

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTION POLICY

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Northumberland County Council Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy

1. Introduction

The provision of quality education is at the heart of sustainable communities and therefore is a fundamental consideration of all new housing developments. Where a new housing development is forecast to create a demand for school places in excess of those available in the catchment area of the development, the local authority will seek an education contribution from developers that reflects the likely costs of the additional places required.

A contribution will be sought where a school's actual pupil population is at 95% or more of its maximum capacity, the 5% figure is used by the Council for contingency planning for example to allow for an unexpected influx of new pupils, managing year to year fluctuations in numbers, and consequential impact of parental preference etc.

Due to this impact, without any mitigating education contribution, an objection to the planning application will be made as this will adversely affect the Council's ability to deliver its statutory services.

The education contribution is sought under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and is consistent with Northumberland County Council's obligation to ensure that every child living in the county is able to access a mainstream school place if they want one.

It is accepted that there are limitation on the use of planning obligations and these may only be used where the obligation is:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Northumberland would also seek to be transparent in relation to both how the proposed obligation is calculated, drawing on key pieces of information already in the public domain. This should assist all parties in being able to assess the likely amount and impact of any obligation at an early stage in the process.

2. Admissions Policy

To this effect the Contribution Policy will be significantly influenced by the Council's Admissions Policy, in order to decide the appropriate catchment area schools, and whether sufficient capacity exists within them to incorporate the likely numbers of new pupils arising from any new development.

The Council's Admissions Policy is consistent with the Department for Education's School Admissions Code, and is contained with the School Admissions Handbook, available online at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Admissions.aspx#admissionpolicies>

Separate handbooks, containing information on the respective admissions policies are maintained for:

- First and Primary Schools; and
- Middle, High and Secondary Schools

It must be remembered that it is not necessarily the Council that sets and manages admissions policies, for each school this is set by the respective Admissions Authority. The respective Admissions Authority for each type of school is shown in the table below:

Type of School	Admissions Authority
Community	Local Authority
Voluntary Controlled	Local Authority
Voluntary Aided	School Governors
Foundation / Trust	School Governors
Academies	Academy Trust

Northumberland County Council sets an Admission Policy which is adopted by Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. While we will make every effort to work on a co-ordinated basis with other schools, they are under no obligation to adopt the same policy or use the same criteria, in part or in whole.

Admission Criteria

When a school is oversubscribed (i.e has more applications than places available), the national School Admissions Code requires that priority of admission is given to :

- Children with a Statement of Special Education needs or Education Health and Care (EHC) plan who have the specific school named in the plan; or

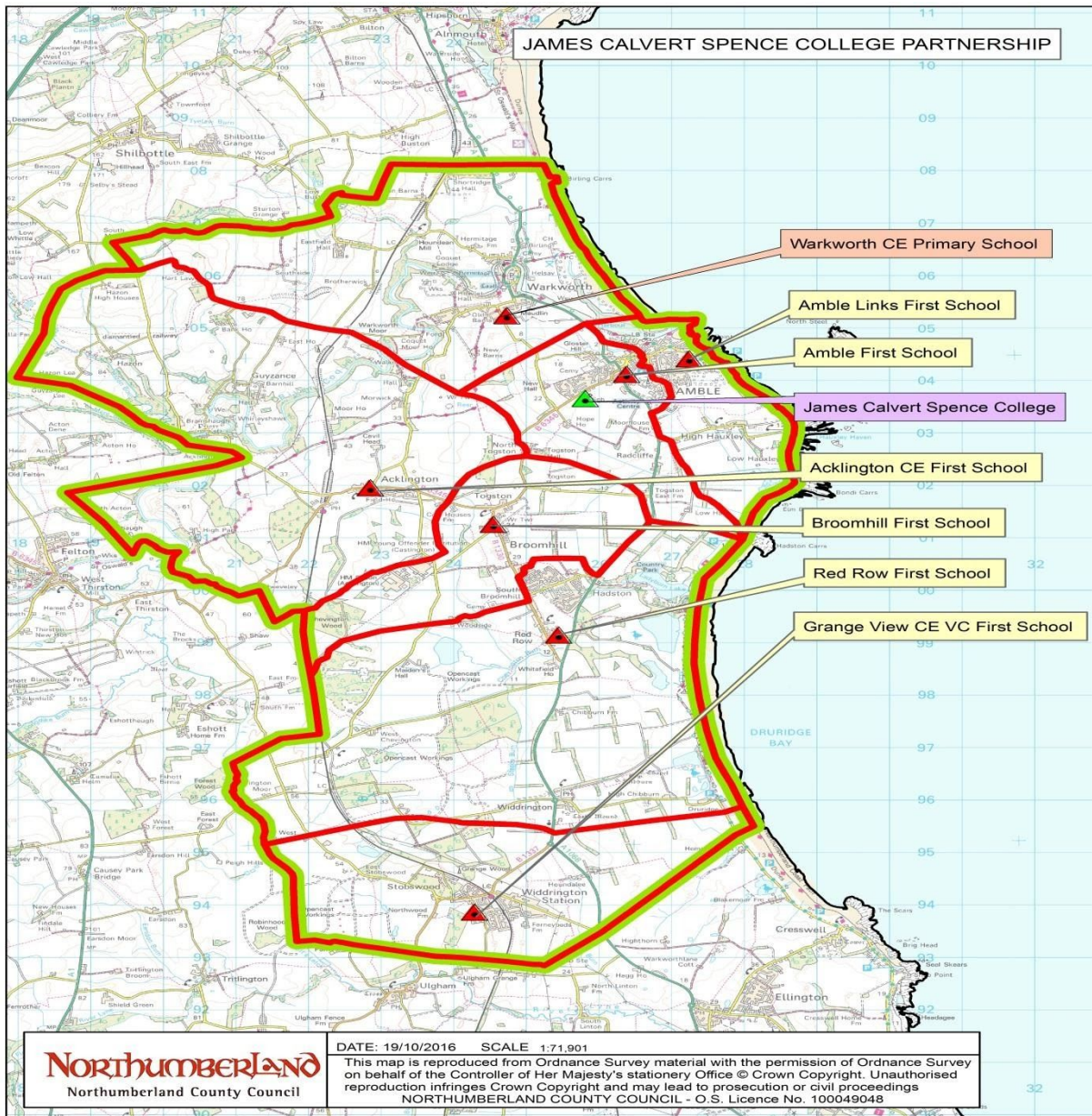
- Children who are “looked after” or have previously been “looked after”.

Remaining applications are determined on the basis of set of criteria, of which the next is whether or not a child is resident in, or has firm evidence that they will be living in the **catchment area** at the admissions date. The relevant catchment area for a school can be checked on Northumberland’s digital mapping service, available at :

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Maps/Digital-maps.aspx#listofalldigitalmappingsservicesavailableinnorthumberland>

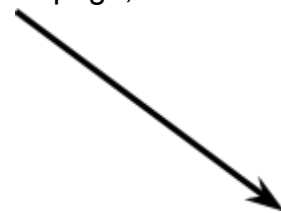
Under this menu, see “Map of Schools”. This shows the county divided by School Catchment area.

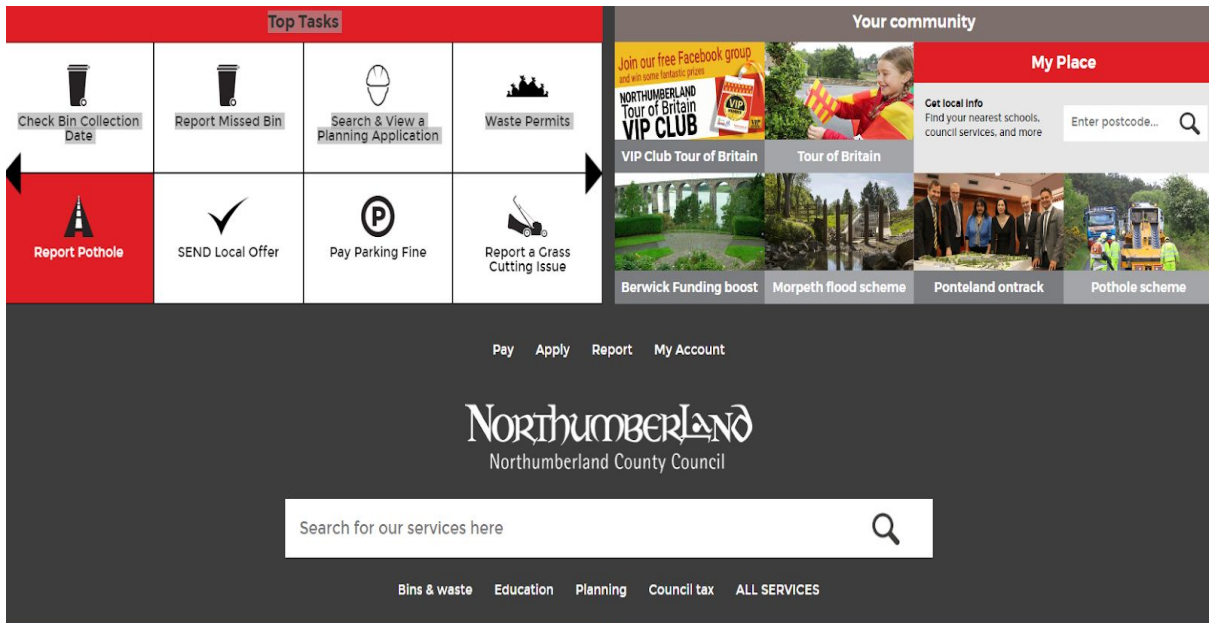
An example of this is shown below, for the Coquet / James Calvert Spence College partnership to demonstrate the relationship between primary (**red**) and secondary (**green**) catchment areas :



Alternatively the relevant catchment area schools can be identified by entering the relevant postcode on the “My Place” area on the Council home page, at :

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Home.aspx>





Find your nearest schools, council services, and more...

Find Address

House

Postcode

County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Commercial, Community Services, Community Service Centres

- ⊕ Business Rates
- ⊕ Election and Voting
- ⊕ Elected Representatives
- ⊕ Conservation
- ⊕ Environment
- ⊕ Planning Applications and Appeals
- ⊕ Building Control
- ⊕ Land Registry
- ⊕ Bins, Recycling and Waste Disposal
- ⊕ Schools and Education
- ⊕ Roads, Streets and Transport
- ⊕ Census
- ⊕ Crime



● Schools and Education

First School

School: **Morpeth First School**
Contact: **Miss Elaine Reay (HEAD)**
Telephone: **01670 512893**
EmailAddress: **Admin@morpethfirst.northumberland.sch.uk**
YearRange: **0 to 4**

Other: **OFSTED**
Data Dashboard
Statistics

Middle School

School: **Morpeth Newminster Middle School**
Contact: **Mr Simon Taylor (HEAD)**
Telephone: **01670 513621**
EmailAddress: **newminster@the3rivers.net**
YearRange: **5 to 8**

Other: **OFSTED**
Data Dashboard
Statistics

High School

School: **The King Edward VI School**
Contact: **Mr Simon Taylor (HEAD)**
Telephone: **01670 515415**
EmailAddress: **kevi@the3rivers.net**
YearRange: **9 to 13**

Other: **OFSTED**
Data Dashboard
Statistics

Having identified the correct schools within the catchment area for the development, it is only these schools that will be used to assess whether there is sufficient school capacity in order to accommodate the likely number of pupils generated by the development, i.e the “**pupil yield**”.

3. Methodology

In line with the restrictions on the use of planning obligations a contribution will only be sought where there are insufficient school places in the catchment area schools of the development.

If it is found that insufficient school places exist, an appropriate level of contribution will be calculated that takes due account of :

- The size of the development;
- Current and forecast school numbers;
- Likely pupil yield;
- The need to manage capacity and retain some flexibility in the system;
- Local and National information in relation to cost factors for the respective type of pupil places.

Where it is necessary to make assumptions in relation to inform the respective calculation these factors will be subject to annual review, to ensure their ongoing accuracy.

The Council's need to retain a certain degree of capacity for place planning and management has also already been highlighted and an allowance of 5% will be factored for this purpose.

At the consultation stage in relation to a potential development, the respective schools within the catchment area for the development will be identified, and consideration given as to whether they have sufficient capacity to manage the numbers of new pupils likely to be generated by the development. The current number of pupils attending, compared to the maximum capacity of the school is a key consideration in this respect.

An estimate of the likely is calculated by applying the estimated pupil yield arising in relation to the development. Current data suggests this is just under 3 children per year group for Primary and Secondary education. The specific ratios used are shown in the example calculation table below, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

For a 500 home development, the anticipated number of new pupils generated would be calculated as follows:

Phase	Yield	No of Houses	No of Years	PUPILS (Rounded)	LESS 3% SEN (Rounded)	Final Pupil Split
Primary	0.02714	500	7	95	3	92
Secondary	0.02286	500	5	57	2	55
SEN	3% of pupils generated – see Section 4			5	0	5

However, in keeping with the 3 key principles, a charge will only be levied when catchment area schools cannot accommodate the additional anticipated pupil yield.

If additional school places are likely to be required an appropriate charge will be calculated, depending on whether primary or secondary school places are required, up to Year 11 pupils aged 16.

Despite the extension of the mandatory education age to 18, no charge is currently made in relation to post 16 (Year 12 or 13) students because a number of education options may be available, not all of which will necessarily be school based.

The respective primary and secondary contribution per pupil place is calculated by reference to standard area spaces requirements of 6 m² (primary) and 8m² (secondary) multiplied by an estimated total build costs per metre. Both the space per individual additional pupil and the space requirements have been identified by reference to the National School Delivery Cost Benchmarking study¹, produced in conjunction with the Department for Education, Infrastructure and Projects Authority and the Local published in Feb 2017 which identifies new development gross costs per m² in excess of £3,000.

On the basis of both this and comparable local data the figure of £3,000 per m² will be used as the basis for calculations. Sample calculations for a 500 unit development are shown below, following on from the pupil yield calculations above :

Phase	Number of Pupils	Area (m ²)	Gross or Total Cost per m ²	Contribution Per Pupil (£)	Total Contribution
Primary	92	6	£3,000	18,000	1,656,000
Secondary	55	8	£3,000	24,000	1,320,000
Total for Primary and Secondary contribution					2,976,000

The “Total Cost” figure is cost represents the total capital cost of providing the places, not simply a “build cost” and is made up of the following elements:

Build Cost	£2,200.00
External Works	£500.00
Professional Fees	£150.00
FF&E	£100.00
ICT	£50.00
Total	£3,000.00

It is consistent with the term “Gross Cost per m²” used in the National School Delivery Cost Benchmarking study but does not include any element of land purchase costs. If

¹ The National School Delivery Cost Benchmarking study, published in February 2017 provides the results of a national cost benchmarking exercise. Funded by the Local Government Association(LGA) information has been shared with the Department for Education and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

land is required that is not owned by Northumberland County Council, then this can be considered as part of the discussions around the required contribution

4. Special Educational Needs:

It is a fact that approximately 3% of the school age population will have complex Special Educational Needs (SEN), as reflected in both local and national pupil numbers having EHC Plans. This accounts for approximately 1400 school age children in Northumberland. This does not include a wider group of children who do not have EHC plans, but are identified and recorded as needing additional SEN support. Taken together, this accounts for approximately 16% of the school age population.

At the same time Northumberland's Special Schools are at capacity, with pupil numbers showing 32 % growth over the last five years, as shown in the table below:

Special School	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Atkinson House	62	53	56	59	66
Barndale House	36	38	40	37	39
Cleaswell Hill	126	149	155	163	173
Collingwood School	105	129	145	137	137
Cramlington Hillcrest	46	56	58	62	74
Hexham Priory	61	65	77	78	89
The Dales School	68	73	76	76	89
The Grove School	36	39	42	43	45
TOTAL	540	602	649	655	712

Our maintained special schools are now at capacity. We are also placing children in out of county placements due to a lack of places. The placement costs arising from this is currently estimated as £4 million per year. We also spend over £4 million per year on SEN transport, both within and outside of the county but what this does not take into account are the long travel times and the impact has on our pupils.

In addition, the 2014/15 Ofsted Annual Report highlighted that in areas of Northumberland, pupils may need to travel long distances to access specialist provision (page 62, para 102).

Given that Northumberland's 8 maintained special schools are all either good or outstanding, the Council is keen to reverse the trend of increasing out of borough placements by increasing the capacity to provide quality SEN education within the county, and enable pupils to be educated within their communities.

An SEN contribution will therefore be requested as part of any Education s106 agreement, reflecting the need to develop the Council's capacity on a co-ordinated county wide basis.

This contribution will be calculated based specifically on the smaller cohort of pupils with more complex needs requiring EHC Plans, or previously SEN Statements. This will be examined in relation to the Ward for in which the development is proposed, and up to 3 neighbouring wards. On average it is anticipated that 3% of the pupil yield figure will be assumed to have complex SEN requirements as indicated by the requirement for an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

Following on from the example of the new 500 unit development shown above, the 5 SEN school places identified would result in the following SEN element within the s106 agreement :

Phase	Number of Pupils	Area (m ²)	Gross or Total Cost per m ²	Contribution Per Pupil (£)	Total Contribution (£)
SEN	5	33	£3,000	99,000	495,000

It is also noted that the term SEN covers a wide range of circumstances and requirements. Given that the SEN pupils included in the contribution calculation is now focussed on those with complex needs, the area figure used is drawn from the Department for Education's Building bulletin 104 *Area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision*. It is accepted that there can be a range of variations, in relation to whether new build, extension or refurbishment, and depending on any economies of scales arising from the size of the development, however these will be used as the basis for calculations, and will remain subject to annual review.

Due to the specific nature of a pupils SEN needs it is not always possible for these to be met from within the school catchment area, so it is anticipated that the Council will request no specifically that there is no geographical restriction as part of the s106 agreement.

5. Other considerations

Given the long term nature of some housing developments, as well as looking at capacity in terms of current school places and actual pupil numbers, it is important to consider potential longer term trends. Key influences in relation to this will be :

Birth data for the catchment area : If there are significant variations in birth data for the catchment area this may impact on pupil numbers.

Other housing developments : within a school catchment area there may be other schemes already under construction, or approved but not yet being built that will affect pupil numbers in future years. When assessing future demand for school places these elements will be considered.

Pupil data : Northumberland County Council receives a range of data in relation to education. Key to this is the school census data collected once a term. Not all of the data is made publicly available due to the factors such as data suppression where small and potentially identifiable numbers are involved (e.g SEN) however Ofsted publish overall school pupil data on a monthly basis, available to the public at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsted-school-inspections-outcomes>

Individual School data is available on the “School Level Data” sheet.

6. Timing of Payments

It is understood that the scheduling of payments in relation to the Education Infrastructure contribution will be part of an agreement in relation to the timing of the s106 payments overall. However the position in respect of the Education contribution is that a payment profile will be sought that reflects the Council’s need to deliver the additional school places during the course of the development. To reflect this, the default profile required will be in three equal parts, falling due : -

- On occupation;
- After 25% of the approved development’s housing units are complete; and
- After 75% of the approved development’s housing units are complete

7. Indexation & Review

Because of the extensive amount of time that can lapse between approval being given and time at which it is payable under the terms of the S106 agreement, the charge shall be index linked and subject to annual review, by reference to the Building Cost Information Services index .

The assumptions used in the calculation of the education contributions shall be reviewed annually to ensure they remain an accurate reflection of the likely costs to be incurred. Given the publication of the National Benchmarking Report in February it is proposed that the figures used are reviewed using the latest available data as at 1st March each year, and adopted from 1st April. Given the adoption of this policy during 2017/18, it is proposed that the first review of the figures will be based on 1 March 2019 data, with a view to adopt any revised assumptions from 1 April 2019 figures.

In order to provide some certainty and stability for potential developers, their advisers and the Council itself, the entire policy shall be reviewed on a 3 yearly cycle, with the first review to be completed by 31 March 2021.