

Pupil Place Planning Strategy 2023/24-2028/29 - Primary Schools

Introduction

Effective pupil place planning is a **fundamental element of the local authority's role as strategic commissioner of good school places**. It is under-pinned by the use of local area knowledge and data to identify any early warning signs of insufficient numbers of school places in specific parts of the authority, or where there may be too many places that impacts on the efficient use of resources. In the context of an increasing number of schools working within Trusts, the local authority must work with system partners including Trusts and Diocesan Boards to develop a strategic approach in response to the sufficiency of school places.

The DfE has recently published updated guidance for [making significant changes to an academy](#), which includes non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning and making organisational changes to academies.

The guidance sets out the sufficiency framework with clear expectations and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, academy trusts, diocesan boards and other partners in the context of strategic place planning. These expectations are centred around collaboration, transparency, and early engagement on pupil place planning. The framework seeks to systemise the place planning process whilst recognising there cannot be a strict 'one size fits all' approach. The guidance states:

"It is for local authorities, academy trusts and local partners to balance the supply and demand of school places, in line with changing demographics locally. The number of places available should be increased in response to need and reduced/repurposed where they are no longer required. Local factors need to be carefully weighed up, along with considerations of the quality, diversity and accessibility of local provision – and the longer-term forecast demand for places – to determine the most appropriate approach in each area. All partners should be mindful of the need to strike the right balance between protecting parental choice and recognising financial pressures facing individual schools."

The DfE has also published trust quality descriptions which define their expectations of what academy trusts will deliver¹. These include an expectation that trusts work collaboratively with schools, trusts, local authorities, dioceses, parents and other partners to ensure the delivery of statutory functions and working collaboratively with local authorities to support them in the delivery of their place planning responsibilities, which apply both to mainstream and to specialist provision.

Assessment of potential impact in Bury

This paper is produced in the context of the sustained decline in the birth rate, and the impact that this is likely to have on the demand for school places. It sets out the updated position with regards to the supply of school places across the borough, looking at forecast demand for the next five years across the primary phase.

Current and forecast demand for places

School Year	Pupil Capacity	Demand	Surplus capacity
2023/24	16280	15845	2.7%
2024/25	16280	15388	5.5%
2025/26	16280	14881	8.6%
2026/27	16280	14383	11.6%
2027/28	16280	13846	14.9%
2028/29	16280	13480	17.2%

Forecast Position by Planning areas

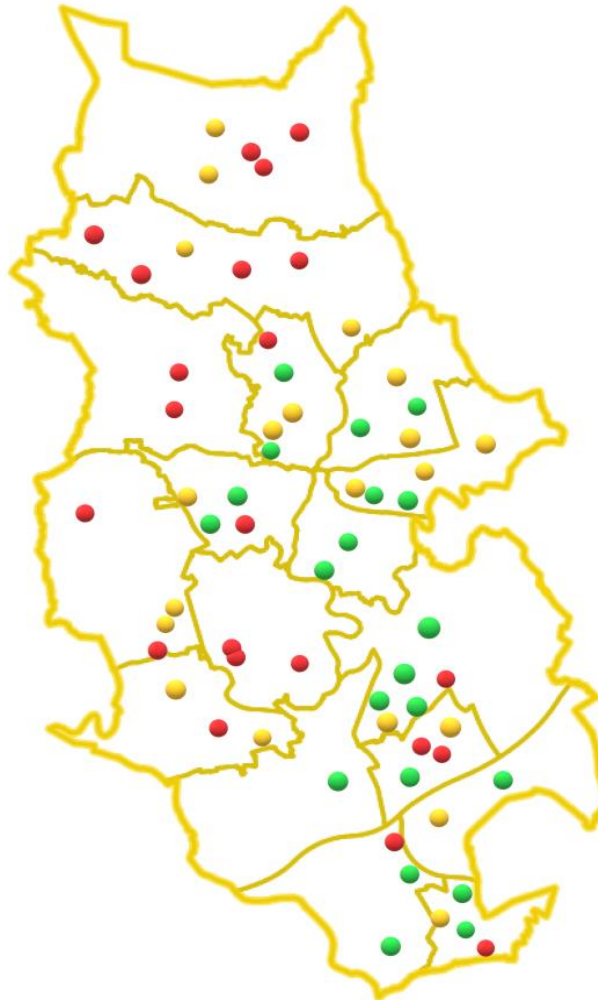
The impact of falling rolls is not felt consistently across the borough, with forecast surplus capacity by 2028/29 for each of the six planning areas showing significantly different impact:

Planning Area	2023/24	2028/29
• Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor	11.9%	30.5%
• Bury West	1.1%	18.3%
• Bury East	0.2%	9.2%
• Radcliffe	16.3%	35.1%
• Whitefield	6.8%	16.8%
• Prestwich	7.8%	15.9%

¹ Trust quality descriptions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-high-quality-trusts>

The map below shows the level of forecast surplus capacity in Primary Schools at 2028/2029

Red denotes over 25 % surplus capacity ●
Amber denotes between 11 and 25 % surplus capacity ●
Green denotes 10% and under surplus capacity ●



Draft Sufficiency Strategy

The draft strategy proposes a number of high-level ambitions/outcomes:

- That surplus capacity should not exceed 10% at LA level
- No school with forecast surplus capacity in excess of 25%
- No school with a deficit budget (or credible three-year recovery plan) through the life of the strategy (5 years)

Next Steps

Action	Who	Indicative Timescale
Confidential draft Strategy shared with Education Strategic Leadership Team for comment/input	ESLT	March 2024
Report to Executive	Stephen Holden/Paul Cooke	March 2024
Project Team established to collate additional relevant data	The team to comprise representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Assurance • Place Planning/Sufficiency • Early Years • HR • Finance • SEND, Access & Inclusion • Asset Management • Strategy, Planning & Development • Early Help 	April 2024
Programme of engagement with Key Partners Summary paper produced for wider circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy Trusts – MAT CEOs • Salford Diocese • Manchester Diocese • Professional Associations • DfE 	April/May 2024
Development of potential options in collaboration with partners that respond to the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team • Key Partners 	Summer Term 2024

Consultation on proposals		Autumn Term 2024
Further development of options		Spring Term 2025
Measures to work toward implementation		From Summer Term 2025 - Dependent upon individual solutions (see Statutory Processes section)

Factors for Consideration in the development of options

Published Admission Numbers

Throughout the borough, there are a number of schools that have irregular Published Admission Numbers (PANs) of 35/40 that can present challenges particularly when a school is not recruiting to that number. Primary schools have to comply with Infant Class Size legislation requiring classes of no more than 30 pupils in Key Stage 1 and so, whilst a school recruiting 30 pupils would require 3 classes with a commensurate teaching establishment, a school with a higher PAN recruiting 31 pupils would be required to have 4 classes. Reducing PANs is a means to reduce capacity and ensure more effective use of resources at school level in some circumstances.

Faith provision

Bury has a high proportion of faith schools serving the Anglican, Catholic and Jewish communities. When considering any reduction in the number of school places, there is an expectation that LAs maintain the proportion of faith school places across the borough.

Residential Development

Officers within the Department are working closely with colleagues in Strategy, Planning & Development to ascertain the impact of falling pupil rolls on the need for new provision linked to planned residential development, and are also working together on the Planning Policy Statement in respect of developer contributions to school places. Given the lengthy timescales for the proposed developments to be fulfilled, a wider long-term strategy (10-15 years) for the overall education estate will also be required.

Places for Everyone

A separate paper has been produced to look in detail at the cumulative effect of the development sites identified in the Places for Everyone Strategy on the supply and demand for school places. The forecasts shown in this paper do not include demand generated from these sites, because none of those sites have planning permission, and it is likely that a significant proportion of the demand generated from those sites will impact significantly beyond the five year planning window of this paper. Nevertheless, when developing a strategy in response to the forecast decline in pupil demand, consideration will be given to the likelihood and timing of future

development on these sites. It should also be noted that the scale of some of the proposed developments is such that they will need to be served by new schools appropriately located, and cannot rely on existing schools on the periphery of the development site.

The DfE has worked with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce pupil yield data for all local authorities in England and this data has been used to model the impact of proposed housing development, taking into account existing demand pressures and forecast pupil numbers. The DfE pupil yield dashboard has then been used to produce the pupil yield for each of the proposed housing developments.

The tables below show the trajectory of the proposed housing developments and resulting pupil yield over the next five years:

Places for Everyone (PFE) housing supply - next 5 years															
Development name	Planning area	Homes 2023/ 24	Primary yield	Homes 2024/25	Primary yield	Homes 2025/26	Primary yield	Homes 2026/27	Primary yield	Homes 2027/28	Primary yield	Homes 2028/29	Primary yield	Total Homes	Total Primary yield
Northern Gateway - Heywood/Pilsworth	Whitefield & Unsworth	0	n/a	0	n/a	25	6	35	9	35	9	35	9	130	33
Northern Gateway - Simister	Prestwich	0	n/a	0	n/a	30	8	80	20	130	32	150	37	390	97
Elton Reservoir	Bury West	0	n/a	0	n/a	100	25	140	35	170	42	170	42	580	144
Walshaw/Elton Brook	Bury West	0	n/a	0	n/a	45	11	120	30	135	34	150	37	450	112
Total PFE homes/yield		0	n/a	0	n/a	200	50	375	94	470	117	505	125	1550	386

Other residential development

Housing supply (excluding PFE) - next 5 years														
Planning area	Homes - 2023/24	Primary yield	Homes - 2024/25	Primary yield	Homes - 2025/26	Primary yield	Homes - 2026/27	Primary yield	Homes - 2027/28	Primary yield	Homes - 2028/29	Primary yield	Total Homes	Total Primary Yield
Ramsbottom, Tottington & North Manor	63	16	53	13	76	19	58	14	76	19	27	7	353	88
Bury West	35	9	41	10	30	7	15	4	20	5	2	0.5	143	35.5
Bury East	83	21	89	22	123	31	237	59	63	16	144	36	739	185
Radcliffe	36	9	102	25	147	37	184	46	162	40	136	34	767	191
Whitefield & Unsworth	5	1	24	6	12	3	4	1	5	1	32	8	82	20
Prestwich	57	14	30	7	23	6	14	3	17	4	54	13	195	47
Total housing supply (excluding PFE)	279	70	339	83	411	103	512	127	343	85	395	98.5	2279	566.5
Total including PFE allocation	279		339		611		887		813		900		3829	

Development of Specialist Provision

Whilst the pupil population continues to fall, the proportion of those children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those that go on to be assessed as requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased significantly.

It is evident nationally that the proportion of children and young people presenting with additional learning needs is increasing, in Bury this growth against an already high baseline in the numbers of EHCP's is creating significant demand for specialist places.

This demand is set against an historically low capacity comprising a small number of Specialist Resourced Provision Units linked to mainstream schools, and two special schools. Consequently, the local authority is reliant on the use of independent non maintained special schools to meet the needs of a large number of children and young people requiring a special school place.

The Council has developed a specialist place sufficiency strategy that seeks to ensure access to a high quality continuum of provision, enabling the majority of children and young people with additional needs to access local provision, with appropriate capacity and resources to meet need. This includes the establishment of two new special schools through the DfE Special Free School Programme, expansion of Millwood Primary Special School, and an increase in the number of Specialist Resourced Provisions

in mainstream schools. With surplus capacity in mainstream provision, this provides an opportunity to further develop the specialist offer by utilising surplus accommodation.

Development of Early Years Provision

In the spring budget of 2023, the Chancellor announced that funded childcare hours would be extended to children of eligible working parents in England from nine months old to support increased parental engagement in the labour market. The measures announced will expand the existing system by offering up to 30 funded hours of childcare per week over 38 weeks of the year to children aged nine months and over whose parents meet the same income eligibility criteria as applied to the existing 30 hours entitlement for three and four-year-olds. The policy will have a phased rollout, with 15 hours per week for 38 weeks a year offered to eligible two-year-olds from April 2024 and to eligible children under two from September 2024. The new entitlement will be offered in full with effect from September 2025.

This suggests that there is an opportunity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility, utilising surplus accommodation. The demand for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

Wraparound Childcare Programme

In March 2023, the Chancellor announced a new national wraparound childcare programme to support families to access wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm, providing local authorities with funding to set up and expand wraparound provision for primary school aged children from September 2024.

Wraparound childcare is childcare that ‘wraps around’ the conventional school day. It can also refer to provision in the school holidays. Provision can be offered by schools and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers (including childminders and early years settings) and can be run on a school site or at another setting in the area. The demand for potential additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

The Changing Educational Landscape in Bury

A separate paper has been produced providing an update on the changing school landscape across Bury. It is written in the context of anticipated shift in proportion of schools operating within Trusts, with currently approximately 30% of Bury schools being Academies, but expected to rise to in excess of 50% by the end of the 2023/24 academic year, and the trajectory of conversions will continue into 2024/25, potentially rising to 80%.

In setting out its agenda for strong leadership and governance of schools, the Government believes that the consolidation of existing MATs, growing in size to provide sustainability, rather than supporting the establishment of new MATs is the way forward. More recently, the DfE has published guidance on commissioning high quality trusts which builds on this.

In addition, the Diocesan Education Authorities have determined their own frameworks, placing stipulations on the basis by which CE & Catholic schools can join Trusts. This will influence the trajectory for faith schools. From Salford Diocese, the stipulation is that all Catholic schools in Bury will join the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust, alongside Catholic schools in Bolton and Rochdale. The Diocese has set out an indicative programme of conversion for Bury schools between now and 2026. Manchester Diocese academy strategy is less prescriptive in that CE schools should join one of the approved faith Trusts for which it has responsibility.

Crucially, the LA is the one organisation that has responsibility for place, both understanding the local context of communities and the schools that serve those communities, and being able to represent the wider interests of Bury and its residents

Included within the statutory duties of the local authority is the sufficiency duty to ensure the supply of sufficient high quality school places to meet the needs of the resident population. This potentially means provision of additional capacity where it is needed, in the form of extension to existing schools or academies or through the Free School programme, or the removal of places where there are too many places and falling school rolls. This latter aspect will become more critical given the current trajectory of falling rolls in primary schools. Furthermore, considering the longer term financial viability of individual schools will be a significant factor in Trusts' due diligence within the conversion process. There is a risk that without intervention in response to falling rolls, some schools will be perceived as being unsustainable and, as a consequence may be 'left behind' as schools join Trusts.

Pupil Forecast Planning Areas

For the purpose of analysis and planning for primary provision, the borough is divided into a number of planning areas which are agreed annually with the DfE for the purpose of the Annual School Capacity Survey (SCAP) return. This approach is consistent with other LA's, with 2,553 primary planning areas across 152 local authorities, each with typically between six and ten schools.

Guidance from the DfE states that effective pupil place planning is a fundamental element of the local authority's role as strategic commissioner of good school places. It is underpinned by the use of local area knowledge and data to identify any early warning signs of insufficient numbers of school places in specific parts of the authority. The basic unit of this local knowledge is the 'pupil planning area': a group of schools within the local authority which is used for the purpose of assessing current and future pupil demand for school place provision.

The DfE understands that the aggregated planning area data does not provide full visibility of place pressures if pressure is being masked by surplus capacity in other areas of the authority. Data at a lower granular level is thus recommended to provide a more accurate picture of place pressure, hence the requirement for planning areas.

The LA methodology enables forecasting to individual school level. With each level of forecasting from overall primary, to planning area, and then to individual school, there is an increasing risk to the accuracy of those forecasts because of the impact of parental preference, with the popularity of a school potentially changing over time. As a result, whilst the overall forecast demand may remain accurate, the distribution of that demand across geographical areas and individual schools may change.

Furthermore, the individual planning areas should not be considered in isolation because when choosing a school, parents generally have little regard to those notional boundaries.

Therefore, whilst the following area-based analysis illustrates the impact on each area, if we were to propose maintaining no more than 10% surplus capacity at area level, this is purely a guide. Any proposals will need to have regard to impact across neighbouring planning areas.

Forecast Position by Planning areas

Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON AND NORTH MANOR PLANNING AREA			
EMMANUEL HOLCOMBE	VA	15	105
HAZLEHURST	NORTHERN EDUCATION TRUST	30	210
ST. JOSEPH'S R.C.	VA	30	210
ST. ANDREW'S C.E.	VC	35	245
PEEL BROW	VISION MAT	30	210
SPRINGSIDE	PRESTOLEE ACADEMY TRUST	35	245
SUMMERSEAT	EPWORTH EDUCATION TRUST	15	105
GREENMOUNT	COMMUNITY	35	245
HOLCOMBE BROOK	COMMUNITY	40	280
HOLLYMOUNT	VA	45	315
ST. MARY'S C.E. HAWKSHAW	VA	15	105
CHRIST CHURCH C.E. WALSHAW	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	35	245
TOTTINGTON PRIMARY	PRESTOLEE ACADEMY TRUST	45	315
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		405	2835

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTION INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON & NORTH MANOR PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	405	2835	336	338	323	337	377	397	391	2499
2024/25	405	2835	264	336	338	323	337	377	397	2372
2025/26	405	2835	267	264	336	338	323	337	377	2242
2026/27	405	2835	261	267	264	336	338	323	337	2126
2027/28	405	2835	252	261	267	264	336	338	323	2041
2028/29	405	2835	252	252	261	267	264	336	338	1970

If the principle of no more than 10% surplus capacity is applied to the planning area, this suggests the need to reduce capacity from 2835 places to 2188 places by 2028/9, an overall reduction of 647 places.

Applying the proposed target outcome of no school with greater than 25% surplus capacity, current forecasts indicate that by 2026 the majority of schools within the planning area would be impacted without intervention.

There is limited scope for residential development within the planning area that would be sufficient to impact on the forecast fall in pupil numbers, with the exception of those schools on the southerly boundary, particularly Christ Church, Walshaw and Tottington Primary, that will experience some increase in demand from the Places for Everyone development site in Walshaw. That site is expected to deliver 1,250 new homes, yielding up to 313 additional primary age pupils when fully developed over a ten year period. Assuming a start on site in 2025, the development will yield up to 112 primary age pupils by 2028/29. This has the potential to mitigate impact on those two schools, but some of the pupil yield arising from the development will also impact on Bury West.

The impact of this residential site will be considered when developing specific proposals, however it is unlikely to mitigate falling rolls for the majority of schools in this planning area.

Specialist provision (Resourced Provision) is being developed at Summerseat Methodist Primary School, responding to the school's strengths in SEN and inclusion, and utilising surplus accommodation.

By regularising Admission Numbers, reducing those schools with a PAN of 35/40 to a PAN of 30 would remove 210 places within the planning area once rolled out across all year groups.

Christ Church Walshaw have already formally consulted to reduce their PAN from 35 to 30 from their September 2025 intake.

Six of the thirteen schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision, although a number are operating significantly below capacity. This suggests that there is already capacity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility, but there may be an opportunity to develop new maintained nursery provision, utilising surplus accommodation, in the seven schools that don't currently have provision. The demand for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

Summerseat Methodist Primary School has also facilitated the establishment of private nursery provision located within its building, utilising surplus accommodation. This could not be established as a maintained nursery at the time given the schools Ofsted rating, but following an improved inspection outcome, the Trust now propose to re-establish the provision as a maintained nursery.

Six of the thirteen schools in the area are already operating within a Trust, with a number of other schools anticipated to convert within the next two years.

Bury West

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
BURY WEST PLANNING AREA			
ELTON PRIMARY	BURY COLLEGE EDUCATION TRUST	45	315
WOODBANK	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	40	280
OUR LADY OF LOURDES	VA	20	140
OLD HALL	COMMUNITY	30	210
CHANTLERS	COMMUNITY	35	245
GREENHILL	FORWARD AS ONE ACADEMY TRUST	35	245
GUARDIAN ANGELS	VA	30	210
LOWERCROFT	COMMUNITY	35	245
ST.STEPHEN'S	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	30	210
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		300	2100

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTION INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
BURY WEST PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	300	2100	271	290	277	303	299	309	327	2076
2024/25	295	2100	261	271	290	277	303	299	309	2010
2025/26	290	2100	234	261	271	290	277	303	299	1935
2026/27	290	2100	222	234	261	271	290	277	303	1858
2027/28	290	2100	219	222	234	261	271	290	277	1774
2028/29	290	2100	219	219	222	234	261	271	290	1716

If the principle of no more than 10% surplus capacity is applied to the planning area, this suggests the need to reduce capacity from 2100 places to 1906 places by 2028/29, an overall reduction of 194 places.

Applying the proposed target outcome of no school with greater than 25% surplus capacity, current forecasts indicate that by 2026 a minimum of two schools within the planning area would be impacted without intervention.

There is scope for residential development within this planning area. It is anticipated that Elton Primary and Lowercroft Primary will experience some increase in demand from the Places for Everyone development site in Walshaw. That site is expected to deliver 1,250 new homes, yielding up to 313 additional primary age pupils when fully developed over a ten-year period. Assuming a start on site in 2025, the development will yield up to 112 primary age pupils by 2028/29. Some of the pupil yield will also impact on Ramsbottom, Tottington & North Manor planning area.

Chantlers, Greenhill, Lowercroft and St Stephen's will experience some increase in demand from the Places for Everyone development site at Elton Reservoir. That site is expected to deliver 3,500 new homes, yielding up to 875 additional primary age pupils when fully developed. Assuming a start date in 2025, the development will yield up to 144 primary age pupils by 2028/29. Some of the pupil yield will also impact on Radcliffe planning area. The size of that development is such that it will also require additional capacity more appropriately located within the development.

Elton Primary School has a 10 place specialist unit for hearing impaired pupils. A 10 place Resourced Provision for Key Stage 2 pupils has been established at Our Lady of Lourdes, with a further 10 places planned for Key Stage 1 pupils. Specialist Resourced Provision is also being developed at Chantlers and Woodbank Primary Schools. This helps the financial sustainability of these schools but does not remove surplus capacity.

By regularising Admission Numbers, reducing those schools with a PAN of 35/40 to a PAN of 30 would remove 175 places within the planning area once rolled out across all year groups. Both Greenhill and Lowercroft have already formally consulted to reduce their PANs from 35 to 30, Greenhill will reduce to 30 for the September 2024 intake and Lowercroft will reduce to 30 from their September 2025 intake.

Six of the nine schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision and there is a private nursery on site at Old Hall.

Four of the nine schools in the area are already operating within a Trust, with a number of other schools anticipated to convert within the next two years.

Bury East

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
BURY EAST PLANNING AREA			
CHESHAM	NORTHERN EDUCATION TRUST	45	315
ST.JOHN WITH ST.MARK	VC	45	315
ST.JOSEPH AND ST.BEDE	ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA CAT	45	315
ST.PAUL'S	VA	30	230
EAST WARD	VISION MAT	60	420
FAIRFIELD	COMMUNITY	30	235
HOLY TRINITY	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	30	210
ST.THOMAS'	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	60	360
ST.MARIE'S	VA	30	210
ST.LUKE'S	VC	60	420
ST.PETER'S	VC	30	210
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		465	3240

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTION INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
BURY EAST PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	465	3240	453	466	436	468	466	474	471	3234
2024/25	465	3240	436	453	466	436	468	466	474	3199
2025/26	465	3240	385	436	453	466	436	468	466	3111
2026/27	465	3240	403	385	436	453	466	436	468	3047
2027/28	465	3240	398	403	385	436	453	466	436	2978
2028/29	465	3240	398	398	403	385	436	453	466	2940

Over the years Bury East has seen steady inward migration and it is an area where pupil demand remains consistently high. Bury East has been a particular ‘hot spot’ due to the extremely high demand for places mainly from international new arrivals due to low residential rental values in the area.

At school level, no individual school will have forecast surplus places in excess of 25%.

There is scope for some residential development within this planning area, with a potential cumulative yield of around 185 primary aged pupils over the next five years.

Five of the eleven schools in the area are already operating within a Trust, and it is anticipated that a number of others will convert within the next two years.

Nine of the eleven schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision, with places available. This suggests that there is already capacity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility. The need for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

All schools in this planning area have already regularised their Admission Numbers.

Radcliffe

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
RADCLIFFE PLANNING AREA			
RADCLIFFE PRIMARY	BURY COLLEGE EDUCATION TRUST	50	350
ST. ANDREW'S CE RADCLIFFE	VA	30	210
WESLEY METHODIST	EPWORTH EDUCATION TRUST	45	315
CHRIST CHURCH AINSWORTH	VC	35	245
GORSEFIELD	FORWARD AS ONE ACADEMY TRUST	60	420
RADCLIFFE HALL	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	45	315
ST. MARY'S R.C. RADCLIFFE	VA	60	420
CHAPELFIELD	COMMUNITY	45	280
CAMS LANE	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	30	210
ST. JOHN'S CE RADCLIFFE	SYCAMORE CE TRUST	30	210
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		430	2975

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTIO N INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
RADCLIFFE PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	430	2975	302	344	361	369	355	381	377	2489
2024/25	430	2975	262	302	344	361	369	355	381	2374
2025/26	430	2975	278	262	302	344	361	369	355	2270
2026/27	430	2975	266	278	262	302	344	361	369	2181
2027/28	430	2975	241	266	278	262	302	344	361	2053
2028/29	430	2975	241	241	266	278	262	302	344	1933

If the principle of no more than 10% surplus capacity is applied to the planning area, this suggests the need to reduce capacity from 2975 places to 2147 places by 2028/29, a reduction of 828 places.

Applying the proposed target outcome of no school with greater than 25% surplus capacity, current forecasts indicate that by 2025 a minimum of four schools within the planning area, rising to six schools by 2028, would be impacted without intervention.

There is scope for residential development within the planning area that may impact on the forecast fall in pupil numbers. St Andrew's, Wesley, Gorsefield and St Mary's will experience some increase in demand from the Places for Everyone development site at Elton Reservoir. That site is expected to deliver 3,500 new homes spanning a largely undeveloped area, yielding up to 875 additional primary age pupils when fully developed. Assuming a start date in 2025, the development will yield up to 144 primary age pupils by 2028/29. It is anticipated that some of the pupil yield will also impact on Bury West planning area. The size of that development is such that it will also require additional capacity more appropriately located within the development.

The impact of this residential site will be considered when developing specific proposals.

In addition to the PfE development, there is further scope for residential development within this planning area, with a potential cumulative yield of around 191 primary aged pupils over the next five years.

By regularising Admission Numbers, reducing those schools with a PAN of 35/50 to a PAN of 30/45 would remove 70 places within the planning area once rolled out across all year groups.

Eight of the ten schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision with places available. This suggests that there is already capacity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility. The need for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

Six of the ten schools in the area are already operating within Trusts, with a number of other schools anticipated to convert within the next two years.

Whitefield & Unsworth

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
WHITEFIELD & UNSWORTH PLANNING AREA			
ST. BERNADETTE'S	VA	45	315
ALL SAINTS	VC	30	210
BURY & WHITEFIELD JEWISH	VA	30	210
HOLLINS GRUNDY	COMMUNITY	30	210
SUNNYBANK	VISION TRUST	30	210
UNSWORTH	OAK LEARNING PARTNERSHIP	30	210
RIBBLE DRIVE	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	30	210
ST. MICHAEL'S	ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA CAT	30	210
WHITEFIELD	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	30	168
MERSEY DRIVE	COMMUNITY	30	175
HIGHER LANE	VISION TRUST	66	462
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		381	2590

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTION INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
WHITEFIELD & UNSWORTH PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	381	2590	342	344	327	351	345	340	366	2415
2024/25	381	2590	332	342	344	327	351	345	340	2381
2025/26	381	2590	298	332	342	344	327	351	345	2339
2026/27	381	2590	290	298	332	342	344	327	351	2283
2027/28	381	2590	275	290	298	332	342	344	327	2207
2028/29	381	2590	275	275	290	298	332	342	344	2155

If the principle of no more than 10% surplus capacity is applied to the planning area, this suggests the need to reduce capacity from 2590 places to 2394 places by 2028/29, a reduction of 196 places.

Applying the proposed target outcome of no school with greater than 25% surplus capacity, current forecasts indicate that by 2026 a minimum of three schools within the planning area would be impacted without intervention.

By regularising Admission Numbers, reducing those schools with a PAN of 35/40 to a PAN of 30 would remove 42 places within the planning area once rolled out across all year groups.

Six of the eleven schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision. This suggests that there is capacity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility, but there may be an opportunity to develop new maintained nursery provision in the five schools that don't currently have provision. This could utilize surplus accommodation. The need for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

Six of the eleven schools in the area are already operating within a Trust, with number of other schools anticipated to convert within the next two years.

Prestwich

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL CATEGORY (COMMUNITY/VC/VA, ACADEMY, UPCOMING ACADEMY)	ADMISSION NUMBER	ADMISSION CAPACITY
PRESTWICH PLANNING AREA			
HEATON PARK	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	60	420
ST. MARGARET'S	VC	35	245
BUTTERSTILE	COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY TRUST	60	410
OUR LADY OF GRACE	VA	60	345
ST. MARY'S C.E. PRESTWICH	VA	30	210
PARK VIEW	BURY COLLEGE EDUCATION TRUST	60	420
ST. HILDAS	VA	30	210
SEDGLEY PARK	COMMUNITY	40	280
TOTAL PAN/ADMISSION CAPACITY		375	2540

	AGREED CURRENT ADMISSION NUMBER	CURRENT ADMISSION CAPACITY	RECEPTION INTAKE 4+	5+ YR 1	6+ YR 2	7+ YR 3	8+ YR 4	9+ YR 5	10+ YR 6	NO. ON ROLL
PRESTWICH PLANNING AREA										
2023/24	375	2540	329	321	328	351	335	331	347	2342
2024/25	375	2540	301	329	321	328	351	335	331	2296
2025/26	375	2540	310	301	329	321	328	351	335	2275
2026/27	375	2540	276	310	301	329	321	328	351	2216
2027/28	375	2540	299	276	310	301	329	321	328	2163
2028/29	375	2540	299	299	276	310	301	329	321	2134

If the principle of no more than 10% surplus capacity is applied to the planning area, this suggests the need to reduce capacity from 2540 places to 2371 places by 2028/29, a reduction of 169 places.

Applying the proposed target outcome of no school with greater than 25% surplus capacity, current forecasts indicate that by 2027 a minimum of two schools in the planning area would be impacted without intervention.

By regularising Admission Numbers, reducing those schools with a PAN of 35/40 to a PAN of 30 would remove 105 places within the planning area once rolled out across all year groups. St. Margarets have already formally consulted to reduce their PAN from 35 to 30, they will reduce to 30 for the September 2024 intake.

Six of the eight schools in the area have maintained nursery classes delivering early years provision with places available. This suggests that there is already capacity to respond to any requirement for growth in Early Years provision resulting from national changes to early years eligibility, but there may be an opportunity to develop new maintained nursery provision in the two schools that don't currently have provision. This could utilise surplus accommodation. The need for additional provision would need to be tested against early years sufficiency more widely, including that provided by private, voluntary and independent providers.

Three schools in the area currently operate within a Trust with a number of other schools anticipated to convert within the next two years.

Sufficiency Strategy - Development of Proposals

Proposals will be developed in collaboration with key partners. In developing proposals that respond to the high-level ambitions/outcomes within the strategy, the following factors will be considered for each school:

- Pupil number demand and forecast, and surplus capacity at individual school level
- Financial analysis, including three/five year budgets based on forecast pupil numbers.
- Impact of individual school budget recovery plans – are the plans deliverable, sustainable, and what is the impact (ie teaching staff reductions)
- Performance, given the focus on sustainable high quality provision
- Location, and the proximity of other schools
- Condition of buildings, and implication of maintaining aging poor condition buildings
- Accessibility, and the importance of ensuring that access to buildings by those with disabilities is maintained.
- Faith, recognising the need to maintain the proportion of faith schools
- Trusts, recognising that Trusts with schools located in Bury will have a view on sustainability that may differ from the LA place based approach
- Likely impact of major residential growth (within reasonable timescales)

From this, a number of scenarios can be considered in order to develop proposals in conjunction with partners. This might include:

- Rationalisation of admission numbers – where this can enable more cost-effective use of resources
- Redesignation/re-use of accommodation for other purposes – eg. development of specialist provision/early years provision/early help/family hub
- Opportunities for revised governance/leadership models across groups of schools. eg executive Head/Head of school; hard federations; Trust Development
- School closure (amalgamation/merger)
- School closure (outright closure)

Consultation with key stakeholders:

- Executive
- Cabinet Member/ Elected Members
- Heads Reference Group/Strategic Education Board
- Diocesan Boards of Education
- School Leaders/Governing Bodies
- MAT CEO's
- DfE
- Professional Associations

Statutory Processes

Rationalisation of admission numbers

As the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools in Bury, the LA is responsible for determining their admission arrangements. Academies and voluntary aided schools are their own admissions authorities and as such are responsible for determining their own admission arrangements.

In accordance with the School Admissions Code (the Code), when changes are proposed to admission arrangements all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following school year. [The Code](#) sets out the process to be followed by admission authorities when proposing a decrease in Published Admission Number. Academies are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions.

Consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. ***Therefore any further proposed reductions in PAN could take effect for admissions to Reception in 2026 at the earliest.***

Making significant changes to schools and academies

The statutory processes regarding making significant changes (such as change of age range or establishment of specialist resourced provision) differ for LA maintained schools and Academies. [The School Organisation \(Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2013 \('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations'\)](#) set out the process to be followed for LA maintained schools, whilst academies are required to follow statutory guidance on [making significant changes issued by the Department for Education](#).

The statutory process for making prescribed alterations to maintained schools has four stages comprising the publication of a statutory notice followed by a representation period of formal consultation during term time, statutorily lasting four weeks. Ordinarily the LA will be the decision maker on such proposals, and proposals must be determined within two months following publication. If a decision has been made, any referral to the adjudicator must be made within 4 weeks of the decision, or if the local authority has not decided a proposal within 2 months, it must refer the proposal to the Schools Adjudicator. There is no prescribed timescale for implementation of proposals, however this must be as specified in the published statutory notice, subject to any modifications decided by the decision maker. Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that governing bodies and local authorities will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, to take into account all relevant considerations.

The DfE has recently updated its guidance on the processes to be followed by Academy Trusts proposing to make a significant change. Where the place planning process identifies a need to make 'significant' organisational changes to academies, the guidance sets out the process for academy trusts to make significant changes to the number, type or location of school places they offer.

'Significant changes' are those which may impact on the local school environment by creating, changing or removing the number and/or type of school places and/or where they are offered. Academy trusts must follow the required significant change process in advance of the change being made. Failure to do so will constitute a breach of the academy trust's funding agreement, which could result in further action taken by the department to address the breach. Applications should be submitted in good time, to allow for processing, to ensure that a decision can be made well in advance of when the change is planned to take effect. Local authorities may ask trusts to make changes to support them to fulfil their sufficiency duty. Where an academy trust has agreed to make a change that has been requested by the local authority, the trust must still follow the significant change process.

From April 2024 there will be three categories (or 'tiers') for the application and assessment process. Most significant changes are categorised as tier 1 (including removal of physical capacity, change of age range or adding a SEN unit or resourced provision). The application form requests core information about the change and asks key questions to determine the appropriate level of scrutiny required. Broadly speaking, where departmental checks confirm that the change is proposed by a strong school in a strong trust, has local support, there are no valid objections from the local authority, and (where applicable) evidence supports the need to increase/rationalise places, applications will move swiftly to approval. ***All changes requiring an application to the department also require a public consultation, which should be conducted ahead of the application being submitted.***

Reducing capacity includes taking space out of use, repurposing teaching space into non-teaching space, and closing additional sites. Local authorities and academy trusts are expected to work collaboratively to ensure the local school estate is managed efficiently and high levels of spare capacity are reduced or re-purposed where it would otherwise undermine the quality and financial viability of schools. Parental choice and other local factors should be carefully weighed up to determine the most appropriate approach in each area. The department will continue to support local authorities and trusts to work together to find appropriate local solutions, including repurposing existing accommodation.

In all cases, when applying to DfE trusts will be required to submit a written response from their local authority. Applications will be considered by the Department and determined by Regions Group and both the trust and the local authority will be informed that the change has been approved.

Closure

Given the scale of the challenges faced by the level of surplus capacity, it must be recognized that the need to bring forward proposals to close schools cannot be ruled out if this is considered to be the most appropriate solution.

The statutory processes regarding closure differ for LA maintained schools and Academies. Under s15 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006, a local authority can propose the closure of a community or voluntary school; and the governing body of a voluntary school may publish proposals to close its own school. The statutory process to be followed is set out in the [DfE Opening and closing maintained schools guidance](#). Alternatively, the governing body of a voluntary school may, subject to specified provisions, give the Secretary of State and the local authority at least 2 years' notice of their intention to close the school.

It is a statutory requirement to consult any parties the proposer thinks appropriate before publishing proposals to close a maintained school. The proposer may use the consultation to consider a range of options for the future of a school (e.g. amalgamation, academy conversion, federation or closure). However, the proposer must then

publish specific proposals. It is these specific proposals setting out details the school to be closed which can be commented on or objected to during the statutory representation period. It is for the proposer to determine the nature and length of the pre-publication consultation. It is best practice for consultations to be carried out in term time to allow the maximum number of people to respond. Proposers should have regard to the Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles² when deciding how to carry out the consultation period.

A statutory proposal should be published within 12 months of the initial consultation period being completed. This will be followed by a statutory four week representation period of formal consultation. Ordinarily the LA will be the decision maker on a school closure proposal, unless the closure proposal is 'related' to another proposal that is to be decided by the Schools Adjudicator. There is no maximum limit on the time between the publication of a proposal and its proposed date of implementation. However, decision makers should be confident the proposers have good justification (for example an authority-wide reorganisation) if they propose a timescale longer than 3 years.

DfE guidance sets out the process to be followed for [closure of an academy by mutual agreement](#). The guidance supports academy trusts to understand when the closure of an academy might be an appropriate solution to address standards and/or viability issues, including in areas where there are surplus places and there is no predicted increase in the need for places in the medium to long term.

Before deciding to close an academy, the academy trust and the DfE Regional Director (RD) should consider whether other types of changes, such as an academy transfer, amalgamation, or reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN) and/or reorganisation of the school estate more broadly, could provide a realistic alternative to academy closure.

Managing surplus capacity is about considering a range of options for the reutilisation and reconfiguration of space, and in some circumstances, closure. Mutually agreed closure can curtail prolonged decline in standards and viability, and as such, support better educational outcomes for pupils. Where there are low pupil numbers with limited prospect of increasing numbers through recruitment, academies should consider area-based solutions for removing surplus capacity, including: amalgamations with other local schools, reduction of PAN, the reutilisation of part of the academy premises for other purposes (such as nursery or special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision), or, where appropriate, academy closure. Local authorities have overall responsibility for local place planning and academy trusts play an important role in supporting local authorities to manage the school estate effectively. In the case of church schools, the diocese will work in partnership with the local authorities in place planning. If an academy trust is considering the future viability of its school, it will need to work collaboratively with RDs, local authorities, other academy trusts and academies, dioceses and the governing bodies of other schools in the area to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

The guidance sets out an expectation that academy trusts will work collaboratively with the DfE's Regional Directors (RDs) and local authorities, and – where applicable – trustees of the school and the appropriate religious authority. Just as it is important that academy trusts and (where relevant) dioceses support local authorities in providing additional places where they are needed, it is equally important that they support the removal of surplus capacity in the system, where there is no forecast increase in the need for school places in the medium to long term.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>