

# A Strategy for School Organisation Place Planning and Basic Need Capital Investment for Children and Young People in Dudley from 2018/19 – 2023/24

<b>Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council</b>
<b>LA Number: 332</b>

## Document Revision List

<b>School Organisation Place Planning and associated Capital Investment Strategy 2018/19 – 2023/24</b>	
<b>Version: Final</b>	
<b>Purpose Description</b>	General Issue
<b>Date</b>	October 2018

## Contents

<b>FOREWORD .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SECTION 1 SETTING THE SCENE – CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1 Key Characteristics of Dudley .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2 Current School Provision .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3 Pupil Projections and other factors that influence the provision of future school places .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4 Primary School Places.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.5 Secondary School Places.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SECTION 2 STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL PLACE COMMISSIONING .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.1 Key Challenges around the Provision of School places .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.2 Pupil Place Planning .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.3 Consultation &amp; Communication.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.4 Action Plans &amp; Project Planning.....</b>	<b>36</b>

## Foreword

Education is at the heart of a thriving community and Dudley is committed to ensuring that a top class education system exists in Dudley for the betterment and enrichment of its young people.

Dudley has seen a significant increase in birth rate in recent years which has now started to decrease. Ensuring that we have a sufficiency of good quality school places to meet demand and increase parental preference continues to be a challenge.

The increase in academisation and introduction of free schools into the Dudley area allow opportunity for Dudley to continue to deliver an excellent education system for its residents, along with a wider choice for parents.

The educational landscape in Dudley has changed considerably in recent years and as a result the way in which we organise the school estate has to change too. This strategy therefore identifies new and innovative ways of working to ensure that we continue to deliver a first class education for the children and families of this borough.

## Executive Summary

This strategy provides the context and policy for school organisation, place planning and associated schools' Basic Need capital investment in Dudley for the next five years. It aims to present the current situation in relation to primary and secondary places in the borough in the context of five geographical townships. This strategy does not cover Early Years settings, which is covered by the Early Years Sufficiency Strategy; post 16 settings which are covered by the 16 – 19 Funding & Commissioning Plan or Special schools which is covered by the SEN Strategy.

Councils are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high education standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential.

The education landscape in Dudley is changing rapidly. The authority has seen a significant rise in birth rates which has now peaked and is on a downwards trajectory. Having addressed the increase in population over the past 5 years in the primary estate we now look to the increase that is pushing into the secondary estate. This strategy looks forward and identifies those areas of the borough likely to come under pressure for school places in the near future. In response to identified pressure points, the strategy then highlights short and medium term actions. These actions reflect knowledge held about the physical infrastructure and teaching arrangements in schools and are being developed into action plans.

It is important to ensure that investment in provision is planned according to projections in demographic change and that it is kept under constant review. In the secondary sector there is strong and sustained growth projected and therefore a balance between short term pressures against longer term demographics needs to be understood when determining the most appropriate response in terms of the scale and nature of new capacity investment. At a primary level birth rates are projected to continue to fall and therefore effective plans need to be put into place to manage this downward trend.

The key priorities for the People Directorate are set out in the Directorate Strategic Plan which is updated annually and reviewed quarterly.

### **The Directorate is committed to:**

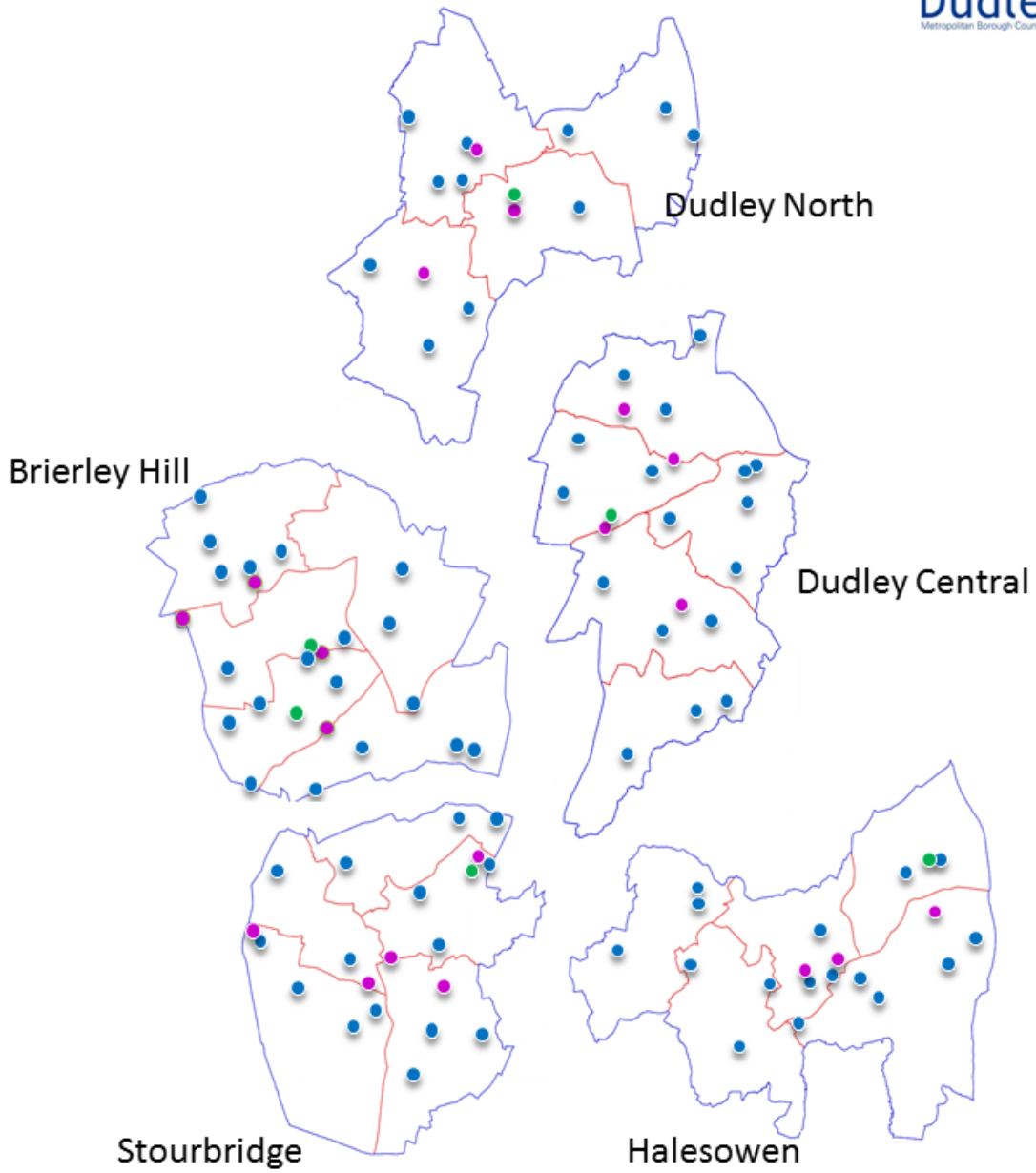
- Improving education outcomes for children and young people by strengthening partnerships with schools and colleges
- To providing targeted support to young people and adults most in need that will assist them in accessing education and training opportunities.

For each of these priority areas we are focused on providing early support; developing our workforce; working in partnership in an integrated way; and the resource needs.

Whilst it is clear that the Directorate has a major responsibility to contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people, much of this work requires working in partnership with other public agencies and the private and voluntary sector. The increase in academisation that has happened in Dudley over the past few years has significantly changed the way in which the authority is able to manage the rise and fall in demand for school places and it is important that this strategic plan reflects these changes.

Fig. 1 A Map of the five geographical townships of the Borough

## Dudley Townships 2017



- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Special School

## Section 1 Setting the Scene – Contextual Information

### 1.1 Key Characteristics of Dudley

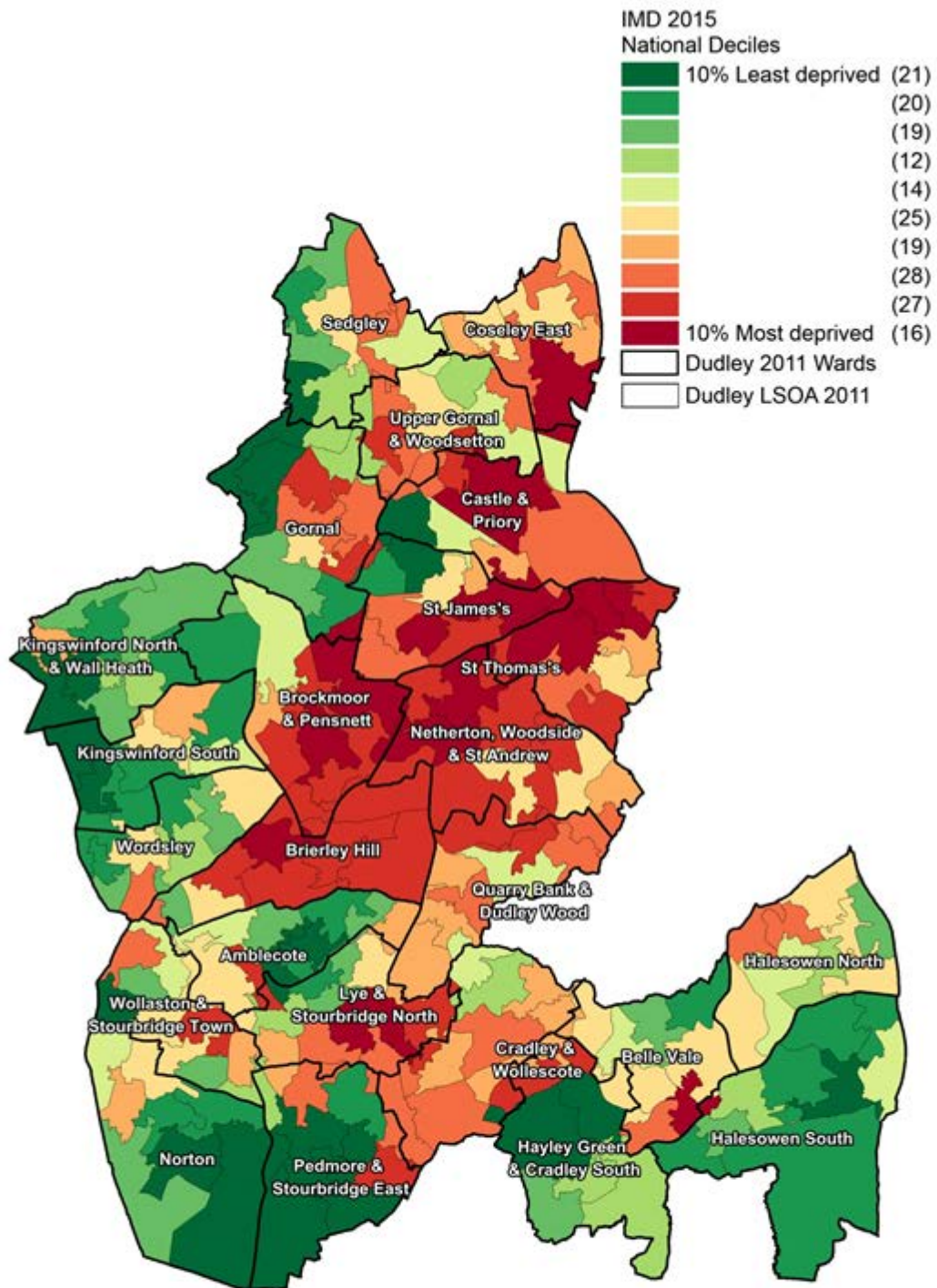
Dudley is a borough with a strong sense of community and industrial heritage. It has the largest population in the Black Country and forms a significant part of the border between the urban and rural West Midlands; 25% of the borough is open space. Dudley has major tourist attractions, including Dudley Castle and Zoo, Black Country Living Museum, the Red House Glass Cone Museum and Merry Hill Shopping Centre and Retail Park.

The borough is very diverse. It contains five separate townships and has commercial and residential areas of some affluence close to relatively deprived communities.

Children and young people constitute 24% of the total population with 75,203 children and young people aged 0-19. The birth rate has been falling and the number of children of school age has declined. Dudley birth rates peaked in 2011/12 and are now in steady decline. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups attending Dudley is rising and now represents 21.3% of the school population and 12.0% of children and young people do not have English as their first language. The proportion of children and young people entitled to free school meals is 16.1%.

The borough wide data suggests that Dudley is relatively affluent when compared with the rest of the West Midlands conurbation. There are, however, some small but severe pockets of deprivation within the area that are amongst the 10% most deprived in England. These are closely associated with our traditional manufacturing base, which suffered from economic decline in the latter half of the 20th century. Dudley was significantly affected by the 2008 recession, with above average increases in unemployment and high impact on manufacturing and engineering.

Fig.2



Map created by Public Health Intelligence, Office of Public Health Dudley,  
 Topographic Data © Crown copyright and database rights (2015)  
 Ordnance Survey License Number 100019566



## **1.2 Current School Provision**

The school estate in Dudley has been effectively maintained and developed by good housekeeping on the part of the Council and its schools, and by the creative and co-ordinated use of various capital funding streams. Over the past five years, a number of major projects have been completed or commissioned by Children's Services that has enhanced the school estate.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that every child or young person living in the borough who wants a school place is able to access one. In order to carry out this duty effectively, we must ensure that changes in the population are taken into consideration when planning school place provision.

Dudley has a diverse school estate. In total there are 79 primary schools, of which 17 are academies, 6 of which are sponsored. 43 are maintained schools, one is a Foundation school, five are Voluntary Controlled schools, six are Voluntary Aided schools, and one an independent school. In addition, there is a project underway to open Dudley's first free primary school which is expected to open in September 2020.

Following the closure of The Coseley School in 2017, there are now 19 secondary schools in the borough, 15 are Academies, 1 is a Voluntary Aided school, and 3 are maintained schools.

## **1.3 Pupil Projections and other factors that influence the provision of future school places**

Dudley's pupil place planning processes are robust and have been endorsed by the Education Funding Agency. We have developed a projection model that incorporates live birth data, new housing developments, cohort survival, cross border movement and admission preferences. The model averaged 99.8% accuracy across the Secondary and Primary phase derived from the October 2017 school census.

Dudley is currently a net importer of pupils from neighbouring local authorities, and has been so for some time, an indicator of the quality of education offered by the borough. Private secondary education in the Borough is limited, with Birmingham and Worcestershire, located to the south of Dudley, being the biggest providers in the region.

As part of its wider regeneration agenda, Dudley Council has worked closely with neighbouring authorities to produce the Black Country Joint Core Strategy which was adopted in 2010 and is currently being reviewed. This forms the basis of spatial planning for the region up to 2026 and is being reviewed to take the authorities into 2036. The strategy has identified the need for future housing growth in Dudley. When

undertaking place planning we have incorporated housing developments into the projection model only where they have either outline or full planning approval. We have not included other potential developments. Subject to future capital funding initiatives, we will build flexibility within any new school designs to allow for additional demand for school places that may be generated as and when the new housing developments are established.

When looking at our total pupil place requirements for the future, we have analysed the schools in their township groups. Pupil projections have been prepared on a school by school basis that has been aggregated up to provide a total projection for each township.

#### **1.4 Primary School Places**

Following a period of 14 years of falling rolls during which the Council closed four primary schools and 3 secondary schools, the trend is now reversing. Dudley experienced an increase in the numbers of primary aged children of 1647 (6.6%) from 2013 to 2017. The increase trend is now slowing and numbers are forecast to rise gradually in the secondary phase over the next 7 years as the primary population makes its transition through the system.

## Dudley North Township

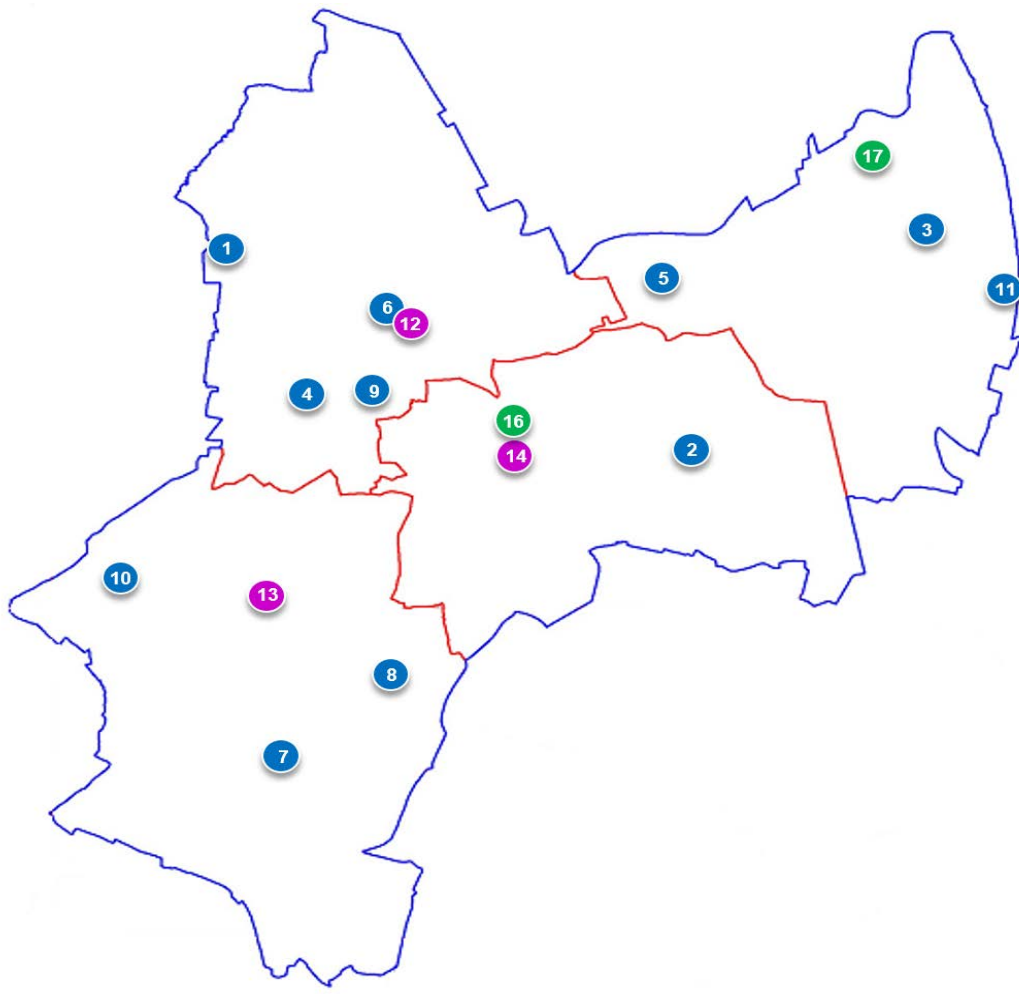
There are 11 primary schools in this area. Pupil numbers in this area are rising.

Surplus capacity in this area is currently 7.5% reducing from 9.4%. This is anticipated to reduce to 4.9% in 19/20 and 4.7% in 20/21.

A new primary free school is anticipated to open in 2020 on the site of the former Coseley School. This free school has been approved and plans for its opening are underway. It is anticipated to open with a 2 form reception year in the first instance.

A significant residential development is currently at the planning stages and it is therefore anticipated that additional school places will continue to be required. This area of the borough does import a large number of pupils from neighbouring local authorities. The table below lists the primary schools located within this township.

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Current Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>Current Net Capacity</b>
Alder Coppice	60	420
Bramford	60	420
Christ Church	75	514
Cotwall End	60	420
Hurst Hill	60	375
Queen Victoria	90	630
Red Hall	60	420
Roberts	90	630
St Chad's R.C. Academy	30	210
Straits	60	420
Wallbrook	45	315



Primary Schools				Secondary / Special Schools	
1	Alder Coppice Primary	7	Red Hall Primary	12	The Dormston
2	Bramford Primary	8	Roberts Primary School	13	The Ellowes Hall
3	Christ Church Primary	9	St Chad's RC Primary	14	Beacon Hill Academy
4	Cotwall End Primary	10	The Straits Primary	16	The Woodsetton
5	Hurst Hill Primary	11	Wallbrook Primary	17	The Rosewood
6	Queen Victoria Primary				

## Dudley Central Township

Dudley Central consists of 17 primary schools, including 10 academies.

Dudley Central planning area has experienced an enormous pressure on requirement for primary places, in recent years. The birth rate rose significantly in this area historically, due to the socio-economic and immigration profile of the area.

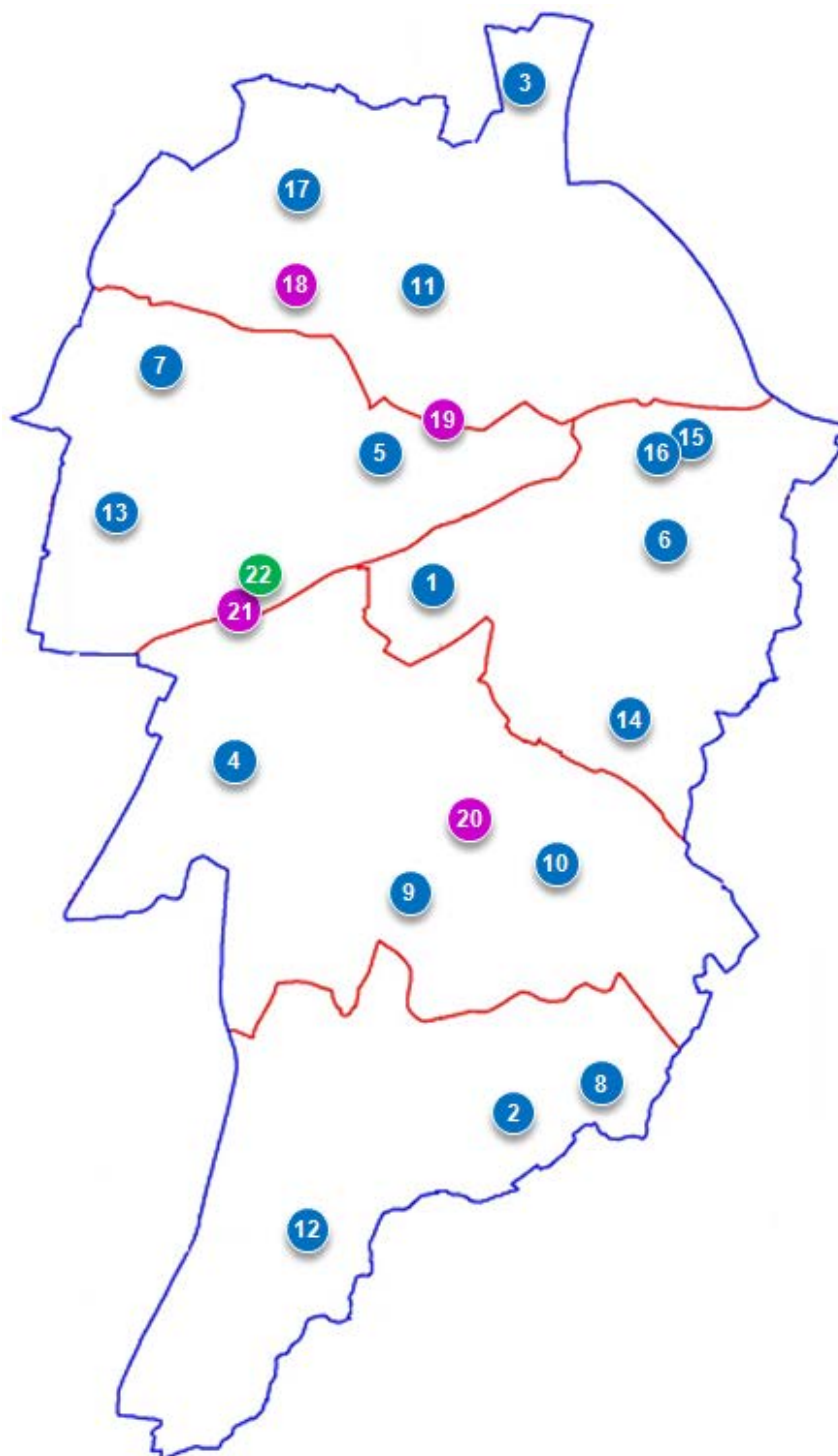
As a result of this, several schools were expanded and places are now available for use. Surplus capacity has therefore risen, but will decline as places are filled through the younger cohorts. Surplus capacity is currently 6.2%

Dudley Central planning area takes relatively few pupils from other authorities, with 7.5% of pupils in this area coming from other local authorities, compared to 6% in 2014/15.

Only one school in this area remains with a significant surplus.

School Name	Current Published Admission Number (PAN)	Current Net Capacity
Blowers Green	30	210
Dudley Wood	60	420
Foxyards	45	315
Jesson's C.E.	75	563
Kate's Hill	60	420
Milking Bank	60	420
Netherbrook	60	420
Netherton C.E.	60	420
Northfield Road	60	420
Priory	90	630
Quarry Bank	45	315
Russells Hall	60	420
Sledmere	90	630
Beechwood C of E	45	315
St Joseph's (Dudley) Academy	30	210
Woodside Community School and CC	60	420
Wrens Nest	60	420

## Dudley Central Geographical Township



Primary Schools		Secondary / Special Schools			
1	Blowers Green	11	Priory	18	Bishop Milner Catholic
2	Dudley Wood	12	Quarry Bank	19	St James Academy
3	Foxyards	13	Russells Hall	20	The Link Academy
4	Highgate	14	Sledmere	21	Pegasus Academy
5	Jesson's CE	15	St Edmund & St John	22	The Sutton Special School
6	Kate's Hill	16	St Joseph's RC Dudley		
7	Milking Bank	17	Wren's Nest		
8	Netherbrook				
9	Netherton CE				
10	Northfield Road				

## Brierley Hill / Kingswinford Township

Brierley Hill consists of 19 primary schools including two Academies. In 2016/17, surplus capacity was 10%, reducing to 6.2% by 2020/21.

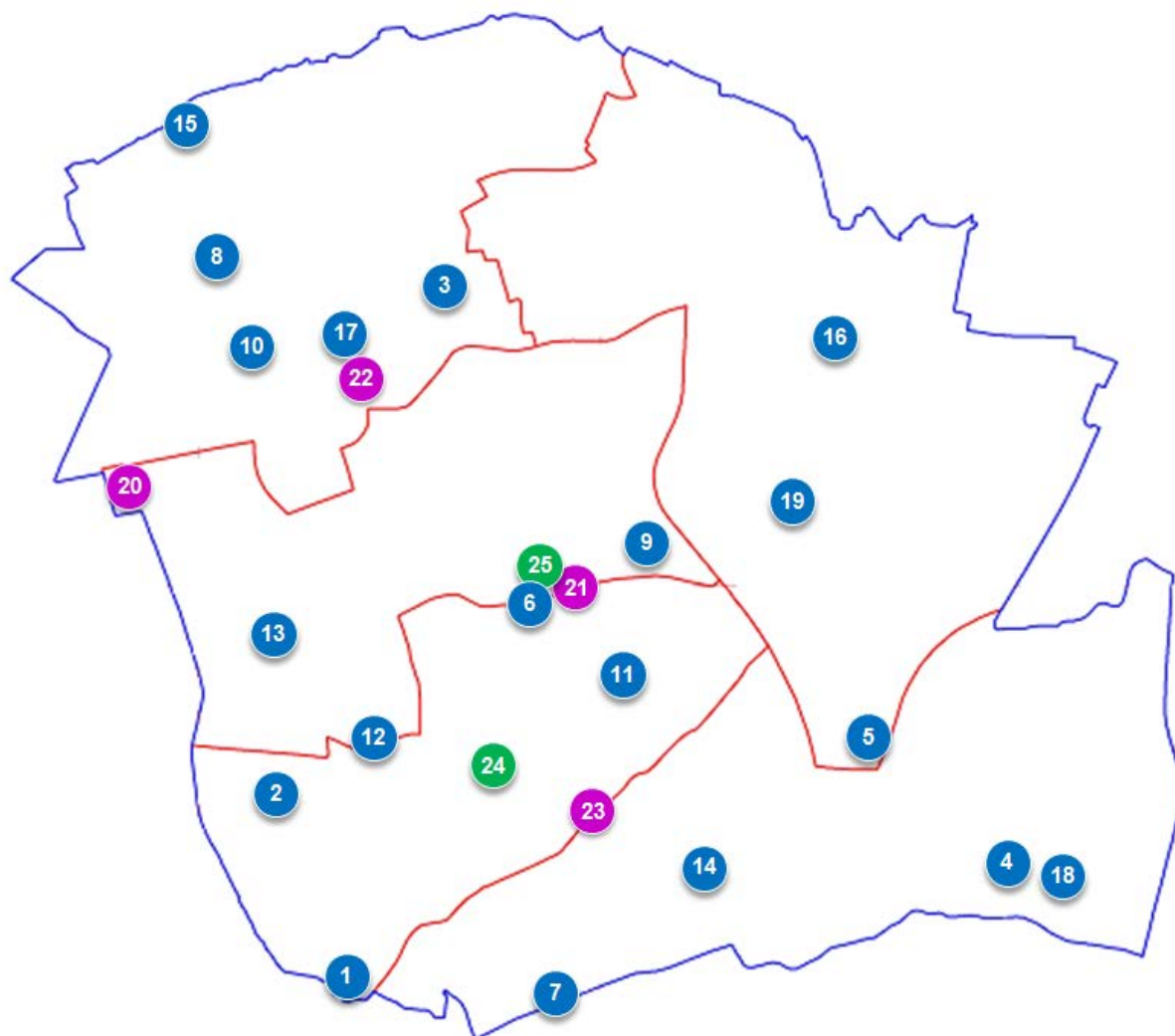
There are 3 schools in this area who currently have a significant surplus capacity and these schools are being monitored closely.

The primary bulge pushing through the other planning areas and the tight capacity that this has created has helped to reduce the surplus in this adjoining area. Places will continue to be monitored closely to assess future needs.

The table below lists the primary schools located within this township.

School Name	Current Published Admission Number (PAN)	Current Net Capacity
Ashwood Park	60	419
Belle Vue	60	420
Blanford Mere	45	307
Brierley Hill	30	210
Brockmoor	60	403
Bromley Hills	45	315
Brook	60	420
Church of the Ascension C.E.	45	315
Crestwood Park	30	210
Dawley Brook	30	210
Dingle Community	30	210
Fairhaven	45	315
Glynne	60	420
Hawbush	30	210
Maidensbridge	30	210
St Mark's C.E	45	300
St Mary's C.E. (VC)	30	210
St Mary's R.C	30	210
The Bromley-Pensnett	45	320

## Brierley Hill Geographical Township



Primary Schools		Secondary / Special Schools	
1 Ashwood Park	11 Dingle	20 Summerhill	
2 Belle Vue	12 Fairhaven	21 The Crestwood	
3 Blanford Mere	13 Glynne	22 The Kingswinford	
4 Brierley Hill	14 Hawbush	23 The Wordsley	
5 Brockmoor	15 Maidensbridge	24 Pens Meadow	
6 Bromley Hills	16 St Mark's CE	25 The Brier Special School	
7 Brook	17 St Mary's CE		
8 Church Of The Ascension	18 St Mary's RC		
9 Crestwood Park	19 The Bromley-Pensnett		
10 Dawley Brook			



## Halesowen Township

Halesowen consists of 16 Primary Schools. 6 of these schools are now academies.

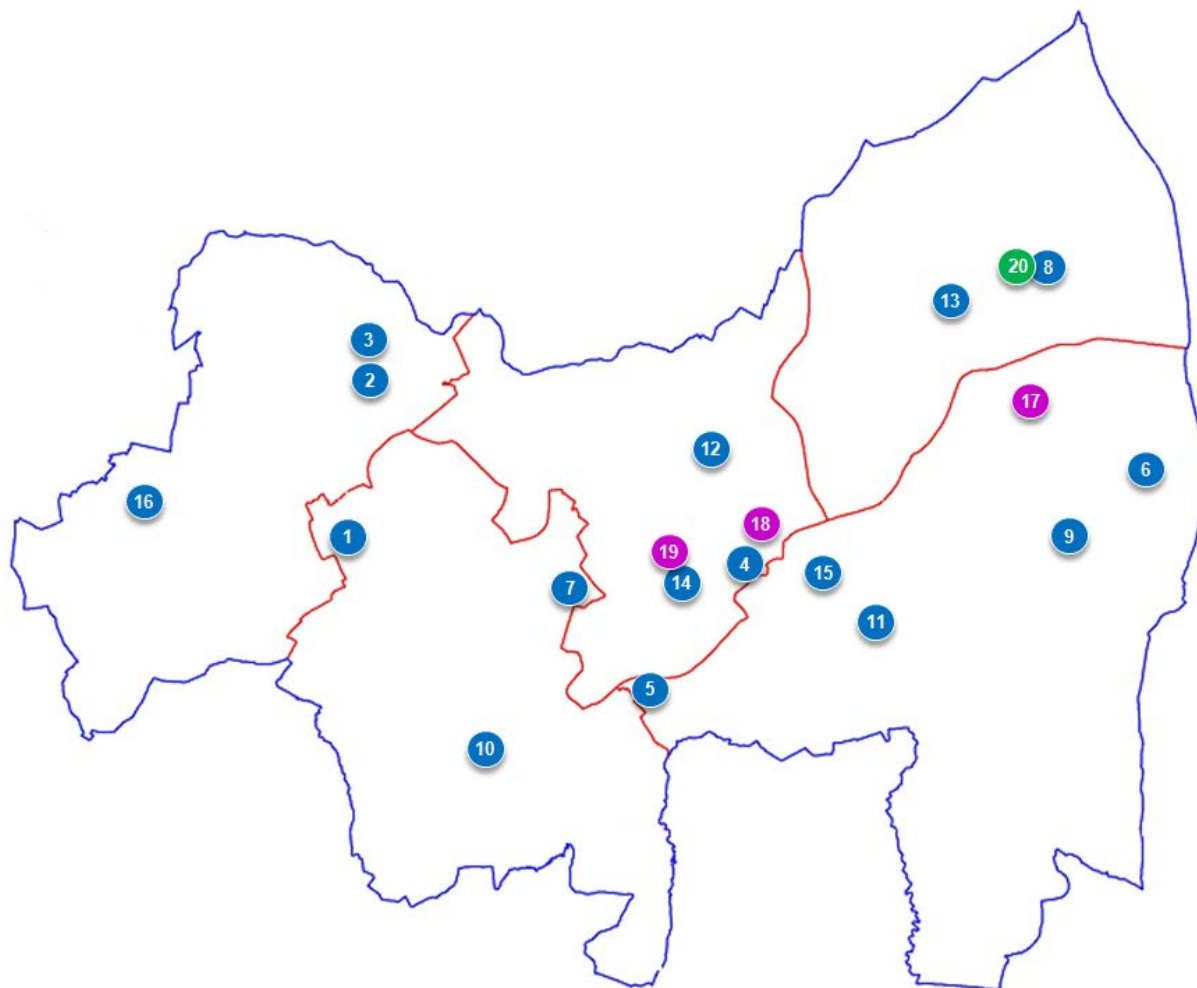
Halesowen has historically experienced a gradual increase in pupil numbers, with specific pockets of high demand for places. In 2014/15 surplus capacity in this area was 5.4% which is now 1.97% The pressure is lifting slightly as the birth rate drops, however pressure remains high, particularly for in-year moves.

In order to increase the capacity through the bulge, two bulge projects are have been implemented in this area.

A significant proportion of pupils in this area come from neighbouring authorities. The table below lists the primary schools in this township.

School Name	Current Published Admission Number (PAN)	Current Net Capacity
Caslon	30	210
Colley Lane	90	630
Cradley C.E.	30	203
Halesowen C.E.	30	210
St Margaret's at Hasbury C.E. (V.C.)	30	210
Howley Grange	60	420
Huntingtree	60	420
Hurst Green	60	420
Lapal	45	330
Lutley	90	630
Manor Way	30	210
Newfield Park	60	510
Olive Hill	60	420
Our Lady & St Kenelm	30	210
Tenterfields	30	210
Wollescote	60	420

## Halesowen Geographical Township



Primary Schools		Secondary / Special Schools	
1 Caslon	9 Lapal	17 Leasowes CC	
2 Colley Lane	10 Lutley	18 The Earls High	
3 Cradley CE	11 Manor Way	19 Windsor High	
4 Halesowen CE	12 Newfield Park	20 Halesbury	
5 St Margarets at Hasbury CE	13 Olive Hill		
6 Howley Grange	14 Our Lady & St Kenelm RC		
7 Huntingtree	15 Tenterfields		
8 Hurst Green	16 Wollescote		

## Stourbridge Township

Stourbridge consists of 15 primary schools, including two academies. One school has a sponsored order in place but this conversion is on hold pending finding a suitable sponsor.

Stourbridge, as a planning area, continues to experience high pressure for pupil places. Work has already completed to expand one school, another school has admitted above PAN. Further projects to increase available places are still under consideration but site constraints make further expansion in this area very difficult.

The Stourbridge planning area currently has a surplus capacity of 1.1%.

Birth rate data indicates that, from 2020/21, pressure on primary places will diminish and return to at least pre-bulge levels. In 2014/15, the Stourbridge planning area only took 2% of pupils from neighbouring authorities. This increased to 3.4% in 2015/16. This area therefore is less affected by the neighbouring authority pressures, and therefore predictions in this area are less volatile.

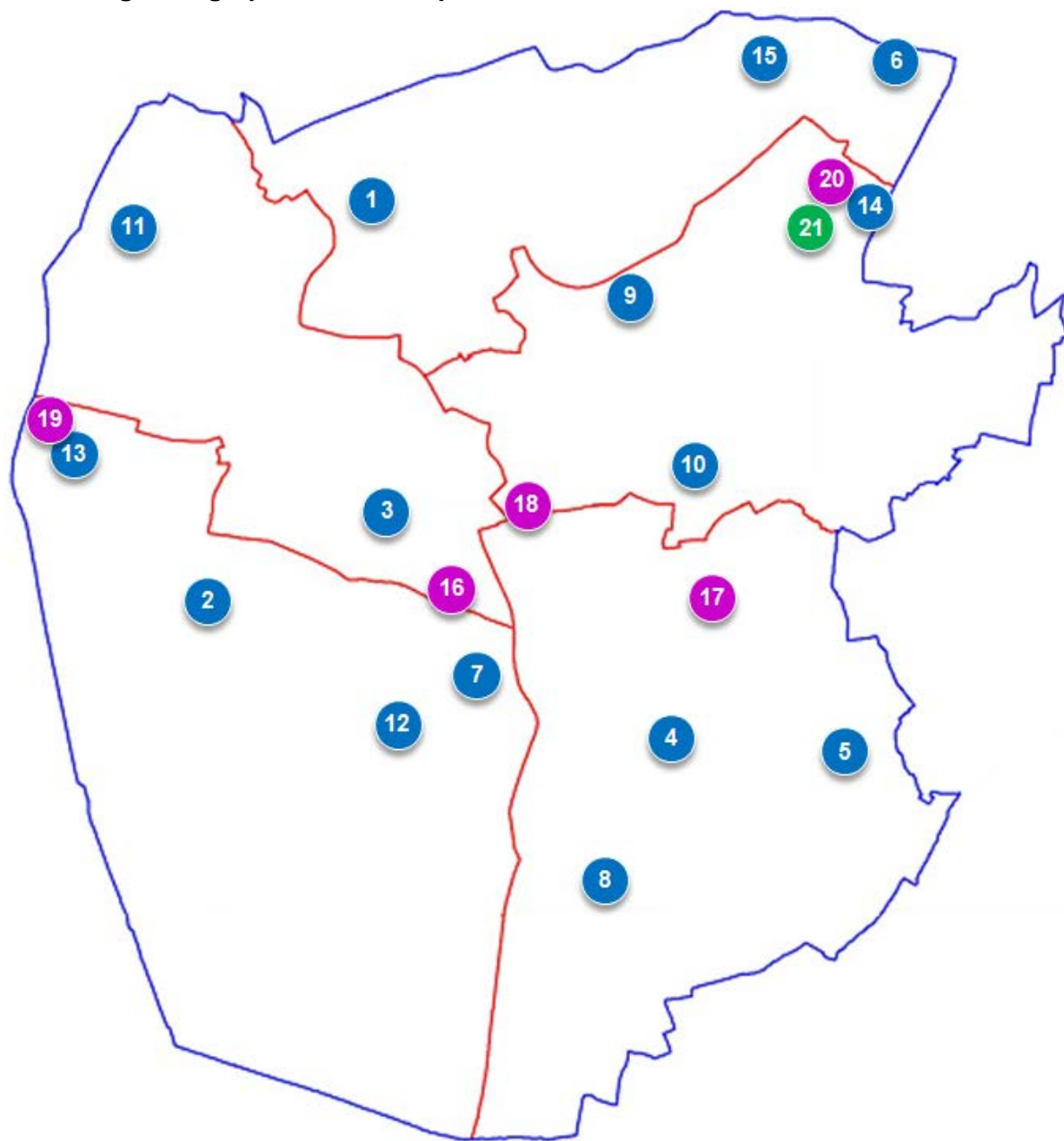
Stourbridge planning area is adjacent to the Brierley Hill area and it is anticipated that the surplus capacity in this area will be sufficient to meet the demands in the Stourbridge area.

The table below lists the schools in this area.

School Name	Current Published Admission Number (PAN)	Current Net Capacity
Amblecote	45	315
Gig Mill	90	630
Greenfield	40	280
Ham Dingle	54	378
Hob Green	30	243
Mount Pleasant	50	337
Oldswinford C.E.	60	420
Pedmore C.E. (VA)	30	210
Peters Hill	120	840
Rufford	30	210
St James's C.E.	60	420
St Josephs R.C. (Stour') Academy	30	210
The Ridge	30	210
Thorns	30	210
Withymoore	60	412

The Independent Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School is also located in this township.

### Stourbridge Geographical Township



Primary School		Secondary / Special School
1 Amblecote	9 Peter's Hill	16 Old Swinford Hospital
2 Gig Mill	10 Rufford	17 Pedmore High School
3 Greenfield	11 St James's CE	18 Redhill
4 Ham Dingle	12 St Joseph's RC Stour	19 Ridgewood High
5 Hob Green	13 The Ridge	20 Thorns CC
6 Mount Pleasant	14 Thorns	21 Old Park Special School
7 Oldswinford CE	15 Withymoor	
8 Pedmore CE		

## 1.5 Secondary School Places

Dudley has a diverse range of secondary schools across the borough.

Dudley has for many years experienced a fall in secondary population numbers. The previous population decrease is directly attributable to the fall in live births which had occurred since 1990. However the increase in birth rate in recent years which has been felt in the primary sector is now going to be seen in the secondary estate.

The Council has been pro-active in removing pockets of surplus capacity, especially where these are associated with low achievement. Following the closure of Coseley Secondary School in August 2017, we currently have 18,723 mainstream secondary pupil places across the borough (Source: DfE Surplus Place Return. August 2017) with 16,966 11 – 16 year olds on roll (source: Provision School Census data October 2018).

In common with other urban authorities outside London, we have seen a steady decline in the secondary pupil population (11-16 year olds) from 18,502 in 2013/14 to the current number of 16,966 (Source: Provisional School Census data October 2018). Numbers are forecast to increase steadily as larger Year 6 cohorts leave primary schools. Focus therefore at the secondary estate is a phased increase of provision as required.

### **Dudley North Township**

There are 3 secondary schools in this area. Due to falling pupil numbers and poor results a decision was taken to close The Coseley School in 2017.

The picture has significantly changed for Dudley North since the closure of the Coseley School.

Current capacity in this area is very limited with 2% surplus capacity currently, 0.85% capacity in 2019/20, 1.78% capacity in 2019/20 and 0.15% capacity in 2020/21.

This lack of capacity is exacerbated by the proximity to the Sandwell border. In 2015/16 The Coseley School provided some 40% of its places to pupils from neighbouring Authorities.

The establishment of a Secondary Free School for this site is currently being explored in order to provide permanent additional capacity going forward, and to meet the increased area demand for places from 2020/21 onwards. The Wave 13 Free School Programme is currently in progress.

In order to meet immediate need and increase parental choice in this area, temporary bulge solutions may be explored with the schools in this area from 2019/20 onwards.

20% of pupils across the area are currently admitted from neighbouring authorities.

The table below lists the schools located in this area.

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Current Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>Current Net Capacity</b>
Dormston School	224	1120
Ellowes Hall Sports College	200	1100
Beacon Hill Academy	242	1210

## Dudley Central Township

There are 4 secondary schools in this area. Numbers in this area are now starting to increase, after a significant period of falling pupil numbers.

Surplus capacity is currently 15.3% but is expected to reduce to 11.9% by 2020/21.

No changes to capacity are currently planned in this area. However, some schools have reduced PAN in previous years due to the low pupil numbers. The LA will work with individual schools in order to discuss rectification of PAN in line with increasing numbers, as required.

The table below lists the schools located in this area.

School Name	Current Published Admission Number (PAN)	Current Net Capacity
St James Academy	180	1069
Bishop Milner Catholic College	130	800
Pegasus Academy	146	699
The Link Academy	210	1050

## Brierley Hill Township

There are 4 secondary schools in this area, including two academies and two maintained schools. The pupil numbers have stabilised and will steadily increase in the next few years due to the growth in the primary population. The local authority continues to monitor capacity in this geographical area in response to both cohort size and planned housing development. This is the first of the planning areas that require capacity growth and plans are currently in process for increasing provision. The table below lists the schools in this area.

Without an increase in places in this planning area surplus capacity is 2.59% currently decreasing to 0.11% in 2019/20; 1.02% in 2020/21 and -0.91% in 2021/22

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Current Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>Current Net Capacity</b>
Crestwood	170	750
Kingswinford	190	900
Summerhill Secondary	210	1055
Wordsley	166	755



## Halesowen Township

There are 3 secondary academy schools in this area. Consistent with all townships, the numbers in this area have gradually fallen during the last few years leading to surplus capacity. This is mostly due to the reduced primary population now feeding through to the secondary phase. The current growth in the primary population will reverse this falling trend in future years. We continue to monitor capacity in this planning area in response to both cohort size and planned housing development. The table below lists the schools in this area.

Surplus capacity is currently 9.15% reducing to 6.19% in 2019/20; 3.54% in 2020/21 and 1.33% in 2021/22

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Current Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>Current Net Capacity</b>
Earls High	248	1200
Leasowes Community College	195	1229
Windsor High	295	1700

## **Stourbridge Township**

There are five secondary schools in this township, four of which are academies and one which is boarding school. The numbers of pupils have gradually fallen during the last few years. This is mostly due to the reduced primary population now feeding through to the secondary phase. It is worth noting, the current growth in the primary population which will reverse this falling trend in future years. The table below lists the schools in this area.

Surplus capacity is currently 21.74%, and is predicted to be 21.12% in 2019/20; 21.10% in 2020/21 and 20.77% in 2021/22, whilst this is high this planning areas surplus capacity is affected by Old Swinford Hospital School admissions, which vary over time.

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Current Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>Current Net Capacity</b>
Old Swinford Hospital (Inc. 6th Form)	69	958
Pedmore High School	150	754
Redhill	245	1175
Ridgewood	190	940
Thorns Community College	270	1422

## Section 2 Strategy for School Place Commissioning

### 2.1 Key Challenges around the Provision of School places

The political, environmental, demographic and economic landscape has changed in Dudley and nationally in recent years, all of which have an impact on place planning and school organisation. School organisation is integral to facilitating school improvement and championing the interests of all children and young people is vital.

#### Local Authority Statutory Requirements

The 'Education and Inspections Act 2006' places a duty on local authorities to act as commissioners, rather than providers of school places. Local authorities are under a statutory duty to;

- Ensure there are sufficient school places in their area
- Promote high educational standards
- Ensure fair access and equal opportunity
- Promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential
- Promote diversity in provision
- Expand popular and successful schools
- Increase opportunities for parents to access schools of their choice

The White paper 'The importance of teaching' states that the local authority has a key role to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools and should focus on supplying enough good school places rather than reducing surplus places.

The Academies Act 2010 enabled more schools to convert to Academy status without the need for a sponsor. The Education Act 2011 expands the programme to allow the establishment of 16 – 19 Academies and alternative provision (PRU) Academies.

The Education Act 2011 made changes to the arrangements for the establishment of new schools by introducing a presumption that when local authorities set up new schools they will be Academies or Free Schools. (Academy is the legal term which also includes Free Schools of all types, University Technical Colleges (UTC's) and some Studio Schools, including 16 to 19 and alternative provision (PRU) establishments.)

In Dudley, the introduction of the white paper "Education Excellence Everywhere", which suggested that all schools should be academies by 2021, caused a significant increase in the rate of academy conversions. Whilst the pace of academisation in

Dudley appears to have slowed, it has changed the way in which place planning operates within the authority.

Academies are responsible for setting their own admission number, and thus capacity, with the agreement of the Secretary of State for Education. Dudley will continue to seek to work in partnership with existing and new providers to secure a wide range of education options for parents and families, whilst ensuring that there are sufficient good school places.

### **The Role of New Providers**

New providers are entering the market nationally in two ways:

- Through the government's Free School Programme.
- Opening of a new school through sponsorship of Academy or Free School

The Local Authority is actively engaging with school providers. The first primary free school in the authority is expected to open in September 2020 and discussions are taking place with regards to a secondary free school in Dudley North. Data and advice is provided in a strategic context and engagement will be made with new providers where provision meets our statutory responsibilities for pupil place planning and where such provision is likely to affect the sustainability of other local provision. All providers will be encouraged to discuss their proposals and to establish good partnership arrangements with local schools.

## **2.2 Pupil Place Planning**

Dudley's strategic principles for place planning and school organisation are to maintain a coherent system that is fit for purpose, is stable and delivers the best possible outcomes for all children and young people and can be defined as:

- To respond to parental preference, where possible offering parents their first choice of place; where feasible, expand those popular and successful schools;
- To update pupil projections on an annual basis and to ensure appropriate numbers of places are available in the desired locations where possible;
- To closely monitor the numbers of pupils on roll and the space available (net capacity) of all schools. To identify those schools that have either too much space or not enough space and recommend appropriate action.

### **Parental Preference**

For admissions in September 2018 in Dudley, 3,845 applications for primary places were received with 89% being offered their first preference and 97.5% being offered one of their top 3 preferences. For secondary age pupils, 3,616 applications were

received, with 86% being offered their first place preference and 96% were offered one of their top 3 preferences.

Parental preference can be very fluid and can be influenced by a range of factors including recent Ofsted inspection outcomes, a change of head teacher, a new build or community view about the ethos of a school, therefore, parental preference can be very difficult to predict.

Some schools are historically popular and, where appropriate and within the authority's remit for school place planning, the local authority would support expansion of these schools.

### **Pupil Projections and Appropriate Numbers of Places**

Historically, Dudley has carefully monitored the number of school places available and the numbers of children requiring a school place. Empty school places are an issue because they can lead to the wasting of scarce resources. In addressing this issue in the past, a number of schools have been closed. The number of empty places is, as far as is possible and practical, kept to a minimum. Some spare capacity is required in each township to accommodate in-year admissions, which have seen significant increase in recent times.

Surplus places are school places that have not been filled. This strategy recommends that a minimum level of surplus within each year group of 5% (against admission limits) is available at a borough level.

A level of surplus is essential in order to offer increased opportunity for parental preference to be reflected in allocations, to allow for fluctuations in demand and to offer flexibility to cater for mid-year entrants. Too few surplus places can result in reduced opportunity for parental choice, increased travel times, and increased class sizes. However, too great a number of surplus places can lead to the inefficient use of resources.

It should be noted that given the significant variations in both localised demand and the popularity of individual establishments, balancing levels of surplus across all schools is a significant challenge; adopting a planned, strategic approach to school place planning maximises opportunities to meet localised demand for school places and for individual establishments' positions to be considered.

To ensure that students can access a local school and that travel times are reasonable this strategy recommends that, where required, a secondary school place is available within a maximum of three miles (walking distance) of each secondary school students' home. An annual dialogue will be established between representatives of Education and Transportation to review school access routes and transportation requirements.

## **The Introduction of Additional School Places**

In order to safeguard the sustainability of the school estate, the expansion of existing schools will be investigated in the first instance, prior to considering the introduction of new provision. In order to achieve this ambition, the Council will seek to maximise the capacity of existing school sites and consider the appropriation of suitable land adjacent to existing school sites.

The following factors will be considered when prioritising potential school expansion schemes:

Parental Choice – schools which are most popular with parents

School Performance - schools judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted

Attainment - schools whose results consistently exceed floor standards

School Leadership – schools with stable and proven leadership

Location – schools located within areas of high demand

Viability for expansion – schemes which can be most easily and efficiently implemented

Value for money - schools that can most cost effectively be expanded.

The Council is committed to ensuring the implementation of practical solutions to meet the basic need challenge and will work closely with schools to develop appropriate schemes that consider students' needs and support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

In order to support the needs of students in expanding schools and in line with the Education Funding Agency's recommended approach, the Council will seek continued support from Schools' Forum for a Growth Fund to support resultant revenue needs of schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need. Schools currently qualify for funding through the Growth Fund in the following circumstances:

- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to permanently increase its admission limit to meet basic need.
- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to provide a bulge class to meet basic need.
- The school or academy has agreed with the LA to expand in-year to meet basic need.

Opportunities to expand on the number of Free Schools in the borough will be explored in order to meet basic need; however, introducing additional Free School provision in geographically appropriate locations and in a timely manner presents a significant challenge.

In order to ensure that the needs of families and students in Dudley can continue to be met effectively it may, on occasion, be necessary for the Council to adopt a more responsive approach to school place planning and to develop contingency plans to cater for external influences on the supply of school places

It is recognised that school funding is currently under review by central government and that at present there remains uncertainty regarding future funding mechanisms. This strategy recognises the need for expanding schools to receive appropriate funding, in a timely manner, to meet students' needs.

When an expanding school is in the process of converting to academy status, the Council will seek to ensure that legal mechanisms are employed to ensure that the needs of the borough are fulfilled and any approved investment is secured for the future. Specifically the Council's legal representatives will seek to include reference to the enlarged capacity within relevant Commercial Transfer Agreements and representations will be made to the DfE to request that Funding Agreements reflect the capacity post-expansion.

### **The Introduction of Additional Capacity into Existing Cohorts**

The size of borough school cohorts can fluctuate significantly in-year. It is recognised that as demand increases and levels of surplus reduce, that the introduction of additional capacity into existing cohorts may need to be considered in the future. However, introducing additional capacity, at points other than standard years of entry, can potentially destabilise individual cohorts, impact on school staffing structures and have significant budget implications.

This strategy requires that the introduction of additional capacity into existing cohorts is only considered in response to significant demographic challenges and to support the needs of local communities. The introduction of additional capacity into existing cohorts should only be considered as a last resort and wherever possible should be avoided in Key Stage 4.

### **All-through Schools**

An 'All-through School' is a school which provides both primary and secondary education. In order to improve the diversity of the school estate in the borough, the introduction of all-through schools will be explored in partnership with schools, where appropriate. Successful all-through schools can offer a number of benefits including:

- Reducing the number of transitions children face and reducing the risk of delayed learning at the start of secondary school
- Extending opportunities available to primary pupils; all-through schools can offer primary age pupils early access to specialist subject teaching and facilities
- Providing an additional opportunity to fully utilise the whole school estate to meet the anticipated future primary basic need challenge
- Providing school staff with wider career development opportunities
- Offering cost savings through economies of scale.

The introduction of all-through provision will only be considered where there is a demonstrable need for additional capacity in the local area and all-through provision would be an appropriate solution.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

Across the school estate a small proportion of schools' schedules of accommodation include temporary facilities. Whilst it is recognised that the quality of temporary

accommodation has improved significantly in recent years, this strategy requires that the replacement of temporary accommodation is prioritised, where appropriate.

### **Reduction of PAN**

In schools where significant surplus provision is currently still in operation, consideration will be given to a temporary reduction in the Published Admissions Numbers. In these circumstances it would be expected that the school utilised the additional capacity of the school to meet SEN, Alternative Provision or other educational needs as appropriate.

### **Discontinuance of Maintained Provision**

In certain circumstances the Council will consider the discontinuance of maintained provision.

This strategy requires that the Council considers the closure of a school if the school meets two or more of the following criteria:

- The school is judged Inadequate by Ofsted
- The performance of students at the school is unacceptably low
- The school has a significant number of surplus places
- There are significant suitability issues in respect of the school's accommodation and/or site
- Closure could be effected without denying any students access to at least one alternative school with available places within a maximum of three miles (walking distance) of their home.
- The substantive Headteacher has left or is leaving.

Prior to initiating any statutory processes to close a school, the Council will consult with the School's Headteacher and the Chair of the School's Governing Body to discuss how the criteria may apply to their school. As part of this process the Council will review and consult with schools' Governing Bodies regarding:

- The likely impact of a school's closure on other schools in the local area, taking account of numbers on roll and the capacity of schools to enhance provision for children and families
- Projected levels of future demand
- The importance of the school to the wider community
- The condition, suitability and sufficiency of school facilities.

### **Intervention**

In certain circumstances, the Council will facilitate the sponsorship of schools to become academies or support eligible schools to convert to academy status. Such



steps will only be taken to support the overall improvement of education in the borough, including the raising of students' attainment and progress. Where appropriate, the Council will work with other agencies to identify locally sourced sponsors to support the conversion of schools.

### **Specialist Provision**

The Council recognises the value of some specialist provision being attached to mainstream schools and the importance of inclusion. This strategy requires that any school reorganisation does not detrimentally impact on such provision.

Council representatives are currently undertaking a review of specialist provision across the borough. This review is aligned to the Council's SEND Strategy which aims to promote inclusion, maximise young people's opportunities to be independent and enable young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be recognised as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community.

### **Alternative Provision**

The Council is currently conducting a review into its alternative provision.

### **Change Management**

It is recognised that making significant changes to individual establishments can have a disruptive effect on the delivery of education. This strategy requires that any school reorganisation or development scheme seeks to minimise disruption and avoid any longer term detriment to students.

### **Estate Management**

It is recommended that a long term approach is taken to the management of educational assets in order to ensure that fluctuations in demand can be effectively and efficiently catered for. Where appropriate, sites should be reserved as contingency to cater for anticipated increases in demand, such as that resulting from new housing developments.

However, it should be recognised that adopting a longer term approach will result in short-term budgetary pressures as sites must be secured and maintained.

Where circumstances arise that present the opportunity to use existing school accommodation in different ways, this strategy would require that priority is given to the provision of statutory school places.

### **Other Considerations**

This strategy requires that when considering school organisation:

- The Council works closely with Diocesan Authorities to ensure that an appropriate balance of denominational and community places are available.
- That, if at all possible, the need for compulsory redundancy is avoided.
- Equal opportunities are promoted and that particular groups of children are not disadvantaged.

### **Partnership Working**

Consultation Forums will be established for each of the 5 planning areas at both primary and secondary level to include the Head Teachers / Chair of Governors, and representatives from the Place Planning team.

Meetings will be on an annual basis and will form part of the review of this strategy.

The Place Planning Team will prepare an annual position statement which will be the focus of discussion for the consultation forum.

Following the conclusion of the meeting, a period of time will be allocated for the receipt of Expressions of Interest from schools with regards to how they feel that they can assist in meeting the demand needs for their area. This will feed into the Strategic Place Planning Board for decision making.

### **Governance**

Under the direction of the Cabinet member and the Director of Children's Services, the responsibility for secondary sufficiency sits with the Strategic Place Planning Board.

The Strategic Place Planning Board meets on a regular basis and provides strategic direction to place planning and school organisation. A number of data streams are monitored on a regular basis by the board that in turn informs proposed action plans. These data streams include the number of pupils on roll at individual schools, admissions data, PAN's, the capacity available at schools, other school site information (for example, information about external play areas and car parking) and the future projections of pupils forecast to attend all schools.

Dudley uses the evidence available to determine the current capacity of schools, where hot-spots are going to occur and as a consequence where additional school places are required. Equally, the local authority also monitors where there is surplus space and where practical and possible will assist a school to reduce it.

### **School Pupil Projection Methodology**

Pupil numbers are closely monitored in Dudley. Schools complete a census return for the Department for Education (DfE) each October, January and April. This provides a

description of numbers of pupils on roll and the October census is used to generate school budgets.

The purpose of pupil projections is to try and determine the future numbers of children and young people that will require a school place in Dudley. Projections help to assess the extent to which a surplus or deficit of places is likely to exist throughout the borough in the future. The local authority can then work in partnership with schools to determine where additional places should be created and where surplus places should be removed. This informs where the Basic Need capital grant should be targeted.

### **Basic Need Capital Grant**

Dudley receives a capital grant from the DfE known as Basic Need that supports the capital requirement for providing new pupil places both in new or expanded maintained schools and in Free Schools or Academies and across both the primary and secondary school estate.

The authority provides data to the DfE in July of each year which explains the authority's current position, plan and projections for the future. (SCAP)

The DfE use this data to determine the level of funding that the authority should be allocated to procure additional school places.

### **Basic Need Funding as reported in SCAP 2017 (position reported as of July 2017):**

The Basic Need allocation for the years 2011-2020 is £23,762,767.

Spend and commitments to date against this allocation currently stands at £11,094,240

Current unallocated funds total £12,668,527.91

### **Current financial position as of January 2018**

The position of the basic need budget varies throughout the year dependent upon changes in capital commitments per project.

Current spend and commitments to date stand as reported below:

Spend/**committed funds** to date: £10,465,767

Current unallocated funds: £13,297,000

The place planning principles set out within this document determine where Dudley's allocation of Basic Need is targeted and informs the action plans that are developed.

## **2.3 Consultation & Communication**

Dudley Council is committed to making sure that local people get the best possible quality public services. Community engagement and empowerment means giving all people within the borough the opportunity to influence decisions and to shape services to meet their needs. By listening and responding to what our local people tell us, we can deliver appropriate, high quality services which provide excellent value for money.

In order to deliver the Place Planning Strategy, consultation with a number of stakeholders is required. Based on the evidence gathered, officers will put forward a number of possible solutions to either provide additional school places or remove surplus places. Once an action plan has been developed, it will be presented at the Strategic Place Planning Board for consideration; from here options would be discussed with individual schools, Schools Forum and eventually considered by the Council's Elected Members for approval.

## **School Organisation Regulations & Guidance**

There are two consultation stages to school organisation proposals that must be conducted in accordance with School Organisation Regulations and guidance. The first stage is publication of a consultation document, detailing the proposals and the reasons for the proposed changes; the second stage is publication of statutory notices. Following both of these consultation stages and taking account of any responses, the decision would be made to proceed or not with the proposals.

As the commissioner of school places, Dudley Council will make the decision on the majority of school organisation proposals, with the exception of new Academy schools. In doing so, the Council will consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them including pupils, parents and carers, staff, other schools and colleges, local residents, diocesan bodies, neighbouring local authorities and any other relevant local partnership.

## **2.4 Action Plans & Project Planning**

Following examination of the information and data mentioned in section 2.2, for each of the phases (primary and secondary mainstream schools) a number of conclusions can be drawn.

At a primary level, the peak of the bulge is now passing through the system. Whilst no other permanent expansions are being considered at present, bulge classes may be considered in order to manage hot spot areas.

In-year admissions have increased rapidly in Dudley and work is being undertaken to ensure that this increase is understood and plans put in place to address any shortages that occur as a result of this.

We have also experienced an increase in the 'in-year' demand for places this academic year which has resulted in pressures in some areas.

As the birth rate continues to decline, it is important that Dudley recognises where surplus capacity is rising higher than the 5% level and takes action to address this swiftly.

Any surplus capacity will in the first instance be considered for alternative education uses, such as SEN provision.

Current action plan for planning areas can be found in Appendix 1 (Primary) and Appendix 2 (Secondary) These will be updated by the Strategic Place Planning Board on an annual basis.