

# Education Sufficiency Strategy

## 2025 to 2028



We put children and young people  
at the heart of everything we do

# Foreword

Welcome to the Solihull Education Sufficiency Strategy. This strategy is part of a wider framework of policy documents that support the Council Plan 2025 to 2030 where 'being ambitious for Solihull children is central to our work as a Council'.

In Solihull we want all children and young people to belong and succeed in education. Guided by principles of equity, diversity and inclusion we recognise the differences between children and young people, planning for the level of variation between individuals and creating a system where children and young people gain essential knowledge and skills throughout their education.

This strategy was developed with the active engagement of our key stakeholders, parents/carers, young people, schools and settings, elected Members and relevant services. This, together with our robust forecasting on future needs for education places, has helped inform this strategy. It will help all key stakeholders understand the need for school place planning, as well as establishing the principles against which school reorganisation will be planned. It will consider the future need for school places throughout the Borough and set out the framework within which the Council will consider the organisation of school places over the next five years.

The strategy also outlines the changing role of the Council as a strategic commissioner and the role of the Department for Education Regional Directors in determining school organisation changes for academy schools.

To ensure we are responding to changing need for places overtime, alongside this strategy each year we will publish detailed pupil number forecast data and highlight areas that we need to consider and explore with groups or individual schools/providers.



**Councillor Karen Grinsell, Leader of Solihull Council & Lead Member for Children & Education**

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## Introduction

The main aim of this Education Sufficiency Strategy is to ensure that children and young people in Solihull can access the right setting for them, across all stages of their education, at the right time, and in the right place and will ensure that there will be sufficient places to meet current and future needs. It sets out the principles at the heart of our school place planning processes and decisions, which will maximise the equality of opportunity and quality of provision across all different age groups, need types and areas of the Borough. It should be read in conjunction with the most recently published annual sufficiency updates for early years, mainstream and special educational needs, which outline the forecast pupil numbers, and the proposed solutions or projects needed to ensure sufficiency of education places is maintained.

We work in partnership with our schools, academy trusts, and other educational partners to ensure that they feel supported to provide the highest quality of education for our children and young people to achieve the best long-term outcomes. We want to invest locally to support children and young people to have their needs met closer to home, fulfil our statutory duties and to deliver the best possible education for all our children and young people.

We take the view that the provision of sufficient, suitable and well-maintained education buildings and environments can contribute significantly to the presence, participation and progress of individual pupils and the Solihull Schools Asset Management Plan directly addresses these issues.

This strategy will help all key stakeholders understand the need for school place planning, as well as establishing principles, against which school reorganisation will be planned. It will consider the future need for school places throughout the Borough and set out the framework within which the Council will consider the organisation of school places over the next five years.

Solihull is entering a period of significant housing growth, and our education sufficiency planning will need to consider how development may create new localised pressures for school and early years places in the future.

*The aim of the education sufficiency strategy is to set out the way that Solihull Council intends to address its statutory responsibility to ensure a sufficiency of places across all areas of education provision including:*

- *Early Years (0 – 4 years).*
- *Mainstream – primary and secondary (4 – 16 years).*
- *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (0 – 25 years).*
- *Post-16 (16 – 19 years).*
- *Alternative Provision (4 - 16 years)*

Where there is a need to consider a reorganisation of schools, the performance of schools will be considered, along with geographical location and physical characteristics. School reorganisation proposals need to demonstrate how standards will be improved and will seek to make the best possible use of existing assets, meet the needs of parents, and optimise expenditure to help maximise performance of schools in the future

In addition, this strategy includes our pupil forecasting methodology which we use to accurately predict the future need for places, and how we commission and support education providers for early years, childcare and school places, to deliver high-quality and accessible places for all learners.

# The council's role in ensuring sufficiency of provision within Solihull

**The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient education provision to meet local need and demand.**

The education landscape within Solihull has a diverse mix of accountabilities and responsibilities with community and voluntary schools, academies, free schools, private, voluntary and independent early years providers, alternative provision and independent special schools. In this context, the Council is required to effectively plan for school places where the schools and settings have varying levels of autonomy and control with respect to areas of education such as admissions, school term dates, and curriculum.

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## **In order to deliver on our statutory duty, we will:**

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Work in partnership with and rely upon the support of school leaders, headteachers, governors, academy trusts, education providers and the private, voluntary and independent sector.

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Undertake strategic planning and forecasting to assess the future need for education places for all phases and for pupils with SEND and share this information with providers, schools, and other partners to support the commissioning and delivery of education provision.

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## **For early years and childcare provision**

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Facilitate and support the delivery of a range of flexible early years and childcare provision to be available in the right geographical areas. Early education and childcare provision in Solihull is available through a market of maintained, private, voluntary, independent and school run providers, childminders and academies who operate as individual businesses and are therefore subject to market forces. The Council is not, in most cases, a direct provider of early years and childcare places, but will work in partnership with our providers to deliver a flexible early years and childcare offer that meets the needs of parents.

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## **For primary and secondary school provision**

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We will fund and commission the expansion and reorganisation of provision, where a need is identified, to ensure that sufficient capacity is available. Where pupil growth is anticipated to exceed current options within existing provision, we will commission the creation of new schools, all of which are expected to be free schools. Equally where there is a need to rationalise school places, we will work with all stakeholders to deliver options for reorganisation and a reduction of places, with a view to redesignation of surplus accommodation to meet other education priorities.

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## **For post-16**

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Our duties are for those aged 16-19 and for those young people aged 19-25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan). We will assess our current and future demand and work proactively with key stakeholders to provide sufficient and accessible post-16 provision located in Solihull, wherever possible.

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## **For special educational needs**

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We will work with mainstream and special schools to increase their capacity to meet the changes to children's needs. We will make additional specialist places available that can meet the needs of children in those identified areas and support schools to adapt to changing needs to ensure the right provision is available to meet the varying needs of our children and young people in the right place and at the right time.

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## **For alternative provision**

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We will work with schools and education providers to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school, or otherwise, for each child of compulsory school age who, for reasons of illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not receive it unless such arrangements were made (The Education Act 1996: Section 19 & DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance 2025).

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# School place planning principles

**Our school place planning principles seek to deliver a transparent process for delivering change to school places and are as follows:**

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Children should be educated, wherever possible, locally and in their own community.

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To undertake a robust and comprehensive approach to forecasting the number of children and young people requiring places in early years, mainstream, specialist and alternative provision.

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Any school reorganisation proposals will look to demonstrate how standards will be improved and will seek to make the best possible use of existing assets, meet the needs of parents, and optimise expenditure to help maximise performance of schools in the future.

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To fulfil the requirement to meet the need for early education, childcare and school places ensuring sufficient places are available for Solihull residents who require them and providing an appropriate level of choice.

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To provide, where new schools are needed, primary schools that are at normally two forms of entry (420 places) and secondary schools that are at least four forms of entry (600 places) or larger to aid sustainability. For special schools an 80-place school is considered to be a minimum size to support educational and financial viability. Where new schools are linked to strategic housing sites they may open at a smaller size and grow over time as the pupil yield requires. All new schools will have inclusion at the heart of their design.

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To ensure that new primary schools provide from Reception year to Year 6 and will normally include early years provision to meet the extended early years offer for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. New secondary schools will provide from Year 7 to Year 11 (or to Year 13 if considered appropriate).

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To identify latent or vacant capacity in planning areas so that it can be used to meet demand, where these schools are within a reasonable distance.

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To ensure that all school organisational changes promote the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) into mainstream settings. Including utilising available capacity to establish new provisions in existing primary and secondary schools and in all new schools where this is appropriate.

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To provide specialist school places locally for pupils with an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) who require one wherever possible.

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To ensure the availability of alternative provision places to serve pupils, parents/carers, and schools on a local basis through planned short-term educational placements with a clear focus on reintegration back into mainstream school

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To ensure that decision making processes on school organisation proposals consider factors such as school improvement, the admissions process, parental preferences, school size, published admission numbers and school transport.

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## Solihull context

### Decision making

**Where school organisation changes are proposed, the Council is the decision maker for community schools. Any school reorganisation proposals will be considered and determined by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.**

**For academy schools, the determination of school reorganisation proposals sits with the Department for Education (DfE) Regional Director, supported by an advisory board.**

**The DfE Regional Director acts on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. Their responsibilities include a wide range of aspects but in relation to school place planning they include:**

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Addressing underperformance in schools, academies, children's social care and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services, offering support, and where necessary intervening, to deliver rapid improvement.

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Taking decisions on academy sponsor matches and significant changes to academies.

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Deciding on new free schools.

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Taking decisions on the creation, consolidation and growth of multi-academy trusts (MATs).

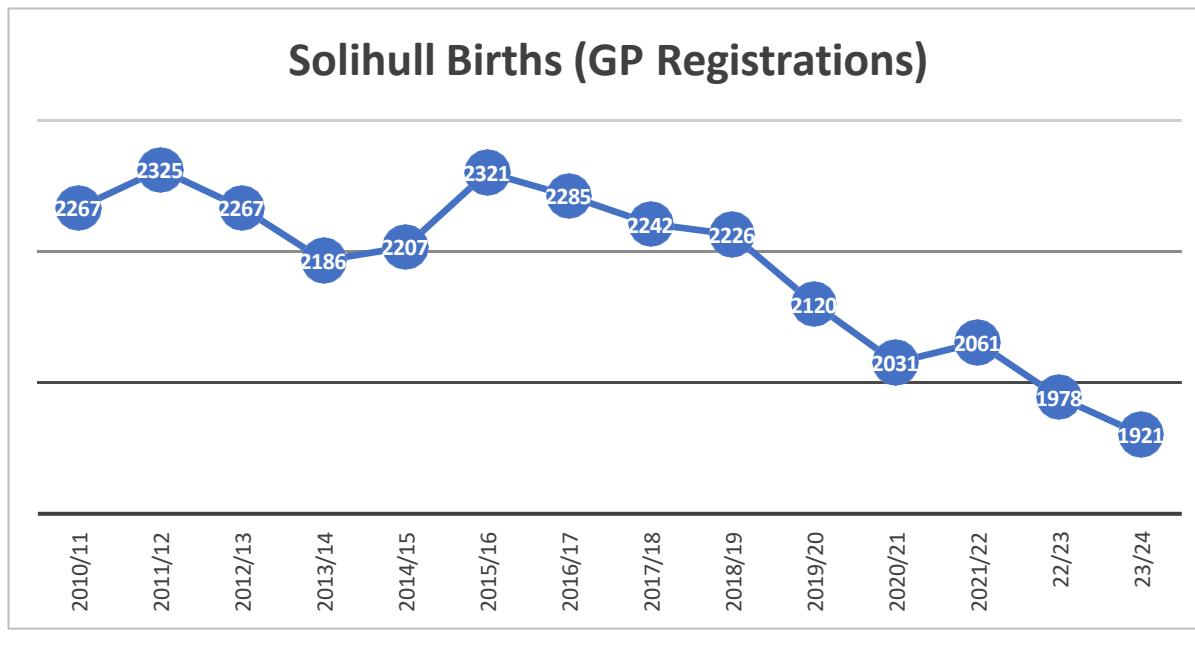
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Supporting local authorities to ensure that every local area has sufficient places for pupils.

## Demography

**Solihull has a mixed economy of schools across all phases. All secondary schools in Solihull are academy schools, with a slow but ongoing trend by primary schools to convert to academy status. In Solihull we work with all of our schools regardless of status, to deliver our statutory duty.**

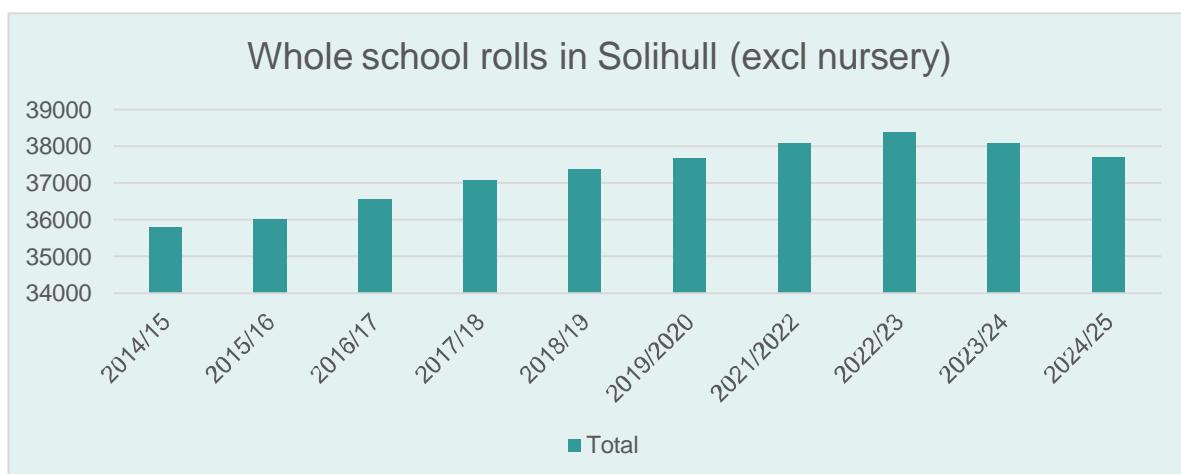
The birth rate in Solihull has fallen by 17% since its peak in 2015/16 to just over 1900 children born in 2023/24. This is the equivalent of 400 less children or 13 forms of entry (FE) joining our school system. Nationally the birth rate has been falling since 2013.



## School population

**The total school population in Solihull peaked in 2022/23 academic year at 38,380 and has seen an overall drop of 1.7% in the last 2 years.**

The drop in whole school population is mainly being driven by falling rolls in our primary schools. Secondary school rolls in Solihull are expected to peak in 2027/28 with lower primary numbers moving through from 2028. However, the number of children attending special school and alternative provision in Solihull is rising and is forecast to continue to do so over the period covered by this strategy.



Based on October pupil census data

Overall, the demographic picture in Solihull reflects the national picture for mainstream, which has seen primary school rolls fall since 2019, and secondary school rolls predicted to peak in 2026 and 2027. However, national predictions anticipate that the number of pupils in state funded special schools will peak around 2027, but this is not reflected in the Solihull data.

## Migration

**Schools in Solihull continue to prove popular with families who live outside of the borough, at October 2024, 19% of all pupils in Solihull schools were resident outside of Solihull.**

When forecasting future pupil demand for school places and planning the number of school places required in future years, we have to include the demand from families living outside of Solihull.

**For mainstream admissions** Solihull continues to operate a system of catchment areas for the majority of our community and academy schools. **Our voluntary aided schools** either use a catchment area or their parish boundary as their priority area.

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Two legal rulings ensure that, any child living outside of a school's catchment area must be treated equally, regardless of which Council area they live in. This can mean that a child living outside of Solihull may have a higher priority for a place in a Solihull school than a Solihull family that live further away from that particular school.

**The Greenwich Judgement** affects schools close to the borough boundary. In practice, the Law requires the Local Authority to admit pupils no less favourably and according to its admission criteria irrespective of the Local Authority in which they live.

**The Rotherham Judgement (1997)** later established that the principle of admission authorities operating catchment areas as part of their over-subscription criteria in allocating school places was lawful provided that in so doing authorities are not in breach of the Greenwich judgement.

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For children attending special schools it is the school named on the child's EHC plan that determines which school a child attends and this is based on the school that can best meet a child's needs rather than which Council area that the child resides. Solihull special school places cannot be 'held' for Solihull resident children.

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When planning school places, it is essential that the migration of children into the Borough is considered. When planning the level of school places in an area, a threshold for available places of between 2% and 5% is considered appropriate. Through the School Capacity and Projections (SCAP) return the DfE are funding a 2% threshold.

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## In-year admissions

**There can often be pressure for school places when families apply outside of the normal admissions process or part way through the academic year and schools are already at capacity**

Similar challenges can be presented when pupils require a school place in year groups outside of the normal points of entry (reception, year 3 and year 7). The allocation of school places is administered in line with the School Admission Code published by the DfE.

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Under the Admissions Code, parents have the right to express a preference for the schools of their choice, not necessarily the closest to where they live. Schools are required to offer a place when available. Where schools are experiencing a period of high demand for places this will not necessarily result in that school being expanded if there are sufficient places available in other schools in the area.

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We will work with schools to endeavour to maintain the 2% threshold of available places to support in-year admissions, create additional classes where appropriate and viable, utilising the Fair Access Protocol to ensure all children can access places where necessary.

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## Housing

**Solihull is entering a period of significant housing growth, and our education sufficiency planning will need to consider how development may create new localised pressures for school and early years places in the future.**

We will assess the likely impact of all new housing developments as part of the planning application process and maintain a flexible approach to any uncertainty on delivery timelines for new homes within the borough.

When housing developments are approved and begin to deliver, we will ensure plans are in place to accommodate any new families that may move into those homes. This may require different approaches over the short and the long term and we will work with existing schools and providers as well as opening new schools where required.

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We will calculate the need for new school places any proposed development will generate and develop strategic plans to meet that need whenever additional places are required. In line with DfE requirements, only the impact of housing developments with planning permission can be included in pupil number forecasts and as such these will change over time as more developments are granted planning permission.

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As part of our existing strategic role in the planning process four new primary schools are being proposed to meet the needs of strategic housing sites in Balsall Common, Knowle, Rural South and North Solihull, as well as at least one secondary school expansion. Further consideration is required on the impact of housing development on secondary school places, in particular in relation to the UK Central development but also across South Solihull.

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The timing for delivery of each new school / expansion will be undertaken in line with the progression of the relevant housing development to ensure the right balance of availability of school places for new families moving in and the need to avoid providing too many places and the associated detrimental impact on pupil numbers in existing schools.

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[Solihull's Developer Contributions for Education Policy](#) was approved in January 2024 and takes account of DfE's pupil yield dashboard and revised guidance on Developer Contributions for Education (August 2023). The policy outlines how the Council calculates what education infrastructure is required across early years, mainstream school, post-16 and Special Educational Needs and how the cost contribution is determined.

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Every proposed residential housing development, of more than 10 dwellings, is assessed for impact on school places across early years, mainstream, post-16, school transport and special educational needs and an appropriate contribution is sought to ensure that the education infrastructure required to meet the needs of each development can be delivered.

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## Planning places and our challenges

**Effective pupil place planning is an essential process that enables us to work with schools and stakeholders to commission and create high quality school places where they are needed. These fulfil the requirement to meet the basic need for school places and provide the right level of preference for parents.**

We undertake a robust and comprehensive approach to pupil place planning that projects the number of children requiring school places in both mainstream and specialist schools.

Our pupil number forecasts are based on robust data about current and recent past trends in birth numbers, parental preference and migration.

However, predicting the future is challenging and uncertain and while there will be future changes in those trends our forecasts do not attempt to predict the possible effect of any future changes until they happen, and their impact can be quantified in the available data.

A more detailed outline of Solihull's pupil forecast methodology is included at

### [Appendix A](#)

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As the statutory and strategic commissioner of educational provision, we will work with all schools, providers and stakeholders to commission and create high quality school places. To deliver this strategic role in an open and transparent way, our school place planning principles underpin our approach.

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## Early years and childcare places

To secure sufficient childcare places, Councils are required by legislation to:

***Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 or up to 18 for disabled children.***

Solihull carries out our sufficiency monitoring at ward level which will be updated through the annual early years and childcare sufficiency plan.

The plan includes a summary for each area and where necessary an action plan for how any potential gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

The latest assessment shows that Solihull is currently meeting its sufficiency duty.

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Following the Spring Budget announcements in March 2023, starting from April 2024, existing childcare support for parents is being expanded in phases. By September 2025, eligible working families with children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of early years funded entitlement.

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The Council's statutory duty is to provide sufficient places for Solihull families. Although borough wide there are sufficient places, we know there are specific localised pressures for places for Solihull families. However, delivery of places will need to take account of demand for places from families living outside of Solihull and a range of activity is underway to address the potential deficit of places that this will create.

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The drop in the birth rate is being offset by the increase in funded entitlement hours and age range to include 9 months to 2-year-olds. Providers are still finding the childcare market difficult in terms of funding and retention of staff. Across Solihull we have nursery classes attached to all primary schools largely catering for 3- and 4-year-olds. However, the drop in the birth rate is impacting the viability of those provisions. We will support community schools, in considering all options available to them to amend their operating model to offer a more flexible approach to their existing school-based nursery. This flexible approach will mean that schools will be able to better meet the needs of parents.

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## Our challenge

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**To work with our providers to consider the opportunity for nursery expansions/new nurseries to meet the forecast deficit for places through the extended early years entitlement and maintaining the level of early years offer for children with additional needs.**

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**Consider how we support schools to extend their early years offer to include 2-year-olds, where there is unmet demand, and surplus accommodation allows and how a move to governor-led community nurseries can offer a more flexible offer for parents.**

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**Ensure that where housing development is planned that the impact on early years places is considered and where appropriate developer contributions are secured to support an increase in places. Where new schools are planned, ensure that they provide early years offer.**

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## Mainstream school places - Primary

**Total primary school numbers are forecasts to fall 6% by 2029. This is partly due to bulge classes working their way out at the end of primary phase but is mainly as a result of lower births and less reception pupils feeding through schools.**

By September 2025 it is expected that 5% of primary school places will be surplus, with the majority of the surplus places being in Reception and Key Stage One year groups.

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In order to support the financial and educational viability of all schools just under 1,000 primary school places will be removed over the next 7 years. This will be undertaken in phases and in line with the admission processes and will not have any impact on existing children attending those schools.

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Even with this reduction, by September 2028 the number of surplus primary school places are forecast to rise to 8% and further reductions will be required. Without careful management, falling rolls can lead to a school having a deficit budget and therefore impact on teaching and learning across school.

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Solihull has experienced a period of significant in-year migration over the last 3 years, but early indications are that this may now have ceased. Primary school year groups grew by the equivalent of 8 forms of entry between October 2022 census and October 2023 census. This inward growth has been focussed on Key Stage 2 and managed through the creation of bulge classes across years 4, 5 and 6.

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A similar comparison between October 2023 and October 2024 census has seen a net reduction in primary age pupils, which is a significant shift from the previous year.

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In-year migration will need to be monitored over the coming years to determine whether this reduction is to become an ongoing trend and will therefore need to be accounted for within the place reduction programme.

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### **Our challenge**

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**We will need to continue to monitor the in-year pressure on primary school places to ensure that the capacity available meets future demand**

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**Work is underway, with schools, to look at opportunities to rationalise reception places to bring the surplus levels more in line with the target of 5% which is required to meet in-year growth and to consider how the accommodation freed up through this exercise can be used for other priorities such as the roll out of expanded early years entitlement and special educational needs.**

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**Where housing development is proposed, planning areas will be reviewed to ensure that the infrastructure required to support places over the longer term is delivered whilst balancing the need to support existing schools in the short term.**

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## Mainstream school places - Secondary

**Total secondary school numbers are forecast to rise by 1% by 2031. School rolls tend to decrease as year groups move through school, especially in year 10 where pupils can access 14-19 schools meaning the total growth across all schools is less than would be anticipated. However, this can mask pressure in some geographical areas between year 7 and 8.**

Forecasts show that year 7 intakes will peak in 2027. A rolling programme of year 7 bulge classes has been agreed with schools and will continue to be implemented to meet this increase in demand. This will have provided 225 additional year 7 places in total by 2027 these temporary increases in school intakes will meet demand without overproviding school places longer term.

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Although there is sufficient physical capacity within the secondary school estate to meet the current demand for Year 7 places, in-year admissions to secondary schools will continue to be an issue.

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A school's published admission number only applies at year 7. From year 8 onwards secondary schools can cap their places to match the existing numbers of pupils in that year group and the way their classes are organised to support their chosen model for teaching and learning. This means that the places available does not necessarily match the physical space available and in-year places can be limited.

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### Our challenge

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**We will need to continue to monitor the in-year pressure on secondary school places to ensure that the places available meets future demand.**

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**Over the longer term the lower numbers feeding through primary schools will start to impact on secondary school pupil numbers. 27% of secondary school pupils in Solihull live outside of the borough. The level of out of borough pupils that continue to seek places in Solihull secondary schools, as the demand for secondary school places reduces, will determine whether a reduction in the number of secondary school places will be necessary.**

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**In planning areas where housing development is planned, the level of places required and how to best meet the new demand created, will need to be kept under review.**

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## Special school places

**Solihull has increased its special school places by 36% since 2018 through significant investment in school expansions and the opening of a special free school. However, the rate of increase in demand for special school places continues to outstrip the supply of places.**

We expect this demand to continue, and we will explore opportunities for further investment in special school expansions, increase provision to enable inclusion in mainstream schools.

Our reliance on out of borough school placements in independent schools and independent post-16 provision is currently essential to meet the demand for places but creating a significant cost pressure on our Dedicated Schools Grant.

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Each September, commissioning conversations will be undertaken to determine a value for demand for the following academic year. This will include the analysis of and discussions around the following:

- Utilisation of the places for the previous academic year to gauge sufficiency and identify any specific concerns around over / under utilisation.
- Examination of EHCP data to identify trends where demand is placing pressures on the system and for which predominant year groups of students.
- Analysis of the progress data received termly from provisions and the measure of key performance indicators.

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Following internal meetings and scrutiny of information, an annual commissioning conversation takes place in the Autumn term with all providers to determine what is required of them in terms of numbers of places. In addition, the conversation looks to take advantage of funding reviews and staffing models, monitoring progress towards KPIs and looking to capture examples of best practice and positive messages from the provider. This document is shared with key LA officers to help to ensure that they remain very much a part of this process.

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## Our challenge

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**Not all children living in Solihull will be able to have their needs met in provision is Solihull. However, as a Council we need to consider carefully how we meet the gap between the supply and demand for special school places and how we continue to support mainstream schools to meet some of the rising demand, for example through the development of a model of additionally resourced provision.**

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**At the same time there will be a need for a sustained increase in special school places to meet some of the sufficiency gap and to meet the needs of our children and young people with the most complex needs.**

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**The impact of housing development on the delivery of specialist places will be kept under constant review and all housing sites of 10 dwellings or more will be assessed for their impact on the sufficiency of specialist places. A S106 contribution sought to support the delivery of additional places where this is considered appropriate**

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## Post-16 provision

**Participation in education and training for those aged 16-18 (and up to 25 for those with an EHC plan) is available in a range of forms:**

- **full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider; or**
- **full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualification; or**
- **an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship. Projection of demand is more complex for the post-16 age group due to the increased breadth of learner choice compared to those of statutory school age.**

The demand being seen within the secondary sector will increase the pressure on the post-16 education and training market. Post-16 cohorts are expected to peak in 2032. This is further impacted by Solihull being a net importer of learners from neighbouring authorities at post-16 with circa 70% of pupils attending our colleges living outside of Solihull.

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The growth in demand for EHC plans is also increasing the pressure on providers offering specialist programmes designed for learners with additional needs and disabilities. The number of post-16 children and young people with an EHC plan is forecast to increase by over 70% by 2032.

Solihull's post-16 strategy sets out a targeted response to local economic growth, skills shortages, and learner inequalities. It focuses on aligning education with expanding sectors such as business services, health, digital, hospitality, and construction, while addressing employer-reported gaps in operational, digital, and interpersonal skills. The strategy promotes a broad qualification offer including T Levels, BTECs, HTQs, and apprenticeships, with particular emphasis on supporting learners without English and maths qualifications and retaining young people locally through accessible progression routes.

The strategy is structured around three strands: sufficiency for SEN learners, curriculum and guidance for all learners, and NEET reduction and re-engagement. It prioritises inclusive provision, improved EHCP planning, and strengthened careers advice, especially for vulnerable groups in North Solihull. A centralised dashboard will support data-driven commissioning and quality assurance. By embedding learner voice, employer engagement, and targeted pathways, the strategy aims to ensure all young people in Solihull can access high-quality education and training that leads to meaningful destinations.

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## **Our challenge**

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**Our strategic working group for post-16 provision is considering the current and future landscape for our post-16 offer.**

**Initial findings of the group indicate that with the existing supply of school and college places and with the aspiration of one school to open a new post-16 department that we will have sufficiency of places for mainstream learners. However, further work is required to ensure that mainstream post-16 provision in schools is accessible for a range of learners, including those achieving level 4 at GCSE and those with an EHCP.**

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**The shift in pupil age profile for children and young people with an EHCP over the next 7 years will increase the demand for specialist provision at post-16. There is a need to review the existing and future demand for post-16 provision in Solihull, in particular the increasing demand for specialist post-16 provision.**

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## Alternative provision (AP)

Alternative provision is education arranged by local authorities for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; alternative provision can also be used by schools for children on a suspension (fixed period exclusion); and for children being directed by schools to off-site provision to receive education intended to improve their behaviour.

We have a statutory duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that we are arranging suitable and (normally) full-time education for children of compulsory school age who fit that narrative and there is a publicly accessible policy statement which demonstrates our compliance here.

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### The Solihull Local Authority offer

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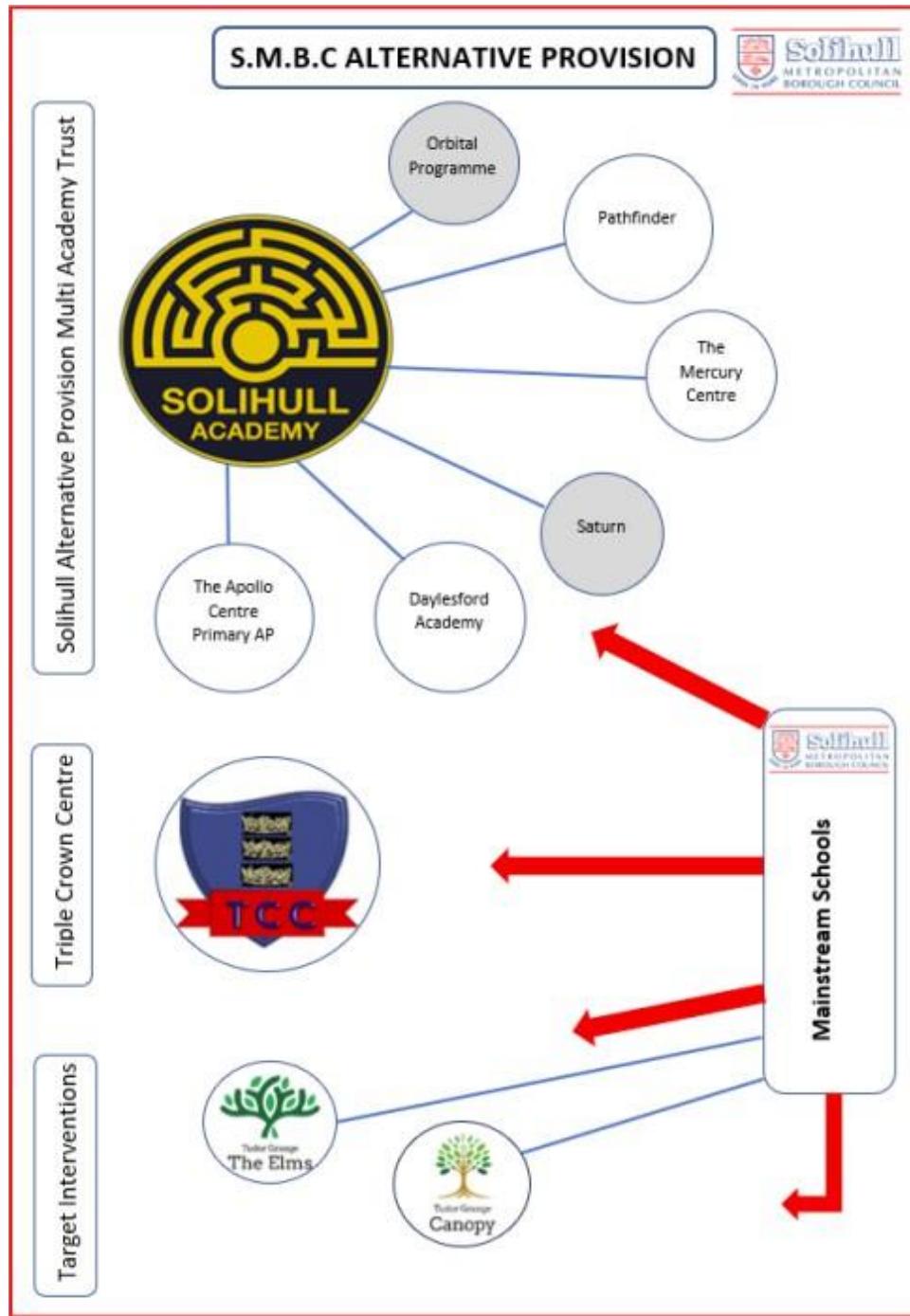
Solihull Local Authority have commissioned the following registered providers to offer provision to meet a wide variety of needs across for students that require access to AP:

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The diagram below offers a picture of the breadth of commissioned AP available to our CYP. There are discrete groups that have emerged over time:

- 1) SAPMAT Provisions & Programmes
- 2) The Triple Crown Centre
- 3) Targeted Interventions

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Significant investment has been made in the alignment of commissioned services with Solihull Alternative Provision Multi-Academy Trust. They are identified as our main provider for AP and have worked closely with us over the last 4 years in the development and creation of provisions, as well as programmes to meet needs identified by both our own LA officers, as well as valuable feedback from Solihull Headteachers.

The number of commissioned places across these provisions is detailed in the table below as follows:

Commissioned Places for academic year 2025-26						
	Commissioned Places across academic year					
Institution	R-11	LA only	Post 16	2024 Total	2025 Total	Student Profile:
The Elms EBSN AP	8	0	0	8	8	Attendance issues / EBSN
The Canopy Intervention	8	0	0	8	8	Primary CYP at risk of exclusion benefiting from UDL principles
Triple Crown PRU	40	40	0	40	40	For whom medical needs prevent access to mainstream provision.
Solihull Academy Main	125	50	0	125	125	Long / Mixed AP for Years 7 to 11
Mercury Provision	18	18	0	15	18	SEMH / ASD with an EHCP
Saturn 6 <sup>th</sup> Day Provision	20	20	0	20	20	LA 6 <sup>th</sup> Day provision for secondary excluded students
Orbital Project <i>(Programme not provision)</i>	20	20	0	20	20	Programme to accommodate sudden arrivals into the LA with Year 11 focus
Daylesford	35	35	0	41	35	SEMH long stay students from Year 9 to 11
Apollo	20	20	0	20	20	LA 6 <sup>th</sup> day provision for Primary excluded CYP with outreach work

Following the publication of [“Arranging Alternative Provision – A guide for Local Authorities and Schools – DFE February 2025”](#) - we have put in place our own Alternative Provisions strategic plan which amongst other requirements “*will assess and ensure that there is sufficient and suitable quality alternative provision to meet all children’s needs.*”

This multi-year strategic plan will ensure alternative provision is securely funded and will better enable providers to plan appropriate curriculum, therapeutic offers and sustainable outreach provision. Therefore, the sufficiency aspect of AP will not be a feature of this Solihull Education Sufficiency Strategy.

# Funding

**The Council plays a key role in securing funding to provide sufficient education provision in Solihull. Delivery of the additional school places needed will rely more than ever on an appropriate level of funding from Government and securing contributions from housing developers.**

We receive funding principally from the following sources:

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## **Basic Need Grant**

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Capital allocations to meet projected shortfalls in provision are provided by the DfE to all local authorities based on the data provided in the annual School Capacity and Projection return (SCAP).

This return informs the DfE of the expected change in pupil numbers over the next five years at primary and over a seven-year forecast period at secondary, the current capacity of schools to meet those numbers, and the planned changes to that capacity.

The SCAP return asks local authorities to provide forecasts of pupil numbers that exclude pupils brought to the area by new housing developments; there is an expectation that provision for these pupils will be funded through contributions provided by the developers.

In order to inform the SCAP return, we will liaise with schools to ensure all plans and Net Capacity records and assessments are accurate.

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## **High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA)**

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This capital allocation is to support the provision of places for children and young people with SEND and those pupils requiring alternative provision. It is a formulaic allocation based on pupil numbers, but the SCAP return is being developed so that in future it can also be used to deliver high needs capital funding.

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## Developer contributions

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The Council is committed to ensuring the best solution regarding the provision of additional school capacity. When this additional capacity is required as a result of housing development and when planning with the District and Borough Councils, we are mindful of their need to meet the housing demand, versus our need to provide the associated education infrastructure.

Solihull's School Place Planning Team is responsible for assessing the estimated additional demand for early years, primary and secondary school, post-16 and special educational needs places generated by development in any given area, against the current available and forecast capacity within the relevant planning areas.

Where new housing development creates a demand for school places in excess of those available, we will work with developers to ensure that the appropriate contributions for the provision of additional school places are provided.

We will seek the contribution from developers to support the provision of additional places that we believe is proportionate to the impact of the development, ensuring all requests for contributions are compliant with the relevant legislation.

We will seek to secure financial contributions and/or the provision of land from developers towards providing additional education provision, either through the expansion of existing schools or the opening of new schools, when the predicted impact of a new housing development creates a shortfall. It is critical that developers make a contribution to school places as, without it, we will be unable to deliver the required provision

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## Other sources of capital funding

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Other funding streams that may be available to ensure sufficient education provision include:

- Other capital grants from the DfE such as the early years extended entitlement capital grant to deliver the additional places required to meet the extended early years offer and the wraparound care to deliver wraparound care for children in reception to year 6.
- Central Government funded new schools via the Government's Free School programme.
- Earmarked capital Receipts – proceeds from the sale of former education settings deemed surplus to requirements.
- Capital contributions from individual school budgets and/or bids by Academies.
- Bids by schools, academies and Further Education colleges to other DfE capital schemes e.g. expansion of selective education places, expansion of sixth form places.

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## Growth fund

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Solihull's Schools Forum has agreed to retain centrally, a level of revenue funding, referred to as the growth fund, for schools which are required to provide extra pre-16 places in order to meet basic need.

The growth fund is also used to provide the pre-opening and post-opening costs associated with new schools opening via the LA presumption route. The criteria for allocation and the budget for each year is agreed with Schools Forum as part of confirming the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget for each forthcoming year.

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## How we will deliver this strategy

**The delivery of this strategy is overseen by the Access to Education service area, through the Education Sufficiency Board. Every autumn we will produce a report to Cabinet Portfolio Holder providing an annual update which details pupil number forecasts, sufficiency plans, and an overview of the pressures expected over the forthcoming five-year period. Appendix A sets out the forecasting methodology and considerations included in producing pupil number forecasts and planning for education sufficiency in Solihull.**

Engagement with schools, early years settings and providers regarding sufficiency and place pressures will continue through one-to-one discussions, school collaboratives and Schools Forum

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The Children's Services capital programme will provide a comprehensive project pipeline working to ensure accurate cost estimates take account of a changing construction market and delivery timeframes are matched against forecast need for places. Any additions to the education capital programme will be progressed through initial feasibility stages in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

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We will continue to seek the maximum levels of capital funding from Government through the annual School Capacity and Projection (SCAP) return and make best use of any other central government grants. We will work to secure funding contributions from housing developers in line with our Developer Contributions for Education Policy which was approved in January 2024.

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We will proactively seek best practice and reflect on successes and challenges, amending our commissioning approach as needed to seek the best strategic solution and value for money.

# Appendix A – Forecasting methodology

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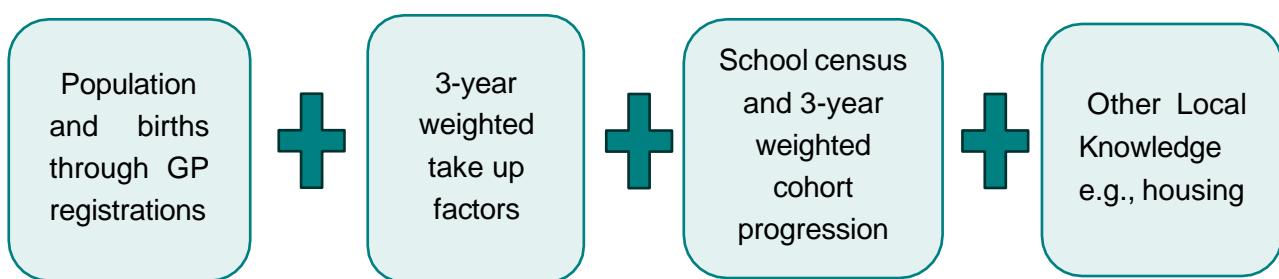
## Mainstream forecasting

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For place planning purposes Solihull is divided into planning areas that represent clusters of schools in a geographical area which benefit from being considered together when forecasting and planning for pupil place provision. These planning areas are used to underpin assessments of current and future pupil demand for school place provision. A full list of planning areas and their schools can be found in the annual mainstream sufficiency update. Planning for sufficient education provision in Solihull is based on robust pupil forecast data, the components of which are outlined below.

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### Core components of our forecasting methodology



Birth data underpins our forecasts. Birth data is collected through local health partners and through the Department for Education. Data on current pupils is also collected from the School Census and used to calculate pupil take up rates and cohort progression factors that track pupil movement patterns between schools and take into account movement into Solihull. Housing development consultations and permissions are received from planning colleagues and are combined with birth and pupil movement trends to produce a forecast.

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## Forecasting of Pupils with an EHCP

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For projections for specialist school places for children with EHC plans, we use the same basic demographic projections as for mainstream pupils and these are underpinned by the same birth, population, and housing data. Cohort progression factors are also calculated in the same way.

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However, whilst the proportion of children with an EHC plan attending a mainstream educational setting is included as part of our mainstream projections, the demand generated by those children whose needs mean they require a specialist school place is projected separately. Additional information relating to a child's special educational need, such as their primary need, must be considered, and a much broader range of educational settings, including those in the maintained, academy, non-maintained and independent sectors, are fed into these projections.

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**Step 1** – Population data.

**Step 2** – Actual EHC plan cohort growth by national curriculum year is determined using SEN2 actual data for a 3-year period to calculate a cohort growth factor.

**Step 3** – For nursery 1 & nursery 2 national curriculum years an EHC plan rate of population is determined, for reception to year 14 cohort progression factors were applied to previous cohorts and for year 15 to year 21 an adjusted cohort progression factor has been applied to reflect the changes in data and process of the last 3 years.

**Step 4** – Total EHC plan forecast created by national curriculum year for the forecast period

**Step 5** – Apply DfE provision categories to historical SEN2 data sets. Calculate actual placement percentage/trends by provision type over the last 3 years and calculate weighted average.

**Step 6** - Apply weighted average provision split to total EHC plan forecast and accrue by key stage to create baseline unmitigated EHC plan forecast by provision type.

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## Appendix B - Acronyms referenced in this document

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<b>AP</b>	Alternative provision
<b>ARP</b>	Additionally resourced provision
<b>ARC</b>	Additionally resourced centre
<b>DBV</b>	Delivering Better Value programme
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DSG</b>	Dedicated schools' grant
<b>EHC plan</b>	Education Health and Care plan
<b>FE</b>	Forms of entry
<b>LA</b>	Local authority
<b>MAT</b>	Multi academy trust
<b>NEET</b>	Not in employment education and trading
<b>S106 contributions</b>	Housing developer contributions to support the creation of additional school places required as a direct result of the housing development.
<b>S27 nursery</b>	Governor-led school-based community nursery unit based at a school
<b>SAPMAT</b>	Solihull Alternative Provision Multi Academy Trust
<b>SCAP</b>	School capacity and projection return
<b>SEN2</b>	Special educational needs annual return
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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# Education Sufficiency Strategy 2025 to 2028



We put children and young people  
at the heart of everything we do

