

REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING



Report Reference	COM-23-11
Meeting Date	30 th October 2023
Agenda Item	8
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

Action COM19 of the council's strategic plan set out to obtain information on current school places provision and subscription levels. This was linked to Aspiration 1 of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan:

ASPIRATION

Knutsford's strategic sites identified in the Cheshire East Local Plan will result in an increased demand on school places, applying further pressure on school provision.

The Town Council and other stakeholders are committed to working closely with Cheshire East Council and the local schools (who have the ultimate responsibility) within the Town (including, but not limited to, Academies, free schools and those managed by Cheshire East Council) to ensure that suitable provision of school places is available to accommodate both existing residents and future growth from the allocated strategic sites.

This will likely require the exploration of these issues, but are not limited to:

- *Amending catchment areas*
- *Improving and delivering new schools, classrooms and facilities*
- *Improving accessibility to schools for all ages and abilities through walking, cycling and the use of public transport, including exploring schemes such as walking buses and other measures to reduce the use of the car to take children to school.*

The Town Clerk obtained data from, and met with, the school places planning team at Cheshire East Council.

2.0 CURRENT SCHOOL PLACES DATA

There are two aspects to school admissions: entry into the first year of a school (Reception for primary, Year 7 for secondary) and in-year transfers. Each school has a published admission number (PAN) which is the number of pupils it can take at each year group. In Key Stage 1 (Reception/Y1/Y2) there is a limit of 30 children per class, for Key Stages 2-4, there is some discretion for each school to go beyond their PAN depending on the school's circumstances (e.g. teacher status, physical space etc).

Bexton is a 2 form entry school, Egerton and St Vincents are single form, and Manor Park is 1.5 form, with future capacity to go to 2 form. The data in table one highlights that Bexton and Egerton are both 'full' in most year groups whilst there is capacity in Manor Park and St Vincents in most year groups. This means a student moving to Knutsford would be able to be offered a place at a primary school in Knutsford.

	PAN	Number of pupils on roll							Total	NET CAP May 2023	Surplus places %
		R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6			
Knutsford Schools											
Bexton	60	51	60	60	60	60	60	60	411	420	2.1%
Egerton	30	30	30	30	29	30	30	30	209	210	0.5%
Manor Park School	45	29	29	30	31	34	33	38	224	315	28.9%
St Vincent's	30	30	30	24	29	28	28	29	198	210	5.7%
TOTAL	165	140	149	144	149	152	151	157	1042	1155	9.8%

Table One: Primary School census data January 2023

The PAN for the Academy was 270, it was reduced to 180 and subsequently increased to 220. It is possible the PAN could increase further in the future. Table two contains the census data for the Academy and Studio Schol, which show it is at/exceeding capacity in KS3, but has capacity in KS4/5. This may mean that students seeking to transfer into the Knutsford Academy would be unable to do so in KS3.

School Name	Number on Roll						6th Form		Total	NET CAP May 2023	Surplus places %
	PAN	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13			
Academy	220	230	220	249	192	187	108	81	1,267	1,606	21.1%
Studio School	75	NA	NA	NA	30	24	33	33	120	300	60.0%
TOTAL	295	230	220	249	222	211	141	114	1,387	1,906	27.2%

Table Two: Secondary School census data January 2023

Where Cheshire East Council is unable to place a student into a school within the vicinity, it will find a place for them in the next nearest school and if this exceeds three miles will provide transport for the student to attend that school. If the parent chooses an alternative school, transport is not provided.

Table three shows the allocations and preferences for the current school intake (Sept 23).

School Name	PAN	at allocation				Allocation @ 05/10/23
		1st	2nd	3rd	total	
Bexton	60	60	36	14	110	59
Egerton	30	24	45	24	93	26
Manor Park	45	28	8	7	43	30
St Vincent's	30	19	12	13	44	17
TOTALS	165	131	101	58	290	132

Academy	220	215	99	69	383	223
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Table Three: School Allocations 2023

Table Four shows the source of pupils for each school by catchment area as at October 2022. St Vincent's does not have a catchment area.

SCHOOL	Bexton	Egerton	Manor Park	St Vincent's
Within school catchment	213 (52%)	137 (65.6%)	170 (76.9%)	n/a
Within Knutsford catchment areas	165 (40.2%)	61 (29.2%)	37 (16.7%)	162 (81%)
Other CE Schools catchment area	17 (4.1%)	4 (1.9%)	7 (3.2%)	23 (11.5%)
Outside Cheshire East	15 (3.7%)	7 (3.3%)	7 (3.2%)	15 (7.5%)
TOTAL NOR	410	209	221	200
CAPACITY	420	210	315	210

Table Four: Primary pupils by catchment area (October 2022)

Table five shows the same data for the Academy and Studio School. There are two areas (Pickmere and part of High Legh) which are both within the Knutsford catchment and Rudheath and Leftwich catchments respectively.

SCHOOL	Academy	Studio School
Within school catchment/shared area	819 (64.9%)	62 (51.7%)
Other CE Schools catchment area	46 (3.6%)	3 (2.5%)
Outside Cheshire East	397 (31.5%)	55 (45.8%)
TOTAL NOR	1,262	120
CAPACITY	1,606	300

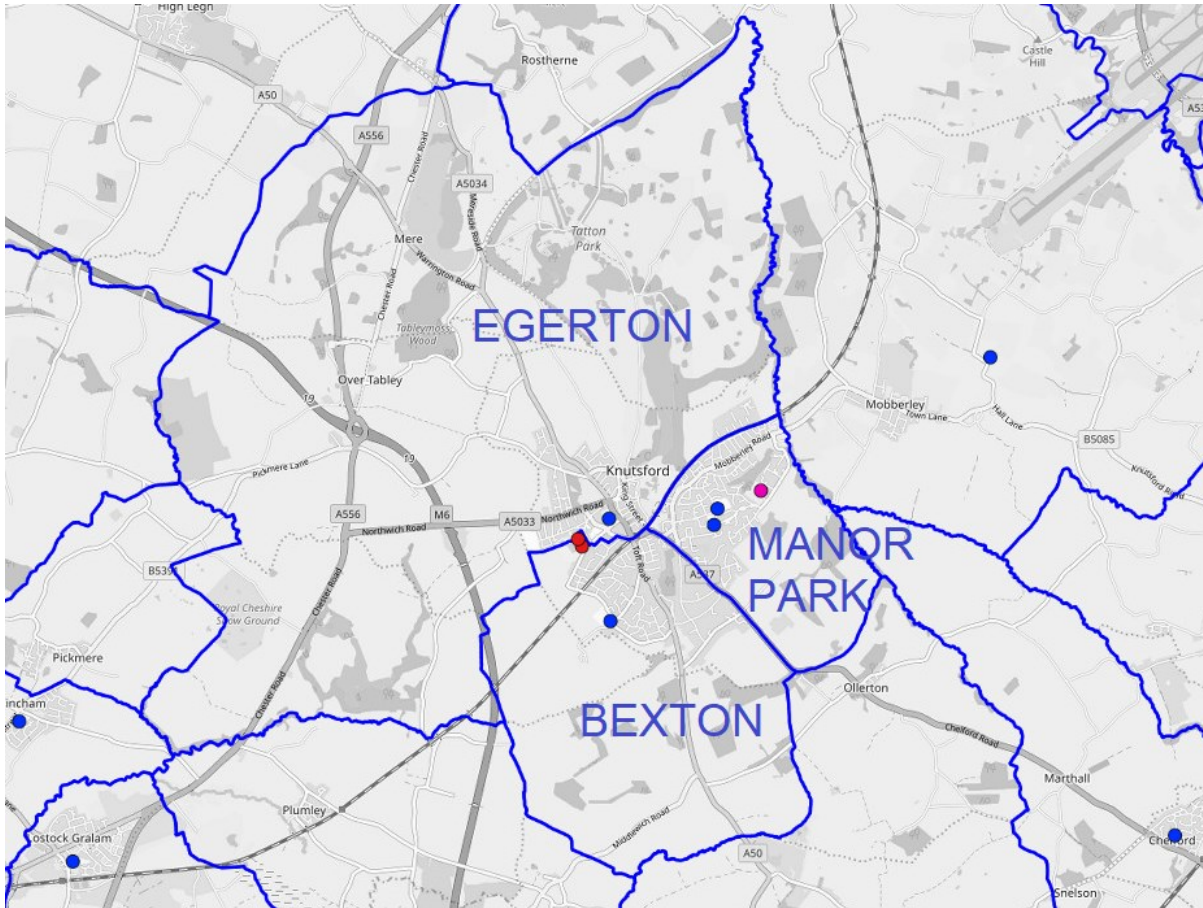
Table Five: Secondary pupils by catchment area (October 2022)

Table six shows October 2022 data of where Knutsford resident pupils are attending primary school. It shows that within the three catchment areas, 65 pupils attend a Cheshire East school outside Knutsford (Cheshire East does not have data on pupils attending private schools or schools in other local authority areas).

	Bexton	Egerton	Manor Park
Pupil attending own Catchment school	213 (80.1%)	137(49.3%)	170 (36.5%)
Pupil attending different Knutsford school	45 (16.9%)	126 (45.3%)	254 (54.5%)
Pupil attending another CE School	8 (3%)	15 (5.4%)	42 (9%)
TOTAL	266	278	466

Table Six: Primary school attended by resident catchment area (October 2022)

The image below shows the three catchment areas.



Bexton and Manor Park do not use their catchment areas in determining allocations when oversubscribed.

3.0 PLACES PLANNING: DEVELOPMENT

The Cheshire East Council school places planning team are consulted on planning applications. The model used to predict places has recently been updated by the Department for Education to 29 primary places per 100 houses and 14 secondary places per hundred houses.

Based on the forecast housing numbers from strategic sites (946), this would increase the pupil numbers by 101 secondary pupils and 210 primary pupils.

The data in section two shows Knutsford Academy has capacity for 339 places at its current PAN, and a significant out of catchment intake. It has more than sufficient provision for the forecast growth in secondary pupils from development.

The data in section two shows there is currently capacity for 113 primary places, this is below the 210 forecast. However, the current school places show 95 out of catchment pupils and, with an increase in the PAN at Manor Park to 60, there would be a potential total of 313 places, which exceeds the forecast requirement. Cheshire East Council seeks developer contributions towards primary (and SEN) places, for example it is seeking £455,544.20 towards primary provision from the Longridge development.

Therefore, there is sufficient school places capacity within the existing Knutsford schools to accommodate the growth in pupil numbers forecast from the strategic housing developments for

first year entry.

However, as noted above, the area where there may be challenges is for in-year transfers. Many schools are at capacity within certain year groups (or completely) which would prevent in-year transfers. This will lead to some situations where pupils have to attend a school which is further from their home than they may wish. However, with secondary pupils Cheshire East Council will provide transport to the next available school and for primary pupils they will be able to attend a school within Knutsford. The schools are unable to withhold school places to maintain capacity “just in case” therefore there is not a practical solution to the any problems that may arise in this regard; in-year admissions are handled by Cheshire East Council and there is a formal appeals process for parents who are dissatisfied with the outcome.

4.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ASPIRATION

The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan aspiration (see section one) sought to ensure that the forecast development would not present a problem for Knutsford schools. In accordance with this aspiration, based on the data set out in this report, there is suitable provision for school places to accommodate both existing residents and future growth from allocated strategic sites.

Whilst there could be an argument for the amendment of the Egerton catchment area to exclude the Parkgate development (which would mean pupils in that area would not be prioritised for Egerton, so could potentially reduce travel across town) this would only be of benefit when Egerton was oversubscribed and where it uses its catchment: as an academy it is able to vary its admission policy not to do so. Bexton and Manor Park do not use their catchment areas for its admissions.

At present there is no need for further school development. Cheshire East Council Schools officers are not concerned about Knutsford school places at present and based on forecast growth, nothing there is ability to unlock further capacity.

The current outstanding aspect of the aspiration would be around improving accessibility to schools for all ages and abilities through walking, cycling and the use of public transport, including exploring schemes such as walking buses and other measures to reduce the use of the car to take children to school. The Active Travel Infrastructure Plan WG will be engaging with schools in connection with its work, which would touch on this aspect.

5.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider the information presented and determine if any further action is required with regard to school places planning in Knutsford.