

### **The education context of Holt is that there has been pressure on school places in the Town for some years**

School catchment numbers for reception in Holt exceeded the Published Admission Number of 30 for the school for 4 years in a row from 2012 to 2015:

2012 – catchment of 36

2013 – catchment of 33

2014 – catchment of 38

2015 – catchment of 42

2016 – catchment of 26

2017 – catchment of 29

2018 – catchment of 31

2019 – catchment of 28

2020 catchment forecast 35 (not including housing impact)

2021 catchment forecast 31 (not including housing impact)

2022 catchment forecast 34 (not including housing impact)

It is correct to say that some families who live in Holt do choose other schools in the area. Historically over the past few years only around 75% of the local catchment have chosen Holt Primary. There are various reasons for this preference; parents prefer a smaller village school, family live closer to local village schools, the consideration that other schools are better than Holt. However in 2012, 34 children applied for a place at Holt Primary for 30 places. In 2013 this figure was 32, in 2014 – 38 and in 2015 – 34. The statement above is correct, there has been pressure on school places in the Town for some years. It is correct to say that since 2015, numbers have dropped slightly but still very close to the Admission number of 30. With the addition of many planned new properties in Holt, as Place Planners we aim to provide a local school place for all local children so we felt it was the right time to begin the process to secure a new school site for Holt Primary School as this can take some time. We could make the assumption that if housing is more central to the local school then these families would choose Holt rather than village schools surrounding Holt.

### **Existing and future planned housing developments in the Town**

We are aware of sites in Holt that have planning permission for housing or are allocated in the current development plan for housing development.

The main sites to consider (not including small sites) are:

3 x sites at Greshams total of 150 dwellings with around 80 built out.

Site at Hempstead Road for 213 dwellings with around 60 built out.

Site at Woodfield Road / Peacock Lane for 85 dwellings – not started but included in Council's 5 year supply.

Site at Hempstead Road (remaining part of allocation H09) for 51 dwellings – application not yet determined and development not started but site is included in Council's 5 year supply.

On this basis, there are at least 359 additional dwellings that are yet to be built that have planning permission or an existing development plan allocation.

In addition to existing housing development commitments, we are aware from North Norfolk District Council that some more housing will be allocated to Holt, as part of the emerging Local Plan,

currently being prepared. We are advised that the First Draft Local Plan proposes to allocate land for 330 additional dwellings (over and above existing development commitments). This includes the current application site on land south of Beresford Road.

On this basis, existing (unbuilt commitments) and proposed housing growth in Holt amounts to 689 dwellings.

### **Norfolk County Council pupil yield multiplier**

Norfolk use a pupil yield multiplier of 28.1 primary age children per 100 new homes. This is a standard multiplier used for NCC pupil forecasting. This multiplier is reviewed annually and calculated from the number of children now living on new housing developments across the County. NCC school place planners are aware that some areas of the County are likely to generate in excess of the multiplier (A11 corridor/Norwich outskirts) and some less than the multiplier (rural villages in North Norfolk and coastal villages). The number of children generated from new housing can vary considerably even across sites in close vicinity to each other. The size of houses, the number of affordable homes, the cost of the properties and the proximity to local services can all have an impact on the number of families choosing these homes. For Holt, even if we do consider that 28.1 is too high (we have no evidence of that though), we can also calculate a scenario based on 20 primary age children per 100 homes for comparison. Calculating the pupil generation from 689 new homes would give an additional 138 primary age children which equates to an additional 20 children per year group. The same calculation based on the LA Norfolk multiplier of 28.1 primary age children per 100 new homes gives 194 additional primary age children – 28 per year group. Using either of these scenarios, the additional pupil numbers for Holt would justify the building of a new school and to future proof a new school, 420 places appears sensible.

I have listed below the schools whose catchment borders the catchment of Holt Primary School and the distance (according to google maps) from the centre of Holt to each of these schools. Children's Services does not consider it sustainably appropriate for children of this age to travel these distances from their homes to school unless completely unavoidable. This is one reason why Children's Services do not plan school places by 'Districts', we plan by school catchment and each school has its own catchment. We would not consider these other schools below when planning school places for Holt catchment numbers for the reason given below.

Astley Primary School – 4.7 miles  
Langham Village School – 5.5 miles  
Blakeney Primary School - 4.8 miles  
Kelling Primary School – 3.3 miles  
Sheringham Primary School – 6.5 miles  
Gresham Village School - 7 miles  
Aldborough Primary School – 10.1 miles  
Corpusty Primary School – 6.7 miles.

### **What would happen to the vacant school site?**

When a school site becomes available for any reason, our first consideration is reuse for educational purposes. This could include special educational needs and disabilities if it fits with an identified in the Norfolk County Council SEND Sufficiency information.

If it does not meet any education need, a site and building can then be offered up for wider County Council use. An example of this could be the 'Housing with Care Strategy' which is looking to support the housing needs of older people across the County. If there is no identified need across the County Council it is only then that a site might then be considered for disposal and put up for sale.

In parallel to the process set out above, the Secretary of State reserves the right to take a site off the Local Authority and directly commission a 'free school' where there is either a pupil need or standards issue in existing schools in the area. It is not currently anticipated this would be the case in Holt.

### **Funding for the new school building**

The responsibility for capital funding for the new building sits with Norfolk County Council. It will be a combination of growth (Basic Need grant and S106 developer contributions) and condition funding. The existing school was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and the condition funding acknowledges the need to invest in the fabric of the building and reprovide existing school places.

### **Site identification/assessment**

The existing school was originally assessed for expansion but at under 1 hectare in size there is no opportunity to expand on its current site. NCC attended the earlier appeal Inquiry in 2015 and gave evidence confirming that it is not possible to expand the school on the current site to provide a 2FE facility. It also firmly expressed an aspiration to move away from the current split site in Holt.

In response to the number of housing allocations made for Holt town, NCC Children's Services commissioned a site search for available land in the town – on the basis of a set of general criteria which are as follows:

- 2-hectare site
- Serving existing community and new development
- Delivery in next two years
- Appropriate access onto a highway
- Impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties
- Need to avoid statutory and non-statutory environmental protection designations
- Need to avoid areas of high flood risk

Aside from site size, the location in relation to existing and new development is an important consideration. The initial search identified ten possible sites but there were two shortlisted to compare more closely. Another site was originally favoured over Beresford Road, but it became clear that this opportunity was no longer available. The site assessment was refreshed in Dec 2018 to see whether any other any assumption had changed in the meantime, but it was apparent that there were no sites meeting as many of the criteria than Beresford Road.

Following site assessment work that has been ongoing since 2015, this site is currently the only available option for the delivery of a new primary school to serve Holt. The proposal has been endorsed by NCC's Children's Services Committee and an allocation of £500,000 has been made to support the development through the design development stage.

A masterplan produced for Norfolk County Council demonstrates that a 420 place primary school, nursery, associated external areas including staff and visitor parking can be successfully achieved on

the proposed site. This would allow the original Victorian school building to be replaced with a fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century school building.

NCC as well as the school and governing body welcomes the opportunity that the proposal provides to secure a new primary school site and is supportive of the planning application.

JANE BLACKWELL  
PLACE PLANNING MANAGER

ISABEL HORNER  
SUFFICIENCY DELIVERY MANAGER

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL  
7<sup>th</sup> January 2020