-hoc basis.
- 3.7.5 Regardless of the form of federation adopted, all schools:
- retain their separate identity;
 - continue to receive individual school budgets;
 - have separate OFSTED inspections and
 - report on performance individually.

3.7.6 Consultation is an important part of the process towards federation and collaboration and the responsibility for this lies with existing governing bodies. The federation regulations provide that schools wishing to federate must first consult interested parties in the area including parents, staff at the schools and their local authority. During consultation, governing bodies are required to specify,

- the schools involved
- the proposed date of federation
- the proposed size of the governing body
- the proposed numbers of each stakeholder group
- the proposed arrangements for staffing (that is, whether there will be a headteacher of more than one school and whether other staff will work at more than one school)
- other details.

3.7.7 Collaborative or federated arrangements should enable innovative approaches to raising standards, improving teaching and learning and improving leadership to be explored. This should be achieved through:

- Schools learning from each other and sharing good practice
- Joint staff appointments and shared staff
- Coherent staff training and professional development
- Better support for governors
- Cost effectiveness and economies of scale
- A more coherent and better managed curriculum

3.8 Popular and Successful Schools

3.8.1 The Government is committed to a diverse school system characterised by improving standards and increased choice for parents and pupils. The Education White Paper outlined the expectation on local authorities to encourage good schools to expand and for the focus to be on supplying a sufficient number of good places rather than removing unused (surplus) capacity in undersubscribed schools. The Education Act 2011 introduced these requirements from February 2012.

3.8.2 For the purpose of school place planning, popularity will be informed primarily by the percentage of children living in a school's catchment area who actually attend that school, rather than any other alternative. This could also be taken as a plausible indicator of parental preference. It is recognised that not all schools have designated catchment areas, for example some faith schools and Academies serve named feeder schools as a priority. For these schools, consideration will be given to the percentage of local children living in the area normally served by the school.

3.8.3 Raising achievement for all learners is one of the key policy priorities for Cheshire East Borough Council. Any proposals for the review of the number of places in an individual school or in a group of schools will take into account Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection reports. This does not mean that only good or outstanding schools will be proposed for growth. However, where the Local Authority has a number of possible options for

change, standards will be a key consideration in the process and may influence the outcome of any review process.

- 3.8.4 When considering increases or reductions in published admission numbers (PANs); which determine the number of pupils to be admitted into the relevant year group (which for Cheshire East includes the reception class in a primary school, year 7 in a secondary school and in some cases, year 12 into a sixth form), and which should be set based on the school's net capacity, the process for change will be implemented in line with legal requirements as set out in the School Admissions Code.

3.9 Policy on Small and Rural Schools

- 3.9.1 Cheshire East Council recognises the value that a small school can contribute to its local community and the importance of retaining this. In this predominantly rural Borough, small schools are considered an essential part of the local education provision where; without such schools, children could have to travel significant distances to the next nearest school. However, it is also recognised that small schools can easily become fragile in terms of both viability and performance.
- 3.9.2 The Cheshire East Scrutiny Review Panel (October 2009) noted that parents are aware that small schools attract a proportionally greater level of resource than larger schools and, in many cases, they tend to choose such schools for their children because of expectations that educational standards will be higher in such an environment. However, the Panel raised an important issue of equity with observations made about the diversion of funding in such cases from the majority of pupils to a minority, which is considered questionable in those cases where a school may not be serving its local community.
- 3.9.3 Whilst there is no nationally accepted definition of what level of pupil numbers defines a small school, as a benchmark, Ofsted regards a primary school of 100 pupils as small and 50 as very small. In comparison, The Audit Commission regards primary schools with fewer than 90 children as less cost effective as these schools cost more per pupil and also receive additional allowances via the Schools Funding Formula (LMS).
- 3.9.4 For secondary schools there is no small school classification, however, the national average is defined as a school with 984 pupils on roll. This is based on secondary schools within the range of 38-2620 pupils. Generally, a secondary school would be considered smaller than the national average if it had between 600-800 pupils on roll.
- 3.9.5 Current Government guidance involves a presumption against the closure of small or rural schools. Recommendations to close such schools therefore require particularly careful consideration. Minister of State (Schools), Nick Gibb, in a Westminster Hall debate held on 18 February 2012 (Hansard 2012): confirmed that of 18,500 maintained schools, 5400 are rural schools and of 2800 maintained small schools (Primary <100 pupils, Secondary <600 pupils) 2300 are rural schools. Of those 525 have fewer than 50 pupils. In the debate the Minister confirmed
- the Government's continuing commitment to the policy of presumption against the closing of rural schools;

- that the government is working to ensure that the number of rural school closures is kept to a minimum
- that the new funding formula is intended to protect small schools.

3.9.6 Any review involving small or rural schools will include, as a matter of priority, consideration of:

- the community importance of the schools
- the additional costs involved in running small schools;
- the difference between strong demand for places at a particular school and the evidence of usage by pupils living in a school's designated catchment or local area.

3.9.7 In all cases, where it is identified that changes are necessary, the first consideration will be to the benefits of collaboration and federation.

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4 Education

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Under *The Education Act 1996*, parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education between the ages of 5 and 16 and that this can be in school or otherwise (i.e. home education). In Cheshire East, the vast majority of parents and carers choose to send their children to school and, in order that this is an option to them, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that they have sufficient school places to meet demand.
- 4.1.2 At 1 September 2011, across the Borough there were 122 Local Authority maintained mainstream primary schools and 2 mainstream Academies. These schools have a combined capacity of 28,195 places, of which 26,061 are filled (according to the latest school census, May 2011) representing an unused (surplus) capacity of 7.6%.
- 4.1.3 At the secondary phase and for the same period, there were 13 Local Authority maintained mainstream schools across the Borough and 8 Academies. 15 of these schools provide for children and young people aged 11-18 years old with on-site or co-located sixth form education. The total capacity of these schools is 24,562 pupils (May 2011). Of these, 23,351 places are filled, which equates to an unused (surplus) capacity across Cheshire East of less than 5%.
- 4.1.4 For children and young people with special education needs, there are 4 Local Authority maintained schools and 2 independent schools providing education for 316 pupils.
- 4.1.5 The Local Authority has one 30-place Pupil Referral Unit established in April 2011 located in Crewe which caters for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Behaviour, Social and Emotional Difficulty (BESD).
- 4.1.6 In addition to the Local Authority publicly funded schools, there are 9 independent sector mainstream primary schools in Cheshire East. This includes 2 in Alderley Edge, 2 in Crewe, 2 in Macclesfield, 2 in Wilmslow and 1 in Knutsford. At the secondary phase there are 2 independent mainstream schools, one located in Macclesfield and one in Alderley Edge. At January 2011, Cheshire East had a total of 4,435 pupils aged 2 to 19 in Independent Education.
- 4.1.7 The types of schools in Cheshire East include:

Community schools – the most common type, the Local Authority owns and funds the school which is run by school Governors, and the Local Authority employs staff and operates its admissions policy;

Voluntary controlled schools – a charity (e.g. religious institution) will own the school and appoint Governors, but the Local Authority will run the school, fund it, employ staff and operate its admissions policy;

Voluntary aided schools – a charity (e.g. religious institution) will own the school which is run by school Governors and will fund it (possibly with some

Local authority support). The Governors will appoint staff and administer the admissions policy in consultation with the Local Authority;

Foundation schools – the school is owned and run by Governors, who also employ staff and operate the admissions policy in consultation with the Local Authority (the Local Authority fund the school);

Trust Schools – this is a local authority maintained foundation school supported by a charitable Trust which can comprise a range of external partners such as schools, businesses, charities, universities and colleges;

Academies – an academy is an all-ability publicly funded independent school established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working with partners from the local community with freedoms to set their own pay and conditions for staff, freedom from following the National Curriculum and the ability to change the lengths of their terms and school days;

Free Schools – are all-ability, non-profit-making state- funded independent schools. They are set up in response to what local people say they want and need in order to improve education for children in their community. They have the same level of autonomy as Academies;

Special Schools – are state schools which are provided by the local authorities for certain children with special educational needs;

PRUs – are legally a type of school providing education for children of compulsory school age for whom attendance at a mainstream or special school is not an option because of exclusion or other reasons;

Independent schools – Governors own and run the school, employ staff and determine the admissions policy. Pupils are not required to follow the national curriculum, and the school is funded privately (e.g. fees or through charitable trust funds).

- 4.1.8 The status of schools in Cheshire East is subject to change at any time over the coming years with all schools being invited to convert to Academy status.
- 4.1.9 New schools can also be established in response to demand and these can include:

Studio Schools - cater for 14 to 19-year-olds, delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study. They are small schools - typically with around 300 pupils - delivering mainstream qualifications through project based learning. Students work with local employers and a personal coach, and follow a curriculum designed to give them the skills and qualifications they need in work or to continue in education.

University Technical Colleges (UTCs) - are Technical Academies for 14-19-year-olds. They offer technical courses and work-related learning, combined with academic studies. Each UTC is sponsored by a university and industry partner and responds to local skills needs. They provide young people with

the knowledge and skills they need to progress at 19 into higher or further education, an apprenticeship or employment.

- 4.1.10 The Funding Agreement between the establishment and the Secretary of State provides the framework within which Academies, Free Schools, UTCs and Studio School operate.

4.2 Special Schools

- 4.2.1 Special educational needs (SEN) is a legal definition referring to children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Most children with special educational needs are catered for in mainstream schools through additional planning and intervention on the SEN Code of Practice levels for School Action and School Action Plus.
- 4.2.2 The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs has been reduced in recent years following an SEN review in 2006, with more children in receipt of individual pupil funding (IPF).
- 4.2.3 Mainstream schools are increasingly developing their resources to ensure that they can meet the needs of children with special needs. An outcome of the review was the provision within all secondary schools of an Inclusion Resource Base to meet the needs of all children.
- 4.2.4 For children who may have special needs that cannot be met within mainstream provision, special schools provide an alternative option. This is currently delivered in Cheshire East by the Local Authority and the Private/Voluntary Sector.
- 4.2.5 In 2010, the Local Authority began the process of reviewing its arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). One of the priority recommendations emerging from the SEND review was the identified need to establish local specialist provision for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) between the ages of 4 to 19. Subject to member approval, the Local Authority plans to undertake all necessary statutory procedures to establish a new school with a preferred implementation date of September 2013.
- 4.2.6 Schools that specifically cater for the needs of children with special needs are shown in the table below.

Table 8. Special School Provision

School	Location	Sector	Gender	Age Range	Number on Roll
Adelaide School	Crewe	Cheshire East Council	Mixed	11-16	36
David Lewis School	Alderley Edge	Independent	Mixed	7-19	50
Oracle	Congleton	Independent	Mixed	7-16	6

Park Lane	Macclesfield	Cheshire East Council	Mixed	2-19	68
St John's Wood community	Knutsford	Cheshire East Council	Mixed	11-16	44
Springfield School	Crewe	Cheshire East Council	Mixed	2-19	112

4.2.7 The Local Authority's Statutory Assessment & Monitoring Team has an agreed protocol for calculating provision and identifying any unused (surplus) places.

4.2.8 Two secondary schools have specialist resourced provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Hearing Impaired (HI). These schools are Wilmslow High and Middlewich High. Pupils attending the specialist resourced provision in these schools are admitted in addition to the schools normal intake, which is determined by the published admission number (PAN). Two primary schools have specialist resourced provision for HI they are Lindow Primary and Middlewich Primary. Four primary schools have specialist resourced provision for ASC - they are Hermitage Primary, Ivy Bank Primary, Puss Bank Primary and Wilmslow Grange Primary. Five primary schools have specialist resourced provision for Complex and Moderate Learning Needs (CMLD) these are Bexton Primary, Elworth Hall Primary, Marlfields Primary, Vernon Primary and Wyche Primary. One primary school has specialist resourced provision for Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) that is Hungerford Primary. These primary schools with resourced provision receive additional funding based on pupil numbers. Pupils will be considered as attending mainstream and will be included in the PAN.

4.3 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

4.3.1 Councils provide Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and other services and provisions for children temporarily unable to attend mainstream school because of permanent exclusion or by reason of their attendance, behaviour or other needs. PRUs are not used as long-term substitutes for mainstream or special schools. In general, the function of PRUs will be to provide short-term provision while preparing children for a return to mainstream education or, more exceptionally, to support a child through SEN assessment or reassessment prior to eventual placement in a special school. For some children in Key Stage 4, PRUs will provide support from the point of admission to the conclusion of compulsory education at 16.

4.3.2 Cheshire East Council has one pupil referral unit currently located in Crewe. This provision opened on 1 April 2011 for children aged 11-16 and provides 30 pupil places providing interim education for pupils that are unable to attend school due to permanent exclusion, anxious school refusal, pregnancy, medical problems or other exceptional reason. The PRU also supports pupils to reintegrate them into mainstream schools as soon as practicable.

4.4 Small and Rural Schools

- 4.4.1 Of the 124 Cheshire East primary schools, 87 are within the categories of *rural*, *predominantly rural* and *more rural than urban*. This represents 70.2% of the total number of primary schools across the Borough. A full breakdown of the rurality of schools within Cheshire East is attached as **Appendix 7**.
- 4.4.2 The majority of these rural schools are located within the Congleton LAP with Congleton having 23 rural primary schools (18.5% of the 124 Cheshire East primary schools). However, when looking at the proportion of rural schools within each LAP, Macclesfield has the highest with 19 of its 25 schools being designated within these three categories. The LAP with the highest number of entirely 'rural' schools is Nantwich, which has 39% of its 18 schools designated as rural. See Table 9 below.

Table 9. Rural Primary Schools by LAP

LAPs	Rural	Predom Rural	More Rural than Urban	Rural Total	% of Total LAP Schools	% of Total CE Schools	More Urban than Rural	Urban	Urban Total	% of Total LAP Schools	% of Total CE Schools	Total Schools
Congleton	3	11	9	23	74.2%	18.5%	7	1	8	25.8%	6.5%	31
Crewe	0	8	4	12	57.1%	9.7%	4	5	9	42.9%	7.3%	21
Knutsford	4	2	1	7	70.0%	5.6%	2	1	3	30.0%	2.4%	10
Macclesfield	3	11	5	19	76.0%	15.3%	2	4	6	24.0%	4.8%	25
Nantwich	7	5	1	13	72.2%	10.5%	5	0	5	27.8%	4.0%	18
Poynton	0	4	2	6	66.7%	4.8%	2	1	3	33.3%	2.4%	9
Wilmslow	0	3	4	7	70.0%	5.6%	3	0	3	30.0%	2.4%	10
Total	17	44	26	87	70.2%	70.2%	25	12	37	29.8%	29.8%	124

Primary Schools by LAP – Rurality (Jan 2011).

- 4.4.3 The majority of Cheshire East primary schools are not in the category of 'small' or 'very small' with only 17 schools with 100 pupils or less at January 2011 (reception class through to Year 6) and 4 schools with 50 pupils or less representing only 13.7% of the total provision. See Table 10 below.

Table 10. Numbers on Roll - Primary Schools

Number on Roll	Number of Primary Schools
50 and under	4
51-100	13
101-200	46
201-300	35
301- 400	17
401 -500	8
500+	1
Total	124

Jan 2011 School Census Data (Rec-Y6)

- 4.4.4 Of the 21 mainstream secondary schools, 8 are within the categories of *rural*, *predominantly rural* and *more rural than urban*. This represents 38.1% of the total number of mainstream secondary schools across the Borough.

Table 11. Rural Secondary Schools by LAP

LAPs	Rural	Predom Rural	More Rural than Urban	Rural Total	% of Total LAP Schools	% of Total CE Schools	More Urban than Rural	Urban	Urban Total	% of Total LAP Schools	% of Total CE Schools	Total Schools
Congleton	0	1	1	2	28.6%	9.5%	4	1	5	71.4%	23.8%	7
Crewe	0	3	1	4	80.0%	19.0%	1	0	1	20.0%	4.8%	5
Knutsford	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0	1	100.0%	4.8%	1
Macclesfield	0	1	0	1	25.0%	4.8%	2	1	3	75.0%	14.3%	4
Nantwich	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	2	0	2	100.0%	9.5%	2
Poynton	0	1	0	1	100.0%	4.8%	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1
Wilmslow	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0	1	100.0%	4.8%	1
Total	0	6	2	8	38.1%	38.1%	11	2	13	61.9%	61.9%	21

Secondary Mainstream Schools by LAP – Rurality (Jan 2011).

- 4.4.5 The majority of these rural schools are located within the Crewe LAP with Crewe having 50 % of the 8 Cheshire East mainstream secondary schools designated as rural schools. These 4 Crewe schools represent 19% of the 21 Cheshire East mainstream secondary schools. The number of secondary schools within each LAP varies with some areas being served by only one secondary school.
- 4.4.6 In comparison with the national average size for a secondary school of 984 pupils, only 6 Cheshire East schools are below this number and a further 2 are broadly in line with the national average having numbers on roll of 970 and 931 pupils (January 2011 School Census Data). See Table 12 below. The majority of secondary schools are above the national average size representing almost 62% of the total.

Table 12 National comparison – Average Size of Secondary Schools

Category	Number	% of Total
Smaller than National Average	6	28.6%
National Average	2	9.5%
Above National Average	13	61.9%
Total	21	100%

(Source: Jan 2011 Census Data)

4.5 Post 16 Provision

- 4.5.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 raises the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training (Raising of the Participation Age/RPA). This does not necessarily mean they will have to stay on at school after Year 11 as they will have a choice about how they want to participate post-16, which could be through full-time education, such as school or college; work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or part-time

education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week. This change applies from 2013, when young people will be required to stay in education or training until they are 17 years of age and from 2015 until they are 18. These changes will therefore need to be taken into consideration alongside any review of post-16 provision due to the potential for growth in the demand for places.

- 4.5.2 Post-16 education and training is non-compulsory and covers a wide range of provision from Foundation Learning (below level 2) to level 4 qualifications. Much of the provision is at level 3 which includes A levels, vocational courses and Advanced Apprenticeships. Post 16 education and training is provided in sixth forms within secondary schools, sixth form colleges, general further education/tertiary colleges, specialist colleges (such as those focusing on drama, or agriculture) and private work-based learning providers.
- 4.5.3 There are 17 post-16 providers based in Cheshire East, which includes 14 secondary school sixth forms (maintained schools and Academies) plus Macclesfield College, Reaseheath College, South Cheshire College and a number of private work-based learning providers including Total People.
- 4.5.4 Under Sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the ASCL Act 2009), local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area. Young people are those who are over compulsory school age but under 19, or are aged 19 to 25 and who have a learning difficulty. The Local Authority also has a duty to secure sufficient education and training for young people who are the subject of youth detention. The Local Authority therefore has a strategic overview of post-16 provision, with a statutory responsibility to encourage, enable and assist participation and secure education and training in the Local Authority area, taking into account quality and other factors.
- 4.5.5 The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) was established in 2010 to support the delivery of training and education and closed in April 2012. The YPLA had a duty to secure the provision of financial resources to persons (including local authorities) providing, or proposing to provide, suitable education and training to young people who are over compulsory school age but under 19, or are aged 19 to 25 and had a learning difficulty. In exercising these funding functions, the YPLA supported local authorities' key statutory duties, including where local authorities have chosen to work together.
- 4.5.6 The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) was also established in 2010 and the Chief Executive of Skills Funding has the power under Section 83 of the ASCL Act 2009 to secure the provision of facilities for suitable Apprenticeship training for young people who are over compulsory school age, but under 19 (including those subject to youth detention), or are aged 19 to 25 and subject to a learning difficulty assessment.
- 4.5.7 From April 2012, the new Education Funding Agency (EFA), which is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE), took on the YPLA's responsibilities. The EFA has responsibility for the direct funding of Academies and Free Schools and all 16-19 provision (excluding apprenticeships). This includes the funding of 16-19 provision in general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent provision.

The EFA will continue to distribute resources to local authorities for them to pass on to those schools which are not Academies.

- 4.5.8 Post-16 funding is determined by student choice. Student volumes drive funding in the following year. This is referred to as the 'lagged learner' number approach. It is possible for the number of students to exceed the planned take-up based on previous intakes and any growth in learner numbers will be consolidated the following year.
- 4.5.9 The Local authority, in order to make information on needs and gaps transparent and capable of being responded to, will develop with their partners and share with the EFA, a statement outlining their strategic overview. Schools, Academies, colleges and other providers are expected to be involved in the development of those statements and to respond to the priorities identified, whilst respecting learner choice.
- 4.5.10 Where the Local Authority and providers identify a gap in provision which cannot be met by changing existing provision, and is therefore outside the lagged approach, procurement of new education and training will be required. The Local Authority will decide with partners the best way of securing the provision. This includes working with other local authorities where necessary.
- 4.5.11 Information on Cheshire East Publicly funded mainstream secondary schools is attached as **Appendix 8**. A breakdown of schools with sixth forms is shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Secondary Schools & Academies Post-16 NOR - Years 12 to 14

Local Area Partnerships	Number of schools operating sixth forms	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Congleton	6	1203	1191	1190	1179	1169	1185	1218	1272	1288	1238
Crewe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knutsford	1	244	250	299	314	288	290	313	295	321	276
Macclesfield	4*	744	731	715	763	745	748	753	817	829	0
Nantwich	2	267	281	292	288	261	262	265	275	279	383
Poynton	1	322	341	354	344	313	290	314	319	336	333
Wilmslow	1	284	309	333	360	408	460	437	474	479	475
Cheshire East Total	15	3064	3103	3183	3248	3184	3235	3300	3452	3532	3536

Data Source: January School Census from the years stated above.

*The Macclesfield Academy was established in September 2011 as an 11-16 mainstream secondary school replacing 11-18 Macclesfield High School.

- 4.5.12 As regards demographic changes, the YPLA produced a 2010 Strategic Analysis for the sub-regional group of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington. The underpinning data set for this gave the following population projections/future cohorts-16 and 17 year olds:

Table 14. 16-17 Year Old Population Projections

Academic Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
16-17 Year Olds	9400	9300	9200	9200	9000	9000	8900	8600	8600
Academic Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
16-17 Year Olds	8300	8100	8300	8500	8700	8900	9100	9200	

Source: YPLA 2010 Strategic Analysis for the sub-regional group of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington.

4.6 Cost per Pupil

- 4.6.1 **Appendix 9** attached provides further information on the costs per pupil for 2011-2012 and 2010-2011, including comparisons between LAPs and types and phases of schools. This indicates that the majority of schools have costs per pupil of below £4,000 for both financial years.
- 4.6.2 The average cost per pupil across all types of schools (including Academies, 4 special schools and 1 maintained nursery school) is £4488. The average cost per pupil including Academies and 1 maintained nursery school but excluding 4 special schools is £4385. A full breakdown of the cost per pupil for individual schools is attached as **Appendix 10**.
- 4.6.3 The cost per pupil of maintaining primary provision across Cheshire East varies significantly with the maximum cost for 2011-2012 being £8,014 per pupil and the lowest being £3,190. This stems from the fact that the cost per pupil in a school with lower numbers on roll is much higher. For secondary mainstream schools, the average cost is 4,878 as shown in table 15 below, with a maximum of £6,065 and minimum of £4,506.

Table 15 Cost per Pupil by Type of School

Type of School	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Nursery	7,258	7,258	7,258
Primary	3,989	8,014	3,190
Secondary	4,878	6,065	4,506
Special	21,541	26,134	21,558

This data refers to the 2011-2012 financial year and includes Academies and Free Schools (Source: Cheshire East Schools Finance Team)

- 4.6.4 Of the 124 maintained primary schools and Academies, 44.4% have pupil costs in excess of the average of £3,989. This equates to 55 primary schools of which 33 also exceed the average cost per pupil for all schools (excluding special schools) of £4,385. At secondary level, only 9 schools have pupil costs that exceed the average of £4,878.

- 4.6.5 The Cheshire East average cost per pupil is compared in the table below with the average for each LAP. The variance between these is shown with '-' indicating less than and '+' indicating more than the Cheshire East average.

Table 16. Average Cost per Pupil (£) by LAP

LAP	Sector	LAP Average	CE Average	Variance (£s)
Congleton	Primary	3947	3989	-42
	Secondary	4817	4847	-30
Crewe	Primary	4172	3989	+183
	Secondary	5382	4847	+535
Knutsford	Primary	4426	3989	+437
	Secondary	4851	4847	+4
Macclesfield	Primary	4676	3989	+687
	Secondary	4874	4847	+27
Nantwich	Primary	4153	3989	+164
	Secondary	4660	4847	-187
Poynton	Primary	3818	3989	-171
	Secondary	4535	4847	-312
Wilmslow	Primary	4011	3989	+22
	Secondary	4599	4847	-248

(Source: Cheshire East Schools Finance Team)

- 4.6.6 The cost per pupil can also vary according to the rural classification of schools within Cheshire East. The Cost per Pupil by LAP and compared with rurality classification is shown in Table 17 below.
- 4.6.7 It could be considered that LAPs with a higher percentage of schools designated as rural, predominantly rural or more rural than urban may have a higher cost per pupil due to the rural areas served and the number of pupils within these areas that could attend the school. However, the level of provision within these areas compared with the number of pupils that could attend the schools will also have an impact. As an example, Poynton LAP, with only one secondary school serving this predominantly rural area has lower costs per pupil compared to the CE average by £312 per pupil. In comparison, Crewe LAP has five secondary schools serving the area of which 80% are classified as rural with an average cost per pupil in excess of the CE average by £535 per pupil.
- 4.6.8 At the primary phase, the area with the highest total percentage of schools classed as rural is Macclesfield. In this area the average cost per pupil is above the CE average by £687. However, Congleton LAP with a comparative number of schools within these rural categories has a cost per pupil below the CE average by £42.

Table 17. Rurality Average Cost per Pupil by LAP

LAP	Sector	Comparison of CE and LAP Average Cost per Pupil (£s)	% of Schools within LAP within each Rurality Classification						
			Rural	Predom' Rural	More Rural than Urban	Total Rural	Urban	More Urban than Rural	Total
Congleton	Primary	-42	9.70%	35.50%	29%	74.20%	3.20%	22.60%	25.80%
	Secondary	-30	-	14.30%	14.30%	28.60%	14.30%	57.10%	71.40%
Crewe	Primary	+183	-	38.10%	19.10%	57.20%	23.70%	19.10%	42.80%
	Secondary	+535	-	60%	20%	80.00%	-	20%	20.00%
Knutsford	Primary	+437	40%	20%	10%	70.00%	10%	20%	30.00%
	Secondary	+4	-	-	-	0.00%	-	100%	100.00%
Macclesfield	Primary	+687	12%	44%	20%	76.00%	16%	8%	24.00%
	Secondary	+27	-	25%	-	25.00%	25%	50%	75.00%
Nantwich	Primary	+164	38.90%	27.80%	5.50%	72.20%	-	27.80%	27.80%
	Secondary	-187	-	-	-	0.00%	-	100%	100.00%
Poynton	Primary	-171	-	44.40%	22.20%	66.60%	11.20%	22.20%	33.40%
	Secondary	-312	-	100%	-	100.00%	-	-	0.00%
Wilmslow	Primary	+22	-	30%	40%	70.00%	-	30%	30.00%
	Secondary	-248	-	-	-	0.00%	-	100%	100.00%

Includes Academies and Free Schools (Source: Cheshire East Schools Finance Team)

4.7 Standards and Attainment

- 4.7.1 The Education Act 2006 requires local authorities to promote fair access to educational opportunity, high standards and pupil achievement when planning the provision of school places. The academic results seen from our schools/settings for 2011 were very positive at ALL phases.
- 4.7.2 Performance tables for 2011 published by the Department for Education showed that Cheshire East was the joint fourth best performing region in the country and joint second in the North West. In comparison with statistical neighbours, the Authority is ranked first out of 11 authorities. Provisional results for 2012 show improvements from the 2011 figures. There are no national results against which to compare at the moment.
- 4.7.3 In 2011, Cheshire East Key Stage 2 results were ranked first out of eleven when compared to statistical neighbour authorities for expected rates of

progress in English, expected rates of progress in maths and for English and maths at level 4+. Provisional figures for 2012 indicate the results for Cheshire East this year have increased for all three measures with 85% of pupils achieving English and maths at level 4+.

- 4.7.4 The provisional percentages of pupils achieving the expected two levels of progress at Key Stage 2 in English and maths have gone up by 4 percentage points since 2011 to 92% and 91% respectively
- 4.7.5 There are two significant measures at the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The first is that in 2012, a total of 75 percent of pupils gained at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage (including 6 or more points in "Personal, Social and Emotional" and 6 or more points in "Communication, Language and Literacy"). This is an improvement of 7 percentage points on 2011. Secondly, the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation stage and the rest has reduced from 26% to 24%.
- 4.7.6 At sixth form level the provisional results, collected from schools on results day, indicate that 96.7% of all A Level entries achieving a A*-E grade. Just under a quarter of all students achieved grades A* to A (24.0%) and almost half of all students entered for A Levels (49.8%) achieved an A* to B grade. Provisional figures also show that Cheshire East's A-level students achieved an average point score of 756.4, which is an increase on last year's published figure of 724.9. As yet, there is no national comparative data for maintained schools.
- 4.7.7 The priorities identified for 2011-2012 are:
- To continue to narrow the gap in the performance of our more vulnerable young people at all phases.
 - To establish a revised data sharing protocol with schools and academies, which allows for the ongoing tracking of performance on a termly basis?
 - To establish revised arrangements for our Improving Outcomes Programme (IOP) which supports our most vulnerable schools.
 - To further refine and target intervention programmes to those which the need is greatest and which reduces the gap in performances of certain groups.
 - To commission, as required, high quality personnel to support the ongoing monitoring and challenge to schools underperforming or at risk of underperforming.

4.8 Cross Border Movement

- 4.8.1 Cheshire East is classed as a 'net importer' of pupils as the number of children resident in other authorities attending a Cheshire East maintained school exceeds the number of Cheshire East residents attending schools maintained by other authorities.
- 4.8.2 Table 18 below shows that based on the January 2011 Census, a total of 1,027 pupils attended Cheshire East primary schools compared with only 659 Cheshire East pupils attending schools in other areas. The number of non-Cheshire East residents on roll in Cheshire East schools represents 4% of the total Cheshire East school population compared with only 2.6% attending state funded schools in other areas.

- 4.8.3 For secondary schools, of the total school population of 18,775, there are 1659 pupils on roll in Cheshire East schools who are resident in other areas compared with 1045 Cheshire East residents taking places up outside their home authority. The number of non-Cheshire East resident pupils represents 8.8% of the total school population compared with only 5.8% of home residents receiving education in schools maintained by other authorities.
- 4.8.4 The overall gain for Cheshire East schools is 982 pupils, which represents 2.2% of the total school population of 44,759 pupils (reception class through to Year 11). (see **Appendix 11**)

Table 18. Pupil Migration - January 2011

	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools			
Home' Local Authority (pupil place of residence)	Number of out of authority pupils attending Cheshire East schools	Number of Cheshire East pupils attending out of authority schools	Net Result for Cheshire East	Number of out of authority pupils attending Cheshire East schools	Number of Cheshire East pupils attending out of authority schools	Net Result for Cheshire East	Total Net Result for Cheshire East
Cheshire West & Chester (CWAC)	238	361	-123	381	534	-153	-276
Derbyshire	58	31	27	28	23	5	32
Halton	0	0	0	0	3	-3	-3
Lancashire	x	0	0	0	x	0	0
Lincolnshire	0	x	0	0	0	0	0
Manchester	68	0	68	98	8	90	158
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	0	x	0	0
Oldham	0	0	0	0	x	0	0
Reading	x	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salford	0	0	0	4	0	4	4
Shropshire	53	x	53	21	x	21	74
Staffordshire	325	56	269	339	58	281	550
Stockport	122	131	-9	352	59	293	284
Stoke-on-Trent	45	8	37	37	51	-14	23
Tameside	0	0	0	4	x	4	4
Telford & Wrekin	0	0	0	0	4	-4	-4
Trafford	62	41	21	392	207	185	206
Wales	5	0	5	0	0	0	5
Warrington	49	22	27	3	92	-89	-62
<i>Total Excl suppressed data*</i>	<i>1,025</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>375</i>	<i>1,659</i>	<i>1,039</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>995</i>
<i>Suppressed data</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>-7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>-6</i>	<i>-13</i>
Totals	1,027	659	368	1,659	1,045	614	982
<i>Total Excl. CWAC</i>	<i>787</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>498</i>	<i>1,278</i>	<i>505</i>	<i>773</i>	<i>1,271</i>

Data Source: School Census January 2011, table from DfE SFR 12-2011. NB. X indicates suppressed data.

- 4.8.5 Following Local Government Reorganisation of the 7 Cheshire Councils in 2009, it is to be expected that parents and carers will continue to seek places

for their children in schools that have traditionally served their local area, regardless of new local authority boundaries that now divide the former Cheshire County Council into 2 separate unitary authorities. Included in the above table are total pupil migration figures both including and excluding movement to and from Cheshire West and Chester Council to provide a further indication of the net gain in the number of pupils due to demand for places in schools maintained by this Authority.

4.9 Pupil Mobility

- 4.9.1 The total movement in and out of schools, i.e. pupils leaving or being admitted to the school other than at the normal point of entry in September, or normal point of exit at the end of August is referred to as pupil mobility.
- 4.9.2 In Cheshire East European Migration has affected pupil mobility in relation to schools. Schools near women's refuges experience higher rates of pupil mobility. Gypsy, Romany, Traveller (GRT) sites affect certain schools and their mobility levels.
- 4.9.3 In July 2010 there were 10 GRT sites in Cheshire East with planning permission, with 109 pitches in total. In addition, there were 2 GRT sites without planning permission having 11 pitches in total.
- 4.9.4 In previous financial years the Local Authority has held back funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to cover pupil number fluctuations and mobile children and children of asylum seekers. However, this arrangement was changed for the 2011/12 financial year. Funding is now being delegated to schools as part of their Age Weighted Pupil Unit, but without a specific use of the funding being enforced on schools. In addition, contingency funds for 2011/12 held by the Local Authority are available for any exceptional changes in pupil numbers for an individual school.
- 4.9.5 Analysis shows that during 2010-2011 academic year (excluding September starters through the normal admission round into reception and Year 7 and pupil leaving a class at the normal leaving point at the end of August) there were 3570 admissions to a Cheshire East school compared with 2450 leavers. The total number of movement between schools during the course of the year was 6020. This will include children moving between Cheshire East schools, Cheshire East pupils leaving for schools not maintained by this Local authority and new admissions into Cheshire East schools of pupils not previously on roll at a Cheshire East school.
- 4.9.6 The schools with the highest level of 'in year' mobility are set out in the Table 19 below. (Full details are provided as **Appendix 12**)

Table 19. Pupil mobility 2010-2011

Phase	School	Joiners	Leavers	Total Movement	LAP
P	St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Crewe)	92	14	106	Crewe
S	Brine Leas School	76	31	107	Nantwich

S	Poynton High School and Performing Arts College	64	46	110	Poynton
S	Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College	46	69	115	Congleton
S	Sir William Stanier Community School	74	47	121	Crewe
P	Leighton Primary School	99	54	153	Crewe
P	Wistaston Green Primary School	97	57	154	Crewe
S	Knutsford High School	91	78	169	Knutsford
S	Malbank School and Sixth Form College	84	90	174	Nantwich
S	The Macclesfield Academy	70	116	186	Macclesfield
S	Wilmslow High School	129	60	189	Wilmslow

Data source: CYPD 2010-2011

- 4.9.7 The LAP with the highest mobility was Crewe with almost 26% of the total Cheshire East mobility over this period. Congleton also experienced higher mobility than other LAP areas with nearly 23% of the total. The total number of schools varies from one LAP to another and this will affect the total level of mobility across an area. However, in looking at the average for each LAP, Crewe also has the highest average with nearly 62 movements per school.

4.10 School Transport

- 4.10.1 At its meeting on 30 April 2012, the Council's Cabinet agreed changes to its existing transport policy. These changes provide that from September 2012,

- Free transport will no longer be provided for children attending denominational schools through parental choice on the grounds of parent's religion/faith; withdrawal of which will take place for all students – whether current recipients or future applicants – from September 2012. Exceptions are to be provided for secondary school age children from low income families attending a choice of their 3 nearest qualifying schools between 2 and 6 miles from home, or up to a maximum of 15 miles to the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief, in accordance with statutory responsibilities;
- The savings resulting from the withdrawal of entitlement on grounds of religion/faith in 2012/13 be redirected to provide one-off funding to the affected educational establishments; this money is to be ring fenced accordingly. Each establishment will have freedom over how it uses this one-off funding to support alternative travel options to students. It is estimated that such savings will be of the order of £150,000, which will be distributed on an equitable basis to relevant establishments;
- A reduced devolved grant – £375,000 a year (equating to approximately 50% of current net expenditure) - be offered to all Sixth Forms and Further Education Colleges accepting Cheshire East resident students for post 16 mainstream transport subsidies and for this money is to be ring fenced accordingly. Each Sixth Form or College will determine the basis of support to each student taking account both the needs of the students and the establishments

themselves. The respective grants to be awarded on the basis of the 2011/12 data and the efficacy of this to be reviewed yearly;

- The Council, in full partnership and consultation with parents, carers and special schools, look at alternatives around SEN transport to improve outcomes by promoting a positive culture of independence for children, young people and families. In addition, the Council will undertake further reviews of provision such as where transport is provided by way of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) and social care transport needs.

- 4.10.2 The Local Authority is under a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport between home and school. Sustainable modes of travel are defined as those that the Local Authority considers may improve the physical well-being of those who use them, the environmental well-being of all or part of Cheshire East, or a combination of the two.
- 4.10.3 All schools in Cheshire East have a travel plan and promote sustainable school travel. Many schools are continuing to monitor their travel plan and aim to update it on a yearly basis.
- 4.10.4 To promote sustainable travel, schools may consider promoting a number of schemes to encourage walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing. Details on the schemes that schools may wish to promote can be found at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools
- 4.10.5 There are 59 dedicated bus services available to access education sites within Cheshire East. A further 230,660 journeys were made by students travelling on local buses.
- 4.10.6 Specialist transport services are also available for young people with special educational needs, with transport supplied (2011) for 352 cared for pupils and 1,487 pupils with complex special educational needs. These services allow students to access both school and after-school activities. The Association of Transport Coordinating Officers (ATCO) benchmarking survey 2008–09 highlighted that Cheshire East spent £4,784 a client during the year on SEN transport (including overhead costs). This compares to an average spend per client of £4,386 across all 26 Local Authorities taking part. The school transport costs for each student were £941, compared to an average of £827 in the 26 Authorities taking part.
- 4.10.7 It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate time each day. In the case of pupils of statutory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and live beyond the 'statutory walking distance' from it the Local Authority will provide free school transport. For Cheshire East Council this is defined within the agreed transport policy as 2 miles for primary school pupils and 3 miles for a pupil aged eleven to sixteen. The distance is measured along the shortest available walking route and the measure is done using a digital mapping system. For the purposes of the school transport policy the 'nearest suitable school' will be defined as either: the catchment school under the Local Authority's zoning arrangements; or the nearest school to the home address, which may be different from the catchment school.

- 4.10.8 School places at alternative schools are usually offered on the basis that parents are responsible for any travelling arrangements that are not covered by the Local Authority's Home to School Transport Policy and the costs involved. In some cases, pupils who are not eligible for free school transport may be able to purchase a spare seat place on an existing education contract if one is available. The Local Authority will not pay travelling expenses to parents choosing to send their child to a more distant school or with effect from September 2012, to a school chosen for religion or faith reasons, in preference to their local school. The Local Authority will consider requests from parents for free transport for children who live within the statutory distance from their nearest suitable school, but who have to travel along a hazardous route to school. It is a parent's responsibility to transport a child safely to school, and in looking at the route it will be assumed that the child is accompanied, if necessary by a responsible person.
- 4.10.9 The Local Authority's agreed Home to School Transport Policy ensures that generally, the Local Authority will provide transport for pupils who are registered pupils at their local school and live more than the recognised (statutory) walking distance from it, i.e. 2 miles for children of primary school age and 3 miles for older children. For most children this transport is free, but there are charges for those who make use of the Local Authority's school transport services but are not themselves entitled to free transport. The Local Authority makes no general transport provision for children under the age of compulsory education, or those of any age who attend private schools or colleges. For secondary aged pupils, if a child is from a low income family (based upon family eligibility for Free School Meals, or family being in receipt of the maximum level of Working Family Tax Credit), then the child will be entitled to free transport to any one of the three nearest suitable secondary schools between 2 and 6 miles of the home address, or an appropriate faith secondary school between 2-15 miles of the home address if preferred on the grounds of religious belief.

4.11 School Transport – Post 16

- 4.11.1 From September 2012, a reduced devolved grant will be offered to all sixth forms and further education colleges accepting Cheshire East resident students for post 16 mainstream transport subsidies. Each sixth form or college will determine the basis of support to each student taking account of the needs of the students and the establishments themselves.

4.12 Cared for Children

- 4.12.1 A 'cared for child' is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that local authority (as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989). Cared for children may be in foster care, residential care, with parent(s) or person(s) with parental responsibility, placed for adoption or supported to live independently.
- 4.12.2 The number of cared for children attending Cheshire East schools at January 2011 (School Census) was 123 of primary school age and 125 of secondary school age. The number of children above statutory school age was 75. At the same time there were 128 pre-school children.
- 4.12.3 Cared for Children are afforded the highest priority for admission to an oversubscribed school and in all cases, the Local Authority works closely

across service areas to ensure that children in care are allocated a place quickly at a suitable nearby school, even if that school is full.

4.12.4 With effect from September 2013, Children previously 'cared for' will be given the highest priority within the Local Authority's admission arrangements alongside cared for children, in accordance with changes introduced in the School Admissions Code (2012). The same or similar arrangements will be adopted by other admission authorities.

4.12.5 Previously cared for children are defined as children who were 'cared for' but immediately after being 'cared for' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

4.13 Elective Home Education

4.13.1 Parents are entitled to educate their children at home instead of school if they choose to do so. Under UK law it is education that is compulsory, not schooling, though the vast majority of parents do choose to send their children to school.

4.13.2 Between September 2010 and July 2011 there were between 112 and 129 pupils known to Cheshire East whose parents had opted for Elective Home Education (EHE). In addition, 21 pupils who were EHE during the year were subsequently removed from the list due to alternative arrangements. Not all children who are EHE are known to the Local Authority, as 'parents are not required to register or seek approval from the local authority to educate their children at home.' (DCSF EHE Guidelines for Local Authorities section 2.4 2007)

4.14 Flexible Schooling

4.14.1 Flexi-schooling is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the rest of the time the child is home educated. "Flexi-schooling" is a legal option provided that the head teacher at the school concerned agrees to the arrangement.

4.14.2 In June 2012, there were 14 children and young people in Cheshire East known to the Elective Home Education department to be subject to a flexi-school agreement. This includes children in all year groups to the end of Year 11 and involves 3 Cheshire East primary schools, 2 high schools and a primary school in Staffordshire where 8 of the 14 children attend.

4.12.3 Flexi-schooling is distinct and separate to part-time attendance at school and is totally at the discretion of the headteacher.

5 Children's Centres

- 5.1 The Childcare Act 2006 imposed duties on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area, reduce inequalities between them, and to make arrangements to secure integrated early childhood services.
- 5.2 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 inserted new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006 so that the Act now defines Sure Start Children's Centres in law. Specifically section 5A of the Childcare Act now gives local authorities a duty to secure sufficient children's centres provision for their area and to consult on any changes.
- 5.3 There are at present 13 Children's Centres in Cheshire East spread across fifteen sites. Each centre has a 'footprint' or catchment area that it serves.
- 5.4 Children's Centres aim to improve the co-ordination of services for families and children (aged 0-5 years old). This could include providing play and early learning opportunities, advice and guidance, healthcare, parenting and family support, help with skills and gaining qualifications, and links to training and work. Services are delivered under a multi-agency partnership approach.

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6 Early Years and Child Care

6.1 Free Early Education Entitlement

6.1.1 The Government, through the Childcare Act 2006, has reformed the system of childcare provision for under fives. The Act introduced the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' which covers:

- The learning and development requirements of young children;
- Improvements in the qualifications of the workforce; and
- Changes to the system of regulation and inspection.

6.1.2 All 3-4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free early education per week for 38 weeks per year. Funding covers the period the term after the child's third birthday up to statutory school age (the term after the child's fifth birthday). Parents/carers have a choice about which setting to use. The Family Information Service provides parents with details of registered provision.

6.1.3 All 3-4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free early education per week for 38 weeks per year that may be taken flexibly. Funding covers the period the term after the child's third birthday up to statutory school age (the term after the child's fifth birthday). Parents/carers have a choice about which setting to use.

6.1.4 Government proposals to extend to two year olds the current entitlement of 15 hours free early education means that by 2014 free early education places will be made available for approximately 40% of two year olds by 2014.

6.1.5 Funding is being provided to local authorities each year for them to build up free early education places for disadvantaged two-year olds in readiness for the new entitlements. The amount of funding each year will increase to £760 million in 2014-2015.

6.2 Childcare

6.2.1 There is a wide range of childcare provision that may be state-maintained, or operate in the private, voluntary or independent sectors. These providers include:

- Reception and nursery classes in maintained and independent schools
- Day nurseries
- Pre-schools / Playgroups
- After school and breakfast clubs
- Holiday clubs
- Childminders

6.2.2 Local Authorities are required to annually assess the demand for, and supply of, childcare, and to conduct a comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every three years. Cheshire East Council undertook a comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency assessment in 2011. A summary gaps analysis and a full copy of the report is available from:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/children_and_families/childcare_sufficiency_csa.aspx)

- 6.2.3 The challenge for the Local Authority in maintaining its duty under the Childcare Act (2006) to secure sufficient childcare will be to maintain a diversity of provision across Cheshire East. Across all sectors, pressure from increased competition in the face of a shrinking market (both in terms of population and affordability) will require a pro-active approach in supporting childcare providers through difficult times.

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7 School Place Planning

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This Plan is not intended to identify changes that are required in specific schools. However, within the framework provided by the Plan, the Local Authority and other providers can subsequently make specific proposals to address the priorities that have been identified in formulating this five year plan.
- 7.1.2 The Education Act 2011 explicitly focuses on the role of the local authority as commissioner of school places, with the first priority for a local authority; when it identifies the need for a new school, being to facilitate the establishment of an Academy or Free School.
- 7.1.3 Current DfE guidance makes clear that local authorities should match school place supply as closely as possible to parental preference and this can require different proposals in relation to unpopular and academically weak schools. The new emphasis on supplying enough good places rather than removing unused (surplus) places supports the presumption in favour of the expansion of successful and popular schools and a consequence of this is that action may also be necessary to remove unused (surplus) capacity in nearby schools.
- 7.1.4 The Plan recognises the requirement to manage places on an area basis and in line with changing demographics. Judgements about how best to manage school places across the Borough are not only concerned with ensuring that there are sufficient places available, but also about enhancing the quality of provision where unused (surplus) places are considered for removal and promoting the highest possible standards where additional places are required.
- 7.1.5 To enable the Local Authority to provide value for money, it is recognised that there should be a close link between the supply and demand for school places. Schools could not plan effectively if there were too many unused (surplus) places as patterns of parental preference can change from year to year creating uncertainty and financial pressures. Therefore, a balance needs to be struck between planning what is needed for an area as a whole and planning that enables parents to express meaningful preferences for individual schools.
- 7.1.6 Schools with 15% - 25% or more unused (surplus) places will be closely monitored. Long term forecasts will be reviewed before any proposals are made to reduce the capacity to take into account future demand due to the potential for growth beyond the five year forecasting period.
- 7.1.7 The Cheshire East Coordinated Admissions Scheme sets out the Authority's agreed process for coordinating applications for school places. The scheme allows parents three school preferences. All preferences are considered on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria and only if more than one school can potentially be offered is the preference ranking used, with a single offer being made for the school ranked highest.
- 7.1.8 For admission in 2011, the percentage of parents and carers offered their first choice of school (preference) was 90% for primary and 94% for secondary. A

slightly lower outcome was achieved for primary for 2012 at 88% and with 94% for secondary. Overall, and for both years, 95% of primary applicants and 98% of secondary applicants received an offer of a place at a school named as a preference on their application form. This data relates to the published offer date. Unsuccessful applicants at this stage can subsequently receive offers from the waiting list and on appeal.

- 7.1.9 In order to maintain customer satisfaction with the admissions process, the Local Authority will need to carefully monitor demand for school places and align its provision, as far as practicable, to meet any changes. This Plan sets out the priorities of this Local Authority for managing this process.

7.2 Capital Investment

- 7.2.1 A copy of the Local Authority's agreed Capital Strategy for 2012-2013 is published on the Local Authority's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk. The Strategy sets out the capital investment priorities for Children, Families and Adults Services, which are based on the following requirements:

- The provision of sufficient places to meet the needs of local communities;
- The removal of temporary accommodation when funding permits;
- The provision of healthy and safe environments in which pupils and staff can work;
- To meet curricular and organisational needs;
- To enhance physical access to buildings; and implement key strategic initiatives.

- 7.2.2 Bi-annual reviews of the pupil forecasting data contained within the Annex to the School Organisation Plan will be implemented to ensure demand and supply of school places are closely aligned. In addition, the condition and suitability of school accommodation will need to be reviewed as it is recognised that pupils and students benefit from high quality learning environments and equipment.

- 7.2.3 Building maintenance funds will be allocated on the basis of the priorities identified in the condition surveys. Suitability assessments are also reviewed and used to determine priorities for school improvements. Key areas for investment are identified in the Capital Strategy. In carrying out strategic reviews of school provision, sufficiency assessments will be used in conjunction with pupil projections to establish proposals for additional places, or to identify opportunities for the removal of those that are unused (surplus).

- 7.2.4 Wherever practical, pupils from new housing developments are accommodated at existing local schools where sufficient permanent capacity already exists. Where additional places have to be provided, the Local Authority may seek to secure; with the co-operation of the Local Planning Authority, a developer contribution to fund the provision of the additional permanent places needed. This might involve contributions towards the expansion of an existing school or full or part payment of a new school. Housing development will only be taken into account within the pupil forecasts when there is some level of certainty that the development will occur within the timeframe of the Plan. Certainty will be measured as the point at which developer contributions have been agreed. It is important to note, however,

that all pupil yields generated from developer enquiries and planning applications will be taken into account in the order they are received when calculating subsequent developer contributions due to their cumulative effect on the demand for school places.

- 7.2.5 An estimate of anticipated and planned housing developments is provided in the Annex to this Plan to demonstrate future demand and its potential impact on pupil place planning.

7.3 Housing Developer Contributions

- 7.3.1 The need for new housing within Cheshire East is expected to increase as a result of predicted increases in population, changes to family sizes and dynamics (e.g. divorce) and changes to the age profile of the area. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (2008) set out the strategic planning framework for development in the North West, which included an additional 20,700 homes to be developed in Cheshire East over a fifteen year period. It should be noted that the Government intends to abolish the RSS through the Localism Act 2011, but, nevertheless, Local Planning Authorities will need to ensure that such housing targets are addressed in their Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 7.3.2 The five year housing trajectory figures published by each Local Planning Authority in their Annual Housing Monitoring Reports are used to provide the estimated phasing of housing developments. It must be recognised, however, that the actual developments and the rate at which new houses are built depends on a mixture of economic and social factors. House builders may prove unwilling to develop all the sites identified and may likewise apply for permission to construct dwellings on alternative pieces of land.
- 7.3.3 It is a statutory responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure the provision of sufficient suitable school places for children residing within its boundary. The Organisation and Capital Strategy Team therefore maintain a database of all potential and approved housing developments within each Local Area Partnership and procedures are implemented to assess the impact on local provision due to increased numbers of school aged children from these developments.
- 7.3.4 In all cases, a pupil (child) yield will be calculated to determine the anticipated number of additional school-aged children to an area. This is an established issue for school place planning that needs to take into account the changes in the housing market, which suggest that the profile of new occupation now and over the next few years may be different from that seen prior to 2007.
- 7.3.5 If existing schools in areas of growth have insufficient capacity to accommodate more pupils and to maintain a level of unused (surplus) places as outlined in this School Organisation Plan, a contribution will be sought from the developer/s via a Section 106 agreement to meet the increased demand at the primary and secondary phase. The basic cost for providing a school place is set out by the Department for Education who prepare a national "Basic need cost multiplier" to determine the cost per pupil for building new accommodation. A regional adjustment is then provided for each local authority.

- 7.3.6 In some instances it may not be feasible to extend existing accommodation and the Authority will, in such cases, require the provision of a new school/s to cater for the new development. The Local Authority will expect the developer to provide a cleared, fully serviced and accessible site free of charge in addition to the normal level of contributions towards school buildings.
- 7.3.7 School capacity is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) sufficiency net capacity calculation and reflects the long term organisation of the school.
- 7.3.8 Contribution towards additional places will normally be informed by schools within a 2 miles radius of the development for primary provision and 3 miles for secondary. Distances are measured on the basis of the Local Authority's straight line distance measurement, which measures from the address point of the property to the address point of the school using Ordnance Survey address point data.
- 7.3.9 The procedure for seeking developer contributions is fully outlined in the Authority's S106 Policy and should be read alongside this School Organisation Plan.

7.4 Asset Management

- 7.4.1 In order to ensure that capital investment is used efficiently and as effectively as possible the Local Authority is developing an Asset Management Plan (AMP) in partnership with schools and Dioceses. The AMP provides the means through which likely future needs are assessed, criteria for prioritisation are set and informed decisions on local spending are made.
- 7.4.2 The AMP has the following main elements:

Local Policy Statement - This sets out how the Authority proposes to develop its AMP and the roles and responsibilities of all partners, including schools and the Dioceses. It also explains the basis on which information about premises will be calculated and the criteria and mechanisms that will be used for determining priorities. The Cheshire East Policy Statement is reviewed annually and published on the Local Authority's website.

Condition Surveys - These are updated annually and provide a systematic, informed and objective assessment of the physical state of the premises and the work needed to bring the premises up to suitable state of repair.

Suitability Assessment - Suitability is defined as how well premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers and other users, and contribute towards raising standards of education. Assessments also deal with some aspects of health and safety requirements. Suitability assessments focus on how well premises are helping in delivery of the curriculum, and contributing towards raising of educational standards at the school.

Sufficiency Needs - The Local Valuation Office (acting on behalf of the DfES) has undertaken a measuring exercise of all Cheshire schools. The new net area data was received at the end of June 2002 following which the Authority is carrying out new capacity calculations for all schools. The DfEE issued guidance on this in April 2001 and it is planned that the new capacities

will be effective from November 2002. The detailed information gathered in this way will be taken into account in the 2003/04 revision of the School Organisation Plan.

7.5 General Guidelines

- 7.5.1 The Education Act 2011 sets out the priority for local authorities of identifying and working with sponsors who will take over weaker schools and transform them into Academies. In undertaking this role, local authorities will be able to use their wider position in local regeneration, employment and community development, and their knowledge of existing schools, to seek sponsors and partners who will fit with the character of the local community and help raise aspirations.
- 7.5.2 Local authorities will also play a role in commissioning new provision and overseeing the transition of failing schools to new management. The Government plans to consult with local authorities and Academy sponsors on what role local authorities should play as strategic commissioners when all schools in an area have become Academies.
- 7.5.3 The School Organisation Plan provides the Local Authority's strategy for ensuring there are sufficient suitable school places for children resident in its area and its agreed priorities for children and young people:
- Raise and sustain high educational standards;
 - Provide more social inclusion and equality of opportunity;
 - Provide better choice and access to learning for learners, through increased collaboration between schools, colleges and other providers;
 - Give special protection and support to vulnerable communities;
 - Offer longer-term stability and greater certainty for the foreseeable future;
 - Develop lifelong and community learning; and
 - Ensure that schools be of an appropriate and sustainable size;
- 7.5.4 The Local Authority seeks to optimise the size of schools to ensure that resources are not wasted by maintaining inappropriately sized provision. However, there are many factors to be considered, such as the distance to alternative provision and the potential for extended school activities within the community.
- 7.5.5 It will be assumed that some new demand for places can be met in unused (surplus) capacity. This can be a more cost effective way of providing additional school places and as such, it is assumed that this will be done whenever possible. However, it is also acknowledged that unused (surplus) capacity is often not in the right place, for example due to housing and population movement. Therefore, the assumption is that most growth will need new provision. Factors affecting the extent to which existing capacity can be used include local geography and transport.
- 7.5.6 It is prudent to plan for additional capacity over the derived need on the basis that all indications are that demand will continue to grow beyond 2015/16. A figure of between 5 and 10 per cent is suggested by the Audit Commission, with 10% considered realistic. (The Audit Commission, 2010).

- 7.5.7 School places will be monitored on an area basis using Local Area Partnerships and, at a more local level using planning areas or school clusters. **(Appendix 13)** The purpose of focusing on LAPs is to identify future demand for each area and not to restrict this pupil movement. It is also recognised within the overall Framework that schools form planning areas or clusters driven by their location and the pattern of demand from parents and carers for school places. The Local Authority will aim to achieve a target level of no more than 10% unused (surplus) places overall but with a minimum target of 4% at a more local level based on these planning areas (school clusters). The purpose of this is to optimise parental preference and provide contingency for pupil mobility and removal into an area, whilst also seeking to ensure that the provision of school places is not only cost effective but also provides good quality education which is sustainable.
- 7.5.8 The size of primary and secondary schools will vary across the Borough according to local needs and circumstances. The general presumption will be that any new provision stemming from a review will be primary, secondary, special or all-through and that a judgement will always need to be made about the size of individual schools, how effectively they can operate and the needs of individual communities, such as whether a school is in a rural or an urban location.
- 7.5.9 Where new schools are needed, careful consideration will be given to the most effective form of organisation, governance and leadership for the new school. This will include consideration of federations and trusts and all through arrangements. In line with the Government's priority, in all cases where a new school is needed the priority will be to seek bids from sponsors for the establishment of an Academy or Free School.
- 7.5.10 A key priority of this Local Authority is that all children should be educated, wherever possible, in schools of a sufficient size to ensure appropriate staffing levels for effective curriculum delivery. In making any proposal for closure or reorganisation of school provision, consideration will be given to the ability of the school to provide effective educational and social provision for each child.
- 7.5.11 Any proposal to reduce or reorganise provision will involve consideration of many factors, including the following:
- The extent to which a school actually admits pupils from the community (designated catchment or local area) generally served by the school;
 - whether the community is sufficient to sustain the school;
 - the physical condition of the school premises;
 - the nature of the site, accessibility to it and scope for expansion;
 - the school's ability to deliver a full range of curriculum and social experiences.
 - The latest Ofsted inspections (successful schools)
 - The pattern of parental preference (popular schools)
- 7.5.12 Any proposed reorganisation involving a small or rural school will also include consideration of:

- The community importance of schools
- The additional costs involved in running small schools;
- The difference between strong demand for places at a particular school and the evidence of usage by pupils living in a school's designated catchment or local area.
- In all cases, where it is identified that changes are necessary, the first consideration will be to the benefits of collaboration and federation.

7.5.13 Schools with 15% to 25% or more unused (surplus) capacity overall will be monitored to ensure sustainability, but taking into account future demand due to the potential for growth beyond 2016.

7.5.14 In considering good value for money, where the unit cost per pupil is twice or more the Borough's average, this Local Authority will consider the funding of this to be an inefficient use of public resources. This is likely to be the case in schools that have a high proportion of unused (surplus) places.

7.5.15 The Annex to this Plan provides data on each of the LAPs, including the level of unused (surplus) places or shortfall in provision in mainstream primary and secondary schools. This data provides key information for pupil place planning and demonstrates important contrasts between schools in terms of their individual cost effectiveness, academic performance, and local popularity. In some cases, postcode data will be used to analyse the relationship between the supply and demand of school places and the pattern of parental preference for individual schools and local area partnerships.

7.6 Working in Partnership

7.6.1 In determining the number of places that will be needed in future years, the first priority will be to review provision through consultation with school partnerships. This is to ensure that headteachers are fully engaged in the process from an early stage.

7.6.2 Consultation will also involve working within Local Area Partnerships (LAP). Local Area Partnerships (LAP) bring together the key agencies within localities to ensure engagement with communities, provide empowerment opportunities and improve service delivery.

7.6.3 Statutory consultation on proposals for change will be implemented in accordance with DfE guidance and statutory procedures to include governing bodies, staff, parents, carers and other interested groups in the school's community. This will include consultation with the Dioceses of Shrewsbury and Chester. Where appropriate, neighbouring schools and local authorities that may have an interest will also be consulted. In addition, the Local Authority has a duty to respond to any representations from parents who are not satisfied with the provision of schools. This might be about the size of schools, the type of schools, where they are located or the quality of education provided.

7.7 Methodology

7.7.1 It is fundamental to the development and assessment of the School Organisation Plan to analyse demographic information relevant to the supply of school places. This includes:

- the numbers of pupils in the Borough and projected pupil numbers for the five year period of the plan
- live birth data and population forecasts
- the published admission numbers for each school
- the number on roll at each publicly funded school within the Borough
- catchment area data
- current net capacity
- unused (surplus) places
- shortfall in places
- cost per pupil
- number of sixth form places

7.7.2 In addition, information will be collated on,

- Projected NOR in five and ten years time
- Popularity of school expressed as percentage of pupils within the school catchment attending the school
- Ofsted reports and measures
- School site issues
- Proposed and approved housing developments

7.8 Forecasting

7.8.1 At the time of writing this report, the pupil forecasting methodology used in school place planning, as set out in this section, is being reviewed. The Annex to this Plan illustrates the need for more detailed analysis taking into account variation in unused (surplus) capacities between key stages and the need to produce forecasts beyond the current timescales to ensure sustainability for the foreseeable future.

7.8.2 A project undertaken by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER), and summarised in its April 2012 report entitled 'Report for the Local Government Association - School Place Mapping', aimed to identify how local authorities establish the need for school places. One of its key findings is that many authorities demonstrate detailed knowledge of the circumstances of individual schools in their area, but it is acknowledged that 'it is not possible, and arguably not desirable, to attempt to derive a five-year forecast on the basis of school level data', recognising that forecasting for five years ahead means a significant margin of error.

7.8.3 The report states that in a 'relatively stable environment... the numbers of school age children are obviously an essential basis for planning school places'. But, with recent instability due to population change and movement, 'accurate and detailed forecasts' are needed' (NFER, 2012)

7.8.4 It is also acknowledged that inefficient forward planning also means insufficient notice to put new capacity in place and thereby reducing the

number of options for change available to the Local Authority and putting greater reliance on the use of existing accommodation and places.

- 7.8.5 Pupil forecasts are estimates of the number of pupils that are likely to attend maintained schools and Academies/Free Schools within the Borough over the next five years. The projections are currently based on January school census data and are reviewed bi-annually. Demand for school places is therefore informed by DfE defined capacity calculations and pupil projections. The number of pupils admitted to a school is also informed by admissions policy, which is determined by the relevant admissions authority. For Academies, and Free Schools and Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools, this is the role of the governing body. The availability of places is therefore influenced by policy choices at a local level.
- 7.8.6 The new School Admissions Code introduced in February 2012 delivers greater freedoms for admission authorities that want to increase their intakes with the requirement to consult on increases in published admission numbers being removed and a reinforcement of the presumption in favour of the expansion of popular and successful schools. It is therefore considerably more difficult for local authorities to challenge admissions number decisions made by other admission authorities.
- 7.8.7 The current forecasts used by this Local Authority are produced taking into account, amongst other things:
- Existing numbers on rolls taken from the Spring School Census;
 - Current parental preferences and patterns of movement between the sectors;
 - Pre-school figures;
 - Housing forecasts where appropriate to an area;
 - Restrictions on class sizes at Key Stage 1;
- 7.8.8 For primary pupil forecasts, an average of the previous three years intake is taken and where this is significantly different from the intake figure provided by the admissions team, then an adjustment is made. The current numbers on roll and forecast reception numbers are rolled forward by a year group to provide forecasts for the next year ahead and so on for later years, to produce forecasts of pupil numbers for the next five years.
- 7.8.9 In some cases the forecast figure is overwritten to take into account other factors that may impact on a school's intake, for example,
- changes to admissions arrangements
 - provision of new accommodation
 - housing
- 7.8.10 The year 7 secondary school intake figures are arrived at by studying which primary school the pupils came from in the previous September. Using this information we then calculate percentage feeder rates for each of the Cheshire East primary schools based on an average rate transferring from that primary school to secondary school over the last three years. These percentage "feeder rates" are then applied to the number of pupils actually on roll at the primary schools in January to generate the future number of pupils which will feed from each of the primary schools into secondary schools. As well as using this primary school feeder rate we also add in a factor for the

number of pupils the secondary school takes from Non-Cheshire East and Non-Maintained primary schools and unexpected admissions from Cheshire East Primary Schools. An average number is arrived at by studying the intake pattern at the secondary school for the previous few years. The basis of all the other Years figures are the actual January figures rolled forward.

- 7.8.11 Sixth form forecasts are based on the average percentage rate of pupils staying on from year 11 to year 12 and year 12 to year 13. This rate is based on the previous 3 years.
- 7.8.12 The above follows closely the Feeder Model methodology as detailed on page 51 of the DfE Pupil Projection Guide.
- 7.8.13 In some cases the forecast figure is overwritten to take into account other factors that may impact on a school's intake, for example,
- changes to admissions arrangements
 - provision of new accommodation
 - housing developments
- 7.8.14 The actual numbers on roll used for forecasting will be based on school census data.

7.9 Net Capacity Assessments

- 7.9.1 The capacity figures for primary and secondary schools in this Plan have been calculated using the DfE's 'net capacity assessment method' of assessing the capacity of mainstream schools to accommodate pupils. The method provides the opportunity for capacities to be set at levels to suit reasonable admission arrangements and organisation of schools (including infant class size limits) and ensures that there is neither too much nor too little space to support the core teaching activities.
- 7.9.2 For primary schools, the net capacity is calculated on the basis of the number and size of spaces designated as 'class bases'. For secondary schools, it is based on the number, size and type of teaching spaces and the age range of the school. In both cases, this is checked against the total usable space.

7.10 Primary School Reviews

- 7.10.1 When reviewing provision and planning for additional schools within an area due to additional demand, expansion will be delivered by all-through primary schools and not separate infant and junior schools. It is considered that this will provide continuity of experiences and ultimately an overall higher quality of educational achievement and experience, particularly at KS2.
- 7.10.2 The Local Authority's school place planning priority will be to provide single aged classes wherever possible (i.e. 1 FE with seven classes, 2 FE with fourteen classes) and in all cases to aid compliance with Infant Class Size Legislation, which limits infant classes to 30 pupils to a single school teacher. This includes any planning for new schools. However, for rural schools in Cheshire East, mixed aged/vertically grouped teaching arrangements may be a necessity as demand from the local community served by the school may be insufficient to provide for a full 1 form of entry (FE).

- 7.10.3 Any school built as 1 FE should if possible have a site capable of development to 2 FE, and be built with infrastructure (e.g. hall size) that can be added to easily. Only in very exceptional circumstances should primary schools in Cheshire East be built or developed beyond a 2 FE i.e. with the capacity to admit more than 420 pupils.
- 7.10.4 Small schools make an important contribution to the overall provision in Cheshire East, particularly in rural areas, where, without such schools, children could have to travel significant distances to the next nearest school. There is a Government presumption in favour of keeping small schools open. In cases where unused (surplus) places are high, this may not result in reorganisation providing the quality of education is not compromised. The Local Authority's view is that wherever possible, primary schools should have a roll of 90 or more pupils. However, it is acknowledged that smaller schools can also be viable and sustainable.
- 7.10.5 In all cases, where it is identified that changes are necessary, the first consideration will be to the benefits of collaboration and federation.

7.11 Secondary School Reviews

- 7.11.1 New secondary schools should be planned to have a minimum expected intake of 180 pupils and should always have a site capable of expansion to 210/240 pupils a year, as a minimum. Below this the level the budget generated is likely to restrict the breadth and depth of curriculum provision that can be sustained. Notwithstanding this, consideration will be given in exceptional cases to the development of smaller secondary schools. In circumstances where a small school is planned, the site should be capable of expansion to 210/240 pupils. The LA would like to see all teaching groups of below 30 pupils; however, a lower maximum size will be needed:
- Where specialist accommodation has health and safety limits;
 - For groups of children with special needs.
- 7.11.2 Where reviews of secondary school provision are undertaken, consideration should be given, through collaboration with the Cheshire East 14-19 team, to providing opportunities and facilities, where appropriate, to increase the number of post 16 children in education and training.

7.12 Removing Capacity

- 7.12.1 The Local Authority will aim to achieve a target level of no more than 10% unused (surplus) places overall and with a minimum target of 4% at a more local level based on school clusters/planning areas.
- 7.12.2 Maintaining a sufficient level of unused (surplus) places is important to allow for parental preference. Increased demand for places in the primary sector requires changes in some areas due to low levels of unused (surplus) places and insufficient places in some year groups to meet demand. At secondary level, current unused (surplus) places need to be protected so that they will be available when they are needed, as primary growth feeds through.
- 7.12.3 Where proposals are brought forward to remove unused (surplus) places, particular attention will need to be given to the quality of education provided

within an area and any community use of the premises. Where practicable, priority would be given to bringing forward proposals to remove unused (surplus) places from those schools in an area that are least successful and popular. This approach is intended to improve the quality of learning and achievement for all pupils and align the availability of school places more closely with parental preference.

7.12.4 In order to remove unused (surplus) school places the following measures will be considered:

- re-designation of accommodation for extended or other related use (see below);
- removing temporary accommodation;
- removing permanent accommodation by the removal of discrete blocks of accommodation;
- closure of a school, where sufficient places exist at better performing schools to accommodate displaced pupils within a reasonable travelling distance of the pupils' home addresses.

7.12.5 Where schools have excessive unused (surplus) capacity, it is possible for consideration to be given to the scope for extended school provision, providing such activities are compatible with the operation and security of the school. Such alternative uses might, for example, include early years' provision, breakfast and after school clubs, adult learning and skills facilities, parent/community rooms, and Local Authority designated support services.

7.12.6 In considering amalgamations as an option, a number of factors would need to be taken into account, including the following:

- Ofsted inspection reports,
- End of key stage test results and other key performance data,
- Research findings
- The circumstances of the individual schools

7.12.7 Whilst evidence suggests federation plays no direct role in removing unused (surplus) places, it can enable future changes to be made, reducing barriers to future amalgamation, providing an opportunity to improve school leadership, and improving staff capability. Forming a federation between two schools could be the first step towards school amalgamation, or the closure of the less successful or less popular school. Federation should be understood as one of several options for school governance which can achieve structural transformation of education and reducing unused (surplus) places as a first step in leading towards the amalgamation of two schools or the closure of one.

7.13 Increasing Capacity

7.13.1 Where there is a demonstrable need for additional places in an area, then consideration would first be given to determining whether the increased demand could be met by expanding existing schools in the area concerned. In considering any such action, the Local Authority will seek to deliver additional capacity in successful and popular schools. However, not all sites will be suitable for expansion and as such, this cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, where the disadvantages of such a proposal outweigh the

advantages, then alternative proposals, including the expansion of other schools in the area, or the construction of a new school, may be brought forward.

7.13.1 DfE guidance indicates that all proposals should be considered on their individual merits and that decision makers must not make blanket assumptions that schools need to be of a certain size before they can be good schools. Where additional accommodation is required in schools for a relatively short period of time, for example when an unusually large year group needs to be accommodated, or a school admits additional pupils from a new housing development whilst a new school is built, then relocatable or temporary classrooms may be provided.

7.13.2 Permanent accommodation will, wherever possible, be provided where growth is likely to be sustained for the foreseeable future, and where there is an identified long-term need.

7.14 Process for Change

7.14.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to plan for and secure sufficient schools for its area in line with its duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996. Proposals will always be referred for advice to the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.

7.14.2 The new 'presumption' for an academy/Free School requires the Local Authority to seek proposals to establish an academy/Free School in the first instance where it identifies a need for a new school

7.14.3 The Local Authority is advised to assess any proposals it receives against the criteria outlined here before forwarding all proposals to the Secretary of State, who will take into consideration any preference the Authority indicates:

- the quality of the places being added into the system, based on the proposer's vision and educational plan;
- the capability and capacity of the proposer to deliver their proposal to time and on budget, based on their expertise and experience;
- value for money, confirming that the proposer considers that the costs of establishing the new academy/Free School can be met within the estimate of capital costs outlined by the Local Authority and, where they cannot be met within that estimate, an explanation of the reasons for the additional costs and how any shortfall will be met.

7.14.4 In the event that the Local Authority does not identify a suitable sponsor through this initial process, it can, on approval of the Secretary of State, undertake a competition to decide who should establish the new school. At this stage the Local Authority will not be able to enter the competition itself to establish a new community or controlled school. The competition procedure requires that,

- The Local Authority issues a public notice which explains why another school is needed.
- The notice would describe the size and age range of the school and invites proposals for the new school from any interested person or group of people. These might be parents, businesses, charities or

faith groups, for example. The local authority might decide to put a proposal of its own into the competition.

- The Local Authority must publish all the proposals and hold at least one public meeting where the proposals can be discussed.
- the Local Authority will decide which proposal should be taken forward.

7.14.5 If no proposals or no suitable proposals are received during the competition, the Local Authority can then publish proposals of its own for a community or foundation school. The Schools Adjudicator will be responsible for determining such proposals.

7.14.6 Full details of the process for establishing a new school are [published on the DfE website and can be viewed by following this link.](#)

7.14.7 Other significant changes to school organisation are subject to statutory processes which require extensive consultation and can include public meetings. This allows all interested parties the opportunity to consider the proposed changes and contribute to the decision making process. Changes, such as closing schools or enlarging them require the publication of statutory notices. This process allows key stakeholders, such as parents, pupils, staff and the local community, the opportunity to consider, object or comment on proposals. Proposals may be published by the Local Authority or sometimes by school governing bodies. In most situations the Local Authority will normally decide these proposals. In some circumstances there will be a right of appeal to an adjudicator.

7.14.8 The process will involve the following stages:

- Share the problem with school partnerships and LAPs and invite local solutions
- Develop a strategic vision and plan
- Formal consultation
- Issue public notices, as appropriate
- Final decisions

7.14.9 Call-ins are only permitted at two stages of the decision-making process:

- when formal consultation is approved; and
- when notices are approved for publication.

7.15 Decisions on School Organisation Proposals

Decisions on School Organisation proposals will be made in accordance with the Local Authority's agreed procedure, which is published on the Local Authority's website. This procedure sets out

- That decisions to consult and publish statutory notices will be taken by the individual portfolio holder for Children and Families, and
- When considering statutory school reorganisation proposals and decisions on non statutory education reorganisation proposals which attract objections, decisions to be taken by a Cabinet Sub Committee under the procedures set out in the agreed procedures.

7.16 Schools Delegated Budgets

- 7.16.1 Arrangements for 2012/13 represent a continuation of the settlement introduced for 2011/12. Grants continue to be mainstreamed within the Dedicated Schools Grant, and the Minimum Funding Guarantee of -1.5% has continued. The Pupil Premium for Cared for Children and Free School Meal children has increased to £600, whilst the service children element has increased to £250. The criteria for allocation has also widened so that any child who has been on Free School Meals during the last six years now attracts the Premium
- 7.16.2 There will be a number of financial challenges faced by schools in 2012/13, and schools will be required to manage their finances more pro-actively than ever. The “flat cash” DSG award for 2012/13 will put pressure on schools to manage inflationary pressures.
- 7.16.3 The mainstreaming of grants has changed how schools currently plan their finances, and there will need to be consideration by schools as to how grants will be used in order to deliver local priorities and objectives.
- 7.16.4 Schools are being encouraged to be more autonomous and undertake as much responsibility as possible going forward. The increase in delegated funding and mainstreaming of grants based on pupil numbers has been aimed to encourage schools to make decisions about how funding is best used to benefit the schools and serve the needs of the pupils.
- 7.16.5 The DfE’s most recent funding consultation: *School Funding Reform: Next Steps Towards a Fairer System*, outlines the changes that the DfE are considering making to local funding formulas for 2013/14 in preparation for the introduction of a National Funding Formula for 2015/16. The Direction of Travel is for a reduction in formula factors to 10 as a maximum, maximum delegation of funding direct to schools, change in arrangements for the funding of High Needs to a Place Plus methodology, and a simplification of funding for Academies.

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8 Pupil Forecasts

8.1 Mainstream Primary Schools

8.1.1 In line with the population forecasts for each LAP, the school-aged population projections indicate that there will be an increase in the number of primary aged pupils over the period 2011 to 2016 with an overall increase for Cheshire East of just below 800 pupils. (See Table 20 below) This represents a 3% increase over this period. The numbers vary from one LAP to another with the biggest increases in the number of pupils being in Congleton and Crewe. The area with the highest percentage increase over this period is Nantwich with the area forecast to have an additional 4.2% pupils in 2016 compared with 2011.

8.1.2 The largest percentage increase from year to year is forecast for September 2013 with approximately 44% of the overall increase occurring at this time. The areas with the highest increase in pupil numbers for September 2013 are Congleton and Crewe with 29% and 18% of the 346 pupils.

Table 20. Primary School Age Forecasts by LAP

LAP	SEPT 2011	SEPT 2012	SEPT 2013	SEPT 2014	SEPT 2015	SEPT 2016	LAP Difference	LAP % Difference
Congleton	6580	6652	6751	6779	6799	6808	228	3.5%
Crewe	6577	6665	6729	6802	6815	6799	222	3.4%
Knutsford	1553	1556	1586	1589	1590	1583	30	1.9%
Macclesfield	4562	4602	4658	4667	4712	4693	131	2.9%
Nantwich	2696	2727	2769	2814	2788	2810	114	4.2%
Poynton	1740	1743	1755	1747	1737	1751	11	0.6%
Wilmslow	2358	2365	2408	2412	2408	2415	57	2.4%
Total	26066	26310	26656	26810	26849	26859	793	3.0%
Year to Year		244	346	154	39	10	793	

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

8.1.3 Indications based on these forecasts are that across the Borough the current number of school places of 28,195 should be sufficient to meet the anticipated demand. However, this will reduce the level of anticipated unused (surplus) to 4.7% overall by 2016 compared with the level at May 2011 of 7.6%.

Table 21. Primary School Age Forecasts by NC Year Group 2011-2016

NC Year	SEPT 2011	SEPT 2012	SEPT 2013	SEPT 2014	SEPT 2015	SEPT 2016	NC Year Difference	%
R	3824	3828	3828	3828	3827	3827	3	0.1%
Yr1	3849	3828	3832	3832	3830	3830	-19	-0.5%
Yr2	3823	3853	3832	3836	3833	3833	10	0.3%
Yr3	3780	3827	3857	3836	3836	3836	56	1.5%
Yr4	3691	3784	3831	3861	3836	3839	148	4.0%
Yr5	3499	3691	3785	3832	3858	3836	337	9.6%
Yr6	3600	3499	3691	3785	3829	3858	258	7.2%
Total	26066	26310	26656	26810	26849	26859	793	3.0%
Year to Year		244	346	154	39	10	793	

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

- 8.1.4 The basis of the forecast September intake figure shown in Table 21 above is determined by calculating an average of the previous three years intake. Where appropriate, adjustments are made to reflect significant changes to intakes agreed through the coordinated admissions process. It is therefore important to consider alongside these pupil forecasts any potential impact due to anticipated changes in the population and live births.
- 8.1.5 Population forecasts indicate that the number of children aged 0-15 will decrease by around 4% over the next twenty years (2009-2029). However, in terms of school place planning and, in particular primary school places, what is really key here is that throughout this period, the number of children in each age group will fluctuate reflecting past patterns of numbers of births. As such, the largest overall decrease (of 7%) will be in the number of 11-15 year olds compared with changes in the number of 5-10 year olds over the next ten years, which are forecast to increase by 3% placing significant pressure on primary school places over this period. This increase was forecast to start around 2011.
- 8.1.6 Whilst forecasts do indicate that after 2016 the numbers will start to decrease again resulting in the same number of 5-10 year olds by 2029 as there were in 2009, with a forecast unused (surplus) capacity by 2016 of only 4.7% overall, a 3% increase in the number of primary aged children by 2019 will significantly reduce the level of unused (surplus) places from year to year and in so doing, reduce the Local Authority's ability to maximise opportunities for parental choice.
- 8.1.7 More importantly, the current unused (surplus) capacity of 7.6% is not evenly spread across the Borough and as such, some LAPs and some schools or clusters of schools will be put under greater pressure due to increased demand in an area. It is also important to note that the level of unused (surplus) places varies between year groups and also key stages resulting in more pressure in some year groups, and notably key stage 1. The figures must therefore be taken only as an indication of the overall unused (surplus) capacity and no detailed analysis must be implemented at a more local level to inform planning for future years.

8.1.8 The year groups currently under the greatest pressure tend to be in the reception classes through to Year 2 and this can be attributed to the forecast increase in the number of 5-10 year olds commencing around 2011. For admission into the reception class in September 2011, the position at 13 July 2011 was that across Cheshire East there were only 3% vacancies when comparing the number of children for whom places are offered and the number of places available. As some schools admitted over their published admission number (PAN) this created some vacancies in other schools resulting in vacancies at 5.6%. However, the level of unused (surplus) capacity in the Wilmslow and Crewe LAPs at this time was only 1.2% and 1.5% respectively. This is after additional places had been created in some schools. For Wilmslow there would have been a shortfall of -3.6% and for Crewe a negative unused (surplus) capacity at -1.6% had such actions not been taken. Further information about the reception class vacancies in 2011 is attached as **Appendix 14**.

8.1.9 The population forecasts indicate that an increased number of pupils within the primary age range will continue over a ten year period. Information about the implications that this has for each Local Area Partnership (LAP) will be addressed in the Annex to this School Organisation Plan.

8.2 Mainstream Secondary Schools

8.2.1 The current total capacity across the 21 maintained secondary schools and Academies is 24,562 pupils. Of these, 23,351 places are filled (May 2011), which equates to an unused (surplus) capacity across Cheshire East of less than 5%.

8.2.2 Pupil forecasts are calculated by taking an average of the previous three years intake. Where appropriate, adjustments are made to reflect significant changes to intakes agreed through the coordinated admissions process. It is therefore important to consider alongside these pupil forecasts any potential impact due to anticipated changes in the population and live births.

8.2.3 In line with population forecasts, the number of pupils across Cheshire East is projected to fall. Forecasts indicate that between 2011 and 2016 there will be 1500 less pupils. The biggest fall is forecast for the Congleton LAP with it having 49% of the total overall decrease of 1531. This represents a 9.6% fall in the number of pupils for this area. (See Table 22 below).

Table 22. Secondary School Age Forecasts by LAP

LAP	SEPT 2011	SEPT 2012	SEPT 2013	SEPT 2014	SEPT 2015	SEPT 2016	LAP Difference	LAP % Difference
Congleton	7801	7638	7433	7308	7134	7052	-749	-9.6%
Crewe	3524	3440	3359	3315	3322	3375	-149	-4.2%
Knutsford	1311	1291	1259	1248	1253	1254	-57	-4.3%
Macclesfield	4508	4460	4344	4331	4263	4275	-233	-5.2%
Nantwich	2381	2329	2274	2224	2229	2237	-144	-6.0%
Poynton	1586	1552	1517	1504	1479	1444	-142	-9.0%
Wilmslow	2009	1997	1973	1969	1963	1952	-57	-2.8%
Total	23120	22707	22159	21899	21643	21589	-1531	-6.6%
Year to Year		-413	-548	-260	-256	-54	-1531	

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

8.2.4 The largest decrease from year to year is forecast for September 2013 with approximately 36% of the overall decrease occurring at this time. For 2012 the projections show a 27% reduction in pupil numbers.

8.2.5 Based on these forecasts, indications are that the current number of school places of 24,562 is more than sufficient to meet the anticipated demand with current levels of unused (surplus) capacity of below 5% (May 2011) increasing to over 12% by 2016.

Table 23. Secondary School Age Forecasts by NC Year Group

NC Year	SEPT 2011	SEPT 2012	SEPT 2013	SEPT 2014	SEPT 2015	SEPT 2016	Difference	%
Yr7	3747	3574	3470	3642	3711	3759	12	0.3%
Yr8	3917	3747	3574	3470	3642	3711	-206	-5.3%
Yr9	3871	3917	3747	3574	3470	3642	-229	-5.9%
Yr10	4089	3871	3917	3747	3574	3470	-619	-15.1%
Yr11	3918	4089	3871	3917	3747	3574	-344	-8.8%
Yr12	1856	1845	1925	1830	1852	1777	-79	-4.3%
Yr13	1598	1544	1535	1603	1525	1541	-57	-3.6%
Yr14	124	120	120	116	122	115	-9	-7.3%
Secondary Total	23120	22707	22159	21899	21643	21589	-1531	-6.6%
Year to Year		-413	-548	-260	-256	-54	-1531	

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

- 8.2.6 The current level of unused (surplus) capacity at secondary level will change after 2017 as a result of the increased number of pupils in the primary sector. This will need further yearly evaluation to ensure that supply and demand are closely aligned.
- 8.2.7 The current and forecast unused (surplus) capacity is not evenly spread across the Borough, or between schools or year groups.
- 8.2.8 For admission into the Year 7 class in September 2011, the position at 26 June 2011 was that there were 11% vacancies after all applications had been processed. This unused (surplus) capacity is calculated by deducting the total number of year 7 children for whom places are offered from the total number of places available (based on the Year 7 published admission numbers). 11% is almost double the level of unused (surplus) across all year groups, which was forecast for September 2011 at just over 5.9%.
- 8.2.9 In order to accommodate local children and siblings, or as a consequence of successful appeals by parents, some schools have admitted above their published admission number (PAN) and this creates vacancies in other schools. The actual number of year 7 vacancies is therefore higher at 11.8%.
- 8.2.10 The number of unused (surplus) places is not evenly distributed across Cheshire East and for Wilmslow and Poynton LAPs the level of unused (surplus) in year 7 is very low at 0% resulting in pressure on school places from late applications and in year admissions. (see **Appendix 15**)
- 8.2.11 The population forecasts indicate that there will be a reduction by 3% in the number of pupils within the secondary age range over a ten year period, falling from 22,000 in 2009 to 21,300 thousand by 2019. Information about the implications that this has for each Local Area Partnership (LAP) will be addressed in the Annex to this School Organisation Plan.

8.3 Unused (Surplus) Places

- 8.3.1 A spreadsheet containing full details about the actual and forecast level of unused (surplus) places within each LAP up to 2016, which is based on January 2011 census data, is attached as **Appendix 16**. Analysis on 2012 data; which will be made available during the autumn term 2012, will be based on October 2012 school census data and will be calculated using a revised methodology.
- 8.3.2 At the primary phase, the overall unused (surplus) capacity calculated at January 2011 was 8% but with some LAPs experiencing a real shortfall in provision having very low or negative unused (surplus) capacity. Table 24 below shows that this unused (surplus) capacity will continue to reduce over the period 2011-2016 and, in some areas will be well below the target unused (surplus) level of 4% or over.

Table 24. Primary School Unused (Surplus) Places by LAP

	Primary % Unused (Surplus) Places						
Local Area Partnerships	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Congleton	7%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Crewe	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Knutsford	6%	6%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Macclesfield	15%	15%	14%	13%	13%	12%	12%
Nantwich	9%	8%	7%	5%	4%	5%	4%
Poynton	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Wilmslow	1%	-1%	-1%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
Total	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return and capacity data from School Organisation team and used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

- 8.3.3 The areas highlighted in red on Table 24 identify the LAPs with unused (surplus) places that are forecast to be below 4%. The main concerns are the Wilmslow and Crewe LAPs, which for 2010/11 indicated only 1% unused (surplus) in Wilmslow falling to -3% by 2016 and for Crewe, 7% falling to only 3% by the same period.
- 8.3.4 A further consideration must be the pattern of parental preference and maximising parental satisfaction with the admissions process, whilst also ensuring cost effective and sustainable provision across an area. For some areas the level of unused (surplus) appears sufficient and in line with the Local Authority's minimum target of 4%. However, in a number of cases, the unused (surplus) is confined to a small number of schools and this can present problems if the distance to a school with vacancies is unreasonable or demand for places is low. Furthermore, in some areas, vacancies are confined to particular year groups resulting in significant pressure for some cohorts.
- 8.3.5 The table below shows that at the secondary phase the overall unused (surplus) capacity of 5% is also inconsistent across LAPs. The unused (surplus) places in some areas are currently very low and well below the minimum 4% target.
- 8.3.6 The pattern of unused (surplus) places across LAPs is quite different to that for the primary phase, with all areas showing an increase in the number of unused (surplus) places across this period. Nevertheless, the number of unused (surplus) places are very low in the Wilmslow and Poynton LAPs but with forecasts indicating a reduction in the number of pupils between 2011-2016.

Table 25. Secondary School Unused (Surplus) Places by LAP

	Secondary % Unused (Surplus) Places						
Local Area Partnerships	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Congleton	2%	2%	4%	7%	8%	10%	11%
Crewe	11%	13%	15%	17%	19%	18%	17%
Knutsford	16%	18%	20%	22%	22%	22%	22%
Macclesfield	-4%	-4%	-2%	0%	1%	2%	2%
Nantwich	10%	12%	14%	16%	18%	18%	18%
Poynton	-3%	-4%	-2%	1%	2%	3%	6%
Wilmslow	-1%	-2%	-1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Total	4%	5%	6%	8%	10%	11%	11%

Data Sources: 2011 January School Census, forecasts from Performance & Data team used in DfE 2011 SCAP return and capacity data from School Organisation Team and used in DfE 2011 SCAP return

- 8.3.7 The areas highlighted in red on Table 25 identify the LAPs with unused (surplus) places that are forecast to be below 4%. It should be noted that following the review of secondary provision in the Macclesfield LAP between 2009 and 2011, Macclesfield High School closed on 31 August 2011 and has been replaced by a 600 place 11-16 Academy on the same site. The reduction in the number of places on this site from 900 to 600 reduced the level of unused (surplus) places across the Macclesfield LAP and the overall level for Cheshire East. The main area of concern is Wilmslow with the one high school serving this area having insufficient capacity to meet current and future demand.

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9 Conclusion

- 9.1. The Local Authority has already begun to experience difficulties in some areas arising from an insufficient number of primary school places due to a very small margin between the supply of school places and increased demand due to population changes and changes in live births. In particular, pressure on school places at the normal point of entry into the reception class has meant that for admission into the reception year groups, some schools have been requested to admit above the Published Admission Number to ensure provision at a reasonable distance for some families. Removal into the area during the school year has also presented problems for these areas with most year groups being full.
- 9.2 In order to address the current shortfall in the number of primary school places, measures have already been taken to deliver additional capacity for September 2012 in some areas. These measures have been implemented as a matter of priority ahead of the adoption by the Local Authority of this School Organisation Plan to ensure that the Local Authority can meet its strategic duty as commissioner of school places. Once adopted, this Plan will inform all future procedures in relation to school place planning. With population forecasts indicating increasing pupil numbers between the age range 5-10 years over the coming years, further more detailed analysis is required at a more local level. This process will be reported in the Annex to this School Organisation Plan.
- 9.4 The Department for Education has published (December 2011) national projections for the number of pupils in schools by type of school and age group using the latest mid-2010 based National Population Projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which were released in October 2011 and covering the period up to 2020. The statistics are presented as the latest available findings and have been released to help planning, to study trends and to inform a variety of programmes and initiatives. The release is the first time that the impact of the mid-2010 based projections on future pupil numbers has been presented. The projections (published online at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001051/index.shtml>) indicate that,
- Overall pupil numbers (aged up to and including 15) in state-funded schools began to increase in 2011 and are projected to continue rising;
 - Numbers in maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools started increasing in 2010 and are expected to continue rising. By 2020, numbers are projected to be 20 per cent higher than in 2011, reaching levels last seen in the early 1970s;
 - By 2015, pupil numbers in maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools are projected to increase by 10 per cent. The number of pupils aged 5 to 6 will increase by 10 per cent. For pupils aged 7 to 10, a 9 per cent increase is projected over the same period;
 - State-funded secondary school rolls of pupils aged under 16 have been in decline since 2004 and are expected to decline further until around 2016, when the increases in primary pupil numbers will start to flow through;
 - By 2015, state-funded secondary pupil numbers aged under 16 are expected to be 5 per cent lower than in 2011;

- State-funded secondary pupil numbers aged 16 and over have risen every year since the mid-1990s. By 2013 (the latest year for which data is available) they are projected to be around 8,000 higher than in 2011;
 - These projections are based on the Office for National Statistics' principal assumptions about levels of fertility, mortality and migration and their impact on the school-aged population.
- 9.5 The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011) shows an annual growth in live births of 2.4 per cent. (Total figures are for England and Wales) Data indicates that there were 723,913 live births in England and Wales in 2011, compared with 723,165 in 2010 (a rise of 0.1 per cent) and 594,634 in 2001. The small rise in 2011 represents a continuation of the increasing numbers of live births recorded since 2001. During this period the number of live births has risen by 22 per cent from 594,634 in 2001 despite a small fall between 2008 and 2009.
- 9.6 The national picture of a rising birth rate over the last six to seven years has already required additional primary provision in many authorities. By 2014/15, it will start to be significant for some secondary schools.
- 9.7 New housing developments are an obvious potential source of increased demand for school places. However, there is more uncertainty about the pace and impact of development in the current (2011/12) economic climate. The issue for the Local Authority is therefore when to introduce additional school places to address any potential change arising from new housing, recognising that increasing capacity in an area can create unnecessary pressures, such as competition between local schools, if the new housing is not delivered. This risk has to be balanced against the risk of having insufficient places to meet demand arising from any known new housing proposals.
- 9.8 A key priority for this Authority must therefore be to establish, as far as possible, accuracy of predictions and develop effective forecasting methodology.
- 9.9 It is, however, recognised that there are difficulties in planning effectively when demand for school places is driven by school reputation and parental preference, which can be volatile. Furthermore, the proportion of parents currently accessing school places in neighbouring local authorities may also change as unused (surplus) places reduce in those authorities and create an unknown additional pressure within the home authority. Changes in patterns of housing may also impact out-of authority provision.
- 9.10 There is general acceptance across local authorities that forecasting by moving cohorts forwards through time, and working from birth data to establish the likely starting population, is a sensible starting point.
- 9.11 One of the key issues for this Local Authority is the need to fully understand recent trends, including increasing births and population changes and to produce analysis at a local level in order to plan school places effectively. This involves consideration of when and where growth in the birth rate requires changes to primary and secondary provision, how population movement, both migration (new arrivals) and local (within and between areas) is changing the pattern of demand for places, and how major changes in the housing market and uncertainty over new developments inform planning.