

Harry Stoke/ East of Harry Stoke Education Infrastructure Briefing

Background/ Purpose of Report

The residential developments at Harry Stoke (1232 units) and East of Harry Stoke (2011 units) will deliver a total of 3243 new houses and flats once the developments are complete. The majority of the development at Harry Stoke will be built out by 2026 whilst the development at East of Harry Stoke has significant levels of the housing being built out post 2026.

As part of the original planning permissions there were two schools designated for the sites: a 1-1.5 FE Primary School at Harry Stoke and a 3 FE Primary School at East of Harry Stoke. Discussions have recently been undertaken with the developer Crest Nicholson about education infrastructure across the sites and more specifically the need for the school at Harry Stoke. This purpose of this paper is to lay out considerations and make a recommendation about the education provision at these two adjacent development sites.

The original S106 dates back 15 years to 2007 at a time when we were in the midst of huge increases in the birth rates across South Glos and indeed the country, where it was clear that we would be needing to significantly increase the number of primary places in the county over the next decade and beyond. Subsequently, we have put in place additional primary school places either by expanding existing provision or by facilitating the provision of new primary schools to meet demand.

As with a lot of large-scale residential development the delivery of the units- and the subsequent child yield- is often later than was originally planned. The build out of both of these developments is coming to fruition later than originally envisaged at a time where birth rates are declining and despite quite high levels of residential development across the county our high-level primary projections are broadly static over the next 5 years. Whilst there is still increased demand in localised areas of high residential development this needs to be viewed alongside surplus places adjacent to new developments- in this case Harry Stoke and East of Harry Stoke. For primary schools we would assess demand in line with provision at other schools within 2 miles of the development. 5 years ago, this figure would have been minimal but with the decline in recent birth rates the surplus places numbers are higher meaning demand for additional places within 2 miles- the relevant planning area- is lower than originally expected.

Aside from the issue of demand for primary places there are significant funding constraints associated with the build out of these two schools. The original planning permissions for Harry Stoke and East of Harry Stoke detail financial contributions from the developer(s) towards primary places and whilst these are indexed in line with BCIS indices to account for inflation these contributions will not nearly meet the cost of building out two schools. To further compound the capital situation, Basic Need funding- the capital monies LA's receive from Department for Education to deliver additional school places- is severely limited now as this is driven by birth rates and school place projections which are in decline.

Summary of Demand Associated with the Development

Having reviewed the expected child yield figures arising from the current residential proposals at the two developments there is an estimated child yield of 776 Primary age children or some 3.7 Forms of Entry. The original proposal for a 1.5FE and a 3FE primary school on the two sites would provide 945 places.

The summer 2022 schools census shows that there were 323 surplus places in primary schools within 2 miles of the Harry Stoke and East of Harry Stoke sites. Furthermore, there are a further 210 primary school places that have been developed as part of the Frenchay Primary school redevelopment. Whilst there will be places required to meet demand from the Frenchay hospital site and other local development sites, even if we cautiously assume the additional places at Frenchay were to serve the hospital and other local developments the net demand for HS and EOHS taken against the surplus place figure (776-323) gives a yield of only just over 2 FE at 453.

Based on this child yield, census data and taking account of the fact that the primary projections over the next 5 years reflect an overall decline in birth rates it seems difficult to justify the need for two primary schools on the two sites where the current net projected position is showing demand for only 453 places. When planning school places, it is good practise to allow circa 3% surplus to deal with unexpected movement in numbers. By applying that principle to the capacity of schools within 2 miles of this development, this would create the need for a further 151 places.

Even taking this into account, this would only give a total of 604 places which could still be met by one 3 FE school (630 place)

Financial Considerations Associated with the 2 Schools

Construction costs for schools have risen considerably over the last 15 years and over the last 3 years inflation has been extraordinary. Even allowing for BCIS there is a considerable gap between the Section 106 developer contributions we will eventually receive.

The two 106 figures for Harry Stoke are 'either/or': if we go ahead with the 1.5 FE primary school on the Harry Stoke site, we would receive a contribution of 3.3m. In the event that we don't go ahead with the Harry Stoke school then the developer is required to contribute 2.2m to the provision of school places off site. However, please note that if we don't go ahead with the Harry Stoke school and the developer is able to build further residential units on the proposed school site then we would seek additional contributions to meet the demand arising from the additional development. Pupil yield figures as indicated earlier have assumed a worst-case yield figure of there being a further 66 units on the school site.

High level estimates for the schools are as follows:

School	Budget
1.5 FE at HS	9.7m
3 FE at EOHS	20.5m
Total	30.2m

S106 contributions from the developments (subject to indexation):

Site	£
East Of Harry Stoke	£8,553,825
Harry Stoke on site	3,300,000
Harry Stoke off site	2,200,000
Total incl On site	£11,853,825
Total incl Off Site	£10,753,825

As can clearly be seen there is- subject to indexation- a circa 18.35m funding gap if we were to proceed with the two schools and a circa 9.25m funding gap if we were just to proceed with a single 3FE school at East of Harry Stoke. Whilst the exact indexing figures are still to be identified even if the indexing since the final S106 agreement had been put in place gave an uplift of as much as 50% on the developer contributions this would still leave shortfalls of circa 12.4 million on the two-school option and 3.5m on the 1 school option.

Capital considerations aside, primary schools that are smaller than 2FE (420 place) are deemed difficult to sustain as the revenue funding arising from the Dedicated Schools Grants assumes economies of scale that often make it difficult for smaller schools to ensure financial health. This is reflected in the DfE policy position on new primary schools where they won't permit the opening of primary schools under 2 forms of Entry.

Conclusion

In light of the census, projections, birth rate and admissions data that has been reviewed; coupled with the significant financial implications of building out the schools as originally proposed, it is recommended that we only proceed with the development of one school on the East of Harry Stoke site to serve these two developments.

There are 323 surplus places within 2 miles of the two developments, 210 places at Frenchay and whilst there will be the need for circa 3FE in the medium term it is not envisaged that there will need to be a second school site. In the event that numbers rise considerably across the broader area around the developments (the scale of which would only really happen if we had a birth rate increase akin to the 2000's) then consideration could be given to expanding the EOHS school to 4FE or to expand another school within the 2-mile radius.

It is also worth considering that any new school will need to be approved by DfE Regions Group and that their policy position is that they will not open a school smaller than 2 Forms of Entry meaning it will be extremely unlikely that permission to open the 1.5FE school on the Harry Stoke site will ever be granted.

Recommendation:

It is therefore recommended that we build out only one of the two proposed primary school sites on the Harry Stoke and East of Harry Stoke sites and that this new school would be delivered on the East of Harry Stoke site.

It should be noted that the current recommendation is that this school should be built as a 630-place primary provision but depending on the programme for delivering the school this may need to be reconsidered in line with pupil projections at that time.

It should also be noted that the release of the Harry Stoke primary school site will enable the developer to increase the number of residential units on the overall development although this has been factored into projections within this report based on developer supplied residential figures.

Please also note that this will have knock on implications for home to school travel and it may be necessary to amend existing travel plans and highways requirements to ensure safe walking routes to school.

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