

Garden Communities

And

Planning School Places

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1. What are Garden Communities?

Garden communities are environments designed to promote community inclusion and walkable, sociable, vibrant neighbourhoods.

Garden communities are defined by the [Town and Country Planning Association](#) (TCPA) as settlements that adhere to the following nine principles:

1. Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
2. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
3. Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
4. Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
5. A wide range of local jobs in the garden city within easy commuting distance of homes.
6. Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
7. Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and which uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
8. Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
9. Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms for local journeys.

[The Essex Design Guide](#) introduces a further objective: 'Provision of comprehensive and future-proof digital connectivity delivered via fixed and / or mobile technology to support the use of smart technology'.

This document seeks to describe how new mainstream state funded statutory age range schools, serving new Garden Communities in Essex, will be established to be consistent with the above principles. Schools are an important part of any community and it is key that the size and location of each is carefully considered as part of the master planning process.

Garden Communities by their nature are unique developments and the precise level and pattern of demand for school places may differ from the norm that has been observed on other developments. Therefore, it is important that the planning of new schools is informed from the outset by **bespoke demographic studies** commissioned by the site promoters to provide a consistent evidence base for the planning of all social and community infrastructure.

The Department for Education have published guidance, titled '[Education Provision in Garden Communities](#)', which should be read in conjunction with this document. The Essex County Council [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions](#) (2020) also provides useful guidance regarding garden communities.

2. How many schools are needed?

The number of schools an area needs is a product of two factors: how many pupils have to be accommodated and the size of each school.

2.1 Pupil Numbers

Section 5.2.3 of the Essex County Council [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions](#) (2020) sets out the formula used in pupil place planning to estimate the number of pupils from new homes. For **primary schools, 0.3 pupils per house and 0.15 pupils per flat** are expected. For **secondary schools, 0.2 pupils per house and 0.1 pupils per flat** are expected. In both cases, single bedroom homes and any other dwelling types unlikely to house families, such as housing for the elderly, are excluded (counted as generating zero pupils). These factors represent the long term, rather than peak, demand for school places. On most new developments, demand starts off below these factors before rising above them and then falling back down to the expected level. The 'bulge' in demand impacts primary schools fairly soon after homes are occupied, and secondary schools some years later.

2.2 School Sizes

Due to the [Infant Class Sizes Regulations](#) (2012) most primary schools organise around classes of 30 pupils. This also tends to be the standard form class size in secondary schools, even though precise numbers in different subject groups differ. On this basis a primary school, with seven year groups (Reception through to Year 6), has a total of 210 pupils for every form of entry (class of 30) that joins the school in Reception. A secondary school has five statutory age year groups (Years 7 to 11) and therefore up to 150 pupils are assumed for each form of entry that joins in Year 7. Where a school has a 'sixth form' (Years 12 and 13), 30 extra pupils are added to this figure. This number takes account of the fact that some pupils leave after Year 11 and not all sixth form students complete two-year courses.

In most cases Garden Communities, or indeed other developments, do not generate neat pupil numbers that fit exactly into school class structures. When using the estimated pupil numbers to decide on how many schools are needed, pupil numbers must be rounded up to match the next whole form of entry. For example: an estimate of 800 primary school pupils is greater than three forms of entry (630 places) and would therefore be counted as requiring four forms of entry (840 places).

Sustainable travel for local journeys is a key principle for Garden Communities so it is logical to avoid very large schools and aim for most neighbourhoods to include a school which is within walking distance, via a safe direct route. [The Essex Design Guide](#) recommends any residential area should be no further than 600 metres walking distance from a primary school and 1,500 metres from a secondary school. Shorter distances could be considered desirable within the Garden Community context. The land required for a large school may also interrupt key walking and cycling routes, particularly in town or neighbourhood centre locations. However, the revenue funding received by schools is linked to pupil numbers and small schools can struggle disproportionately if there are consecutive low birth years. There are also capital cost savings to be made with larger schools, along with opportunities for a wider curriculum and resilience to fluctuations in demand.

Essex County Council considers **two forms of entry** (420 places) to be the appropriate **primary** school size for new developments. This is the minimum size recommended by the Department for Education in its document '[Education provision in garden communities](#) (April 2019)'. Two form entry primary schools balance the desirability of a local 'catchment' with viability considerations. They also offer a degree of flexibility in terms of expansion potential should the new Community experience bulges in the primary school age population. Clearly, schools are less likely to be expanded if they are already

large. Where the number of forms of entry required to serve the development is not an even number, one three form entry school (630 places) may be considered.

For **secondary** school provision, Essex County Council will aim to establish schools of **at least six forms of entry** (900 statutory age pupils or 1,080 including a sixth form). This equates to pupils from 4,500 houses or 9,000 flats (with two or more bedrooms). Smaller secondary schools can struggle to sustain a sixth form, which is an important consideration if a Garden Community is going to be ‘self-sufficient’ in education terms. The largest secondary school is likely to be eleven forms of entry (1,650 statutory age pupils or 1,980 including a sixth form) as demand for twelve forms of entry could be met by two six form entry schools with shorter travel distances for their pupils. A twelve form entry school would also be the largest in Essex, offering little flexibility in terms of future expansion should that be required to deal with any fluctuation in demand (bulge groups) or pupils generated by other local housing development.

3. Where should the schools be located?

School sites must meet strict criteria and be distributed to minimise walking distances between home and school.

3.1 Site Suitability and Area Requirements

The Essex County Council [Developers’ Guide to Infrastructure Contributions](#) (2020) sets out the criteria that each school site should meet. Most of these are common sense and the question ‘*would I want my child to be educated there*’ is a useful benchmark to keep in mind. Site promoters must submit a **Land Compliance Study** report (see section 4.3 of the Developers’ Guide) for each school site they propose. Some issues, such as ground levels, may be overcome by the developer completing pre-transfer site works. The provision of access, utility connections and fencing are also required (see section 5.2.8 of the Developers’ Guide).

The **amount of land** provided for each school must be in line with the top end of the Gross Site Area Range recommended by the Department for Education in its document ‘[Area guidelines for mainstream schools](#) (Building Bulletin 103)’. This provides appropriate flexibility to meet demand if it rises above the average on which the calculations described above are based. Each primary school site should also allow space for commensurate Early Years and Childcare provision. These are the approximate school sizes and site areas that are likely to be required on Garden Communities:

Primary School including 56 place Early Years and Childcare Facility (0.1 hectares added)	
Pupils	Site Area
420 (2 form entry)	2.1 hectares
630 (3 form entry)	3.0 hectares

Secondary School including commensurate sixth form provision (20% added)	
Pupils	Site Area
900 (6 form entry)	7.9 hectares
1,200 (8 form entry)	10.1 hectares
1,500 (10 form entry)	12.4 hectares

Additional space must also be provided for co-located Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision and any community uses being delivered in conjunction with the school.

3.2 Distribution

A key principle of Garden Community design, and an Essex County Council objective, is the promotion of walking and cycling over the use of the private car. This is best achieved by an **even geographical distribution** of schools within the overall development to minimise the distance that pupils need to travel to attend their nearest school.

Garden Communities are usually designed around distinct neighbourhoods. It is highly desirable for each to have its own primary school, potentially located to form part of a local centre, which can act as a focus for the community. Head teachers are key community figures and parents often make new friends at the school gate. School buildings can also provide out of hours / school holiday time accommodation for clubs and other community activities.

A primary school should be co-located with each secondary school planned for the Garden Community, thereby providing the option of establishing an **'all-through' school**. Such schools can assist in establishing a full range of education facilities earlier in the development's construction than would otherwise be the case. This is because having a 'feeder' primary cohort reduces the risk of a low secondary intake. There are also economies of scale generated by pooling some resources.

3.3 School Zones

All schools should be located within largely **traffic free** 'school zones'. The extent of these zones and the limits to vehicular access within them will be set out in further guidance. Of prime importance is the area outside the main pupil entrance, which must be entirely traffic free. Such pedestrianised public areas provide a space for children, parents and younger siblings to congregate safely at the beginning and end of the school day and foster a sense of community. Such spaces should be well connected to walking, cycling and bus routes that make sustainable modes of travel attractive. In addition to the environmental benefits, there is a clear link between active travel and health & wellbeing.

4. When will the schools be established?

New schools will be established as soon as: suitable land is serviced; there is sufficient demand for places not to undermine other local schools; and the new school is viable in terms of the pupil numbers required for effective curriculum delivery.

4.1 Initial Demand

Although it is desirable for Garden Communities to include new schools at the earliest opportunity, schools cannot be established before any homes are occupied. Even with significant subsidy, schools with too few pupils are unlikely to be able to offer a full range of social interactions and curriculum opportunities. The Secretary of State will not enter into a funding agreement for a new school without assurances that it will be financially viable during its initial years.

Under the Department for Education's [Fair Access Protocol](#), once a school is open, it must admit pupils up to its Published Admission Number and cannot reserve places for future Garden Community residents. This means that places may be taken by pupils from outside the Garden Community if a new school is opened too soon. This risks undermining other local schools without delivering places for

pupils about to move to the Garden Community. A common [Admissions Oversubscription Criteria](#) (discussed further in section 7.3) is to give priority to children who have siblings already at a school. Attracting children from the wider area when a school is establishing may thus mean that in future years those pupils' brothers and sisters gain entry at the expense of children who have moved to the Garden Community. For these reasons the **initial Garden Community pupils are likely to be educated off site** at existing nearby schools.

In the absence of suitable available walking routes for pupils being educated off site, Essex County Council has a duty to fund and make arrangements for [school transport](#). A route is deemed available if it is considered that a child, accompanied as necessary, can use it in reasonable safety. The distance between the child's home and the school via this route must be no more than two miles for pupils below the age of eight or three miles if the child is older. School transport may be provided by dedicated school buses, particularly for primary age pupils, but could also take the form of free passes to use on buses run by private operators. The latter option may present an opportunity to establish a commercially viable bus service earlier than would otherwise be the case on a development. Additional temporary facilities at existing schools would likely be needed to accommodate the pupils. Both costs, transport and buildings, as well as any other transitional costs identified by the schools in question, need to be covered through developer contributions.

4.2 First Schools

Because of the key role a school plays in forming a new community, **Essex County Council will seek to open a school as soon as it is viable to do so**. The first school to be established on a new Garden Community is likely to be a primary school. The decision over when it will be delivered may be constrained more by the availability of a suitable site than by the question of need. A phased opening is likely, to avoid a significant number of places being taken up by pupils from outside the new community (as described in section 4.1). The building itself may be delivered under a single contract, but not fully fitted out, in order to minimise cost and disruption to learning from later construction work. Some interim community use of vacant rooms may be appropriate. Such use should be fully articulated when master planning the Garden Community, so that it is considered during the school design process.

Most developments commence and build out from one edge, with access from the existing highway network in the form of a new junction feeding a spine road. **Essex County Council does not consider a spine road to be a suitable location for a school** due to noise, air quality and pupil safety. **The edge of a development is also not suitable** as walking and cycling distances will be greater compared to a central site. A suitable traffic free location, close to the centre of the area to be served by the school, must be identified as part of the master planning process. The phasing of development must also be scheduled to ensure access and utilities are provided to the school site as soon as is practical.

Construction of a two form entry primary school usually takes at least a year, including fitting out. A secondary or an all-through school takes longer. Because a new school is unlikely to be established mid academic year, further time may be required to meet a September opening. It is also prudent to ensure there is some room for slippage. On this basis the **first primary school** is unlikely to open earlier than **two years after commencement** of the Garden Community.

The precise timing of the first secondary school will depend on a number of factors including the relative costs of transport and the subsidy required to run a new school with a small number of pupils. As stated above, Essex County Council supports the establishment of **all-through schools**, which may assist in delivering secondary provision earlier than might otherwise be the case. Unless the first phase of development is central to the Garden Community as a whole, or part thereof to be served, it is unlikely that the first primary school site will also be in a suitable location for secondary provision. By the point at which a second primary school has been established, demand for secondary school places may be approaching a sustainable level and plans for this second school could include all-through provision.

4.3 Subsequent Schools

The establishment of additional schools will be mainly demand led. As schools fill, and the phasing and unit mix of the development becomes more certain, each subsequent school opening will be planned to strike a balance between using current capacity and avoiding any deficit in suitable school places. The demographic model alluded to in Section 1 of this document, will require updating and will be used to inform school place planning decisions. As a very rough guide, an extra **two form entry primary** school may be required for **every 1,500 homes** that are occupied.

Since neighbourhood sizes are unlikely to be wholly congruent with the capacity of each school, and precise pupil numbers in any single year or age group fluctuate, it may be necessary to add temporary accommodation to some schools. Space for additional accommodation should be considered at the outset when designing the permanent school buildings. New schools may also be commissioned in phases to ensure demand and supply are broadly matched.

5. What will the schools look like?

Essex County Council is committed to high quality design and innovation, with new school buildings producing net zero carbon. The location and layout of each building must support outstanding education; pupil welfare and community integration.

5.1 Co-location

As stated in section 4.2, all new secondary school sites should be co-located with primary schools to provide the option of establishing an **all-through school**. The Department for Education guidance document [‘Securing developer contributions for education’](#) also states that all new primary schools are expected to be co-located with **Early Years and Childcare** provision. Synergies with other facilities, such as libraries, gyms and health centres, may also exist.

Whilst primary schools may be provided as part of a **community hub or local centre**, offering a wide range of services in a single location, it is important that there is a clear rationale for such an approach. For example, the environment around schools must not be compromised by inappropriate adjoining land uses such as car parking or hot food takeaway outlets. With secondary school provision in particular, it must also be considered whether the area of land required can be accommodated without severing important walking and cycling links between residential areas and the community hub.

5.2 School Building Design

Broad guidance regarding new schools is set out in the [Essex Design Guide](#) and the DfE has developed and published [baseline designs](#) setting out how buildings should be designed to support the delivery of high-quality teaching and pupil learning. It is envisaged that buildings within Garden Communities will also be required to follow detailed **design codes**. Such codes must be developed with schools in mind and allow a suitable degree of flexibility, to recognise the function of education buildings. Because schools are often amongst the largest buildings in non-city centre locations, they are important in urban design terms. This could lead to an over emphasis on visual impact and a loss of focus on how the buildings contribute to Garden Community principles and address the needs of their users. For example, the assumption that a school will be a landmark or focal point that frames a traditional street scene may not be appropriate given that school buildings will not face on to motorised vehicle routes. The scale, and dimensions of school buildings must be considered at the masterplan stage to ensure their form and location supports both the visual aesthetic and urban planning aims without compromising how the building will function.

The [Essex Quality Review Panel](#) will evaluate and provide feedback on all school building designs and its input will play an important role in ensuring that the highest standards are adhered to. Involving children in the design process will also be encouraged. As the ultimate users of the buildings, their perspectives on aesthetic and function are important.

5.3 Carbon Positive Buildings, Sustainability and Lifetime Cost

Essex County Council is committed to eliminating carbon emissions from new schools and aspires to move beyond the construction of net zero carbon buildings to deliver carbon positive buildings by 2030. Details of this important agenda can be found in the Essex Climate Action Commission's report: '[Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral](#)' (July 2021). The use of innovative modern construction methods will be encouraged to achieve this. Garden Community design codes should nurture such approaches. Although expectations may need to adapt, this does not mean less visually pleasing buildings.

Another key environmental consideration for new schools is their integration into a sustainable drainage system (SuDS). This requirement may influence the location of schools and the surrounding urban landscape. Masterplans must ensure that the infrastructure provided for the overall development recognises the drainage needs of school buildings, including run-off from areas such as car parks and playgrounds. Rainwater reuse will be encouraged. Details of how this can be achieved can be found in the [Essex SuDS Guide](#) under the section on [rainwater reuse](#).

When evaluating the capital cost of constructing new schools, life-time cost will be factored in. A lower specification building which results in higher operational costs, or ongoing repair and replacement of equipment, is not an effective use of resources. Potential externalities and the value added to the Garden Community by investing in the school buildings and their landscape must be considered. For example, buildings that reduce the need for mechanical and electrical solutions to ensure the classroom environment is appropriate to deliver the curriculum, not only reduce running costs but contribute to the overall aim of carbon neutrality.

5.4 The Environment Around Schools

The area directly outside the school gates must be traffic free and well connected to the areas the school will serve via safe direct walking and cycling routes, all set within an inviting environment. A **generous pedestrianised square**, where parents can meet and younger siblings can play in safety at either end of the school day, should be included in public realm land budgets. As stated in Section 3.3 of this document, the wider area should form part of a 'school zone' with limited vehicular access. School drop off areas should only be provided on the outer edge of this zone, with the exception of provision for pupils with additional physical needs. The aim of any drop off areas should be to **reduce car use**; keep traffic away from school entrances and disperse any nuisance caused to residents.

Green infrastructure plays an important role in enhancing the wellbeing of staff, pupils and parents. In line with Garden Community principles, the school should be connected to 'a **comprehensive green infrastructure network**' with hard landscape materials chosen carefully to reduce noise and visual dissonance. Trees can improve air quality and play an important role in climate change adaptation, although safety considerations must be factored in in relation to school sites. Planting schemes should be drawn up at the master planning stage to maximise the benefits of shade and screening along walking routes and within the wider public realm. Selection of the right species can also present pupils with **learning opportunities** by encouraging suitable wildlife into the area. The inclusion of public art, history boards and seating should also be included to enhance journeys to school by foot. Play and outdoor gym equipment could also be considered. Section 8.7 of the [Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy \(2020\)](#) offers further guidance on the provision of education and its relationship to multi-functional green infrastructure, including its role in supporting healthy lifestyles.

6. How will the schools be delivered?

In line with the principle of 'land value capture', all infrastructure will need to be fully funded by the Garden Community landowners / developers. It is envisaged that Essex County Council will lead all school construction projects.

6.1 Funding

Essex County Council's [Developers' Guide](#) to Infrastructure Contributions sets out how developers / land-owners are expected to contribute towards new schools. Since the Garden Communities will, in the main, be self-contained settlements it is **not envisaged that outside funding will be available**. These are the indicative build costs for new schools at January 2020 prices:

Primary School including 56 place Early Years and Childcare Facility (£1.15m added)	
Pupils	Cost
420 (2 form entry)	£9.8m
630 (3 form entry)	£14.1m

Secondary School including commensurate sixth form provision (20% added)	
Pupils	Cost
900 (6 form entry)	£26.9m
1,200 (8 form entry)	£35.9m
1,500 (10 form entry)	£44.9m

Due to the bespoke demands of Garden Communities the education infrastructure costs may, in some cases, differ from the costs suggested in the Developers' Guide.

6.2 Land Transfer and Site Works

The costs set out above assume that the **land is transferred** to Essex County Council at **nominal cost** (usually £1). They also assume that the land is suitable for education use in all respects and the pre-transfer site work requirements alluded to in section 3.1 of this document have been completed. The precise nature and timing of these obligations will be the subject of detailed negotiation with the land-owners and developers to ensure that no additional costs are borne by the tax-payer. Completion of the site works and land transfer will usually be required around 18 months prior to a primary school opening, or two years in the case of a secondary school.

6.3 Developer Built Schools

The default position, and preferred method for delivering new schools, is for Essex County Council's Infrastructure Delivery team to manage the process. However, in some instances it may be appropriate for developers to build new schools. This method of delivery must comply with all relevant **competition and procurement rules** and result in buildings that meet or exceed the output specification Essex County Council would have delivered. Developers must provide full assurance regarding the quality of outcomes and mitigate any risks associated with late delivery. To judge whether developer delivery is appropriate Essex County Council will require the following information:

- A business case setting out the reasons in favour of developer delivery as opposed to using standard procurement routes.
- Details of how the school buildings and outdoor areas will meet all relevant Department for Education, Essex County Council and local planning authority building performance standards, including achieving a carbon positive building.
- A draft budget detailing development, design and construction costs.
- Evidence that all appointees to the proposed design and construction teams will be competent, experienced and have membership of the appropriate professional body.
- Details of collateral warranties, including levels thereof, to be provided for the work undertaken by the principal designer and contractor (and others if appropriate).
- Evidence of the financial stability of all parties and the provision of insurance backed bonds to provide surety in the event of company failure.
- Confirmation the school will be constructed without recourse to public funds, including contingency measures to cover late delivery of the project.
- Detailed project governance and dispute resolution mechanisms to allow Essex County Council to regulate building design; control quality (including health and safety) and ensure adherence to project timelines.
- A draft programme for the project delivery and handover, including sufficient detail on the milestones to be achieved. The programme must also confirm the points at which Essex County Council will approve designs, specifications and construction methods and inspect the building to ensure it is constructed in accordance with agreed standards.
- A communication plan demonstrating how the developer will engage with relevant stakeholders, noting that the residents within the Garden Community may not be present when initial proposals regarding the site are promoted.

If developer delivery is agreed in principle the parties will negotiate a draft s106 agreement. The developer will then need to provide an **independent counsel opinion** confirming that the agreement would be lawful in all respects. This opinion must indemnify the parties against financial loss in the event that the procedures set out in the draft agreement are later found to contravene competition or procurement rules.

On signature of an agreement the developer will be required to fund an Essex County Council appointed Independent Certifier with authority to intercede and, where necessary, evoke dispute resolution mechanisms regarding any aspect of the project or compliance with s106 obligations. As with all school buildings, the design will be subject to [Essex Quality Review Panel](#) scrutiny. The Panel's ongoing assistance must be sought during design development leading to a planning application.

7. How will new schools be established?

With Garden Community principles in mind, it is envisaged that most pupils will be educated locally so the new schools must be inclusive. However, it will be appropriate to deliver schools with a range of characteristics to provide parents with choice.

7.1 Free Schools

Most new schools are Free Schools (Academies). These schools are independent from the Local Authority and directly funded, in revenue terms, by the Department for Education. They also have autonomy over such matters as staffing and curriculum. Under the Education Act 2011, Essex County Council can only seek Secretary of State approval for a new Local Authority 'community' school in the event that it has failed to find a suitable Free School provider.

To establish a new school, Essex County Council follows the '[presumption process](#)' whereby:

- A public consultation is held to establish the character of the new school.
- A specification is published setting out detailed requirements the new school should address, including such matters as community use.
- Prospective providers are invited to submit proposals.
- Proposals are assessed and a recommendation made to the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- The Regional Schools Commissioner makes a decision on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- The Secretary of State enters into a Funding Agreement with the chosen provider.
- The provider works with Essex County Council and the Department for Education to open the new school.

Free Schools may also be set up directly by the Department for Education as part of a '[Wave](#)' process where independent proposals are sought to address a particular objective. The current 'Wave 14' targets areas with the lowest educational standards, where there is a need for additional places and evidence that a new school would bring innovation to the wider education system and diversity to local provision. As it is unclear when future 'Waves' will be announced or the criteria that will apply, it is unlikely that new schools to serve Garden Communities will be delivered through this route.

7.2 Faith Schools

As part of the process set out above, faith groups may apply to run Free Schools in the same way as other groups or individuals. They may also propose a new school under [section 11](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Such proposals are determined by the Local Authority with responsibilities for Education, but its decision may be appealed to the Schools Adjudicator.

Essex County Council could support proposals for a new faith school in the larger Garden Communities where such proposals would add choice and contribute fully to meeting the demand for school places from within the new community. A faith school is most likely to be located in the centre of a Garden Community so that it is within easy reaching distance of a large number of homes. It is unlikely to be one of the first schools to open on a Garden Community or the only school within a particular neighbourhood unless priority is given to local children irrespective of faith.

7.3 Admissions Oversubscription Criteria

All schools, regardless of type, must agree a set of criteria that are used during the annual admissions round to determine which children are offered a place in the event there are more applications than there are places. These criteria are published each September by Essex County Council in [Admissions Booklets](#). As alluded to in section 7.2 above, 'faith' may be one of the criteria that a school uses. Other common criteria include the presence of a sibling at the school; distance between home address and school and the use of priority admission areas (catchments).

Depending on the geography of the Garden Community, Essex County Council is likely to **encourage the use of priority admission areas** to ensure all children are offered a place at their 'neighbourhood school'. If only straight-line distance is used, children from densely populated central locations, with a choice of schools, may have priority to the exclusion of children living on the edge of the Garden Community for whom the neighbourhood school is the only walkable option.

7.4 Phased Opening

As set out in section 4 of this document, when a new school opens it may be smaller than its intended final size. For example, a primary school may only have seven classbases ready to occupy rather than the fourteen that will allow it to take two forms of entry. There is also a need to consider whether there is demand for places in all year groups.

Clearly families with children just about to reach Reception (primary) or Year Seven (secondary) age, will require places at new schools. However, families moving to the Garden Community with children already at local schools may decide to keep them at their current school. It may also be the case that the Garden Community attracts a high proportion of families that have children about to enter a new phase of education and who see this as a good time to relocate. For these reasons, it is likely that demand for school places in the higher year groups of both primary and secondary schools will initially be lower than for places in Reception and Year Seven.

One option is to allow a new school to fill from the bottom up by only admitting pupils into Reception or Year Seven in the first year of operation. This may be a sensible approach for secondary schools and for primary schools built during the later phases of the Garden Settlement when there are already other schools that can take additional older children.

For the first primary schools, it is likely that places will be offered to pupils of all ages from the outset. With demand weighted, as described above, some mixed age teaching groups are likely to operate. For example, the school may initially offer:

- 30 Reception places (one single age group class)
- 30 Year 1 and Year 2 places (two age groups mixed in one class)
- 30 Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 places (the whole of Key Stage 2 mixed in one class)

In the case of secondary schools, a similar approach is unlikely as the curriculum is subject based and not suited to mixed age teaching. The ratio of staff required to offer a suitably broad curriculum would be financially prohibitive.

7.5 Community Involvement

It is anticipated that the Garden Community principle of 'stewardship' will extend to its schools. Involvement in the establishment and governance of schools will be encouraged. At the outset there may be a limited number of potential parents to engage, but care will be taken to build on experience from other Garden Communities and ensure that involvement grows as the school and its neighbourhood establish.

If a primary school is the first public building constructed on a Garden Community its role is of particular importance. At the outset it may have underutilised space. As long as rooms can be brought back into school use when needed, interim **use by the community will be encouraged**. Subject to suitable security measures, built in through the design process, this could include social groups and services that will later move to their own permanent buildings.

The use of school facilities by the wider community, primarily out of school hours, is supported in principle. The siting and design of sports facilities, in particular, must be carefully considered as light pollution and noise can negatively impact neighbours. Use will be subject to formal agreements covering matters such as hours of availability, safety, management and pricing. Schools will be designed in such a way as to allow access to school halls and playing pitches (including changing facilities if available), without the need for the whole school building to be open. Particularly in the case of secondary schools, investment by the community in school facilities may provide enhanced opportunities for joint use. For example: a swimming pool or gym, neither of which would form part of most new schools, could be funded.

Exemplars

The examples on the following pages all incorporate these principles:

- For simplicity they are based on all dwellings being built as qualifying houses, but each example is applicable to any new community that generates a similar level of demand for school places.
- The precise location and phasing of each school will depend upon the neighbourhood structure of the settlement and the availability of suitable land for school use.
- All primary school site areas assume space for a 56 place Early Years & Childcare setting and all secondary school sites include space to accommodate a sixth form.
- One of the required primary school sites will be co-located with each secondary school to provide the opportunity of establishing an all-through school.

Case A: 4,000 Home Community

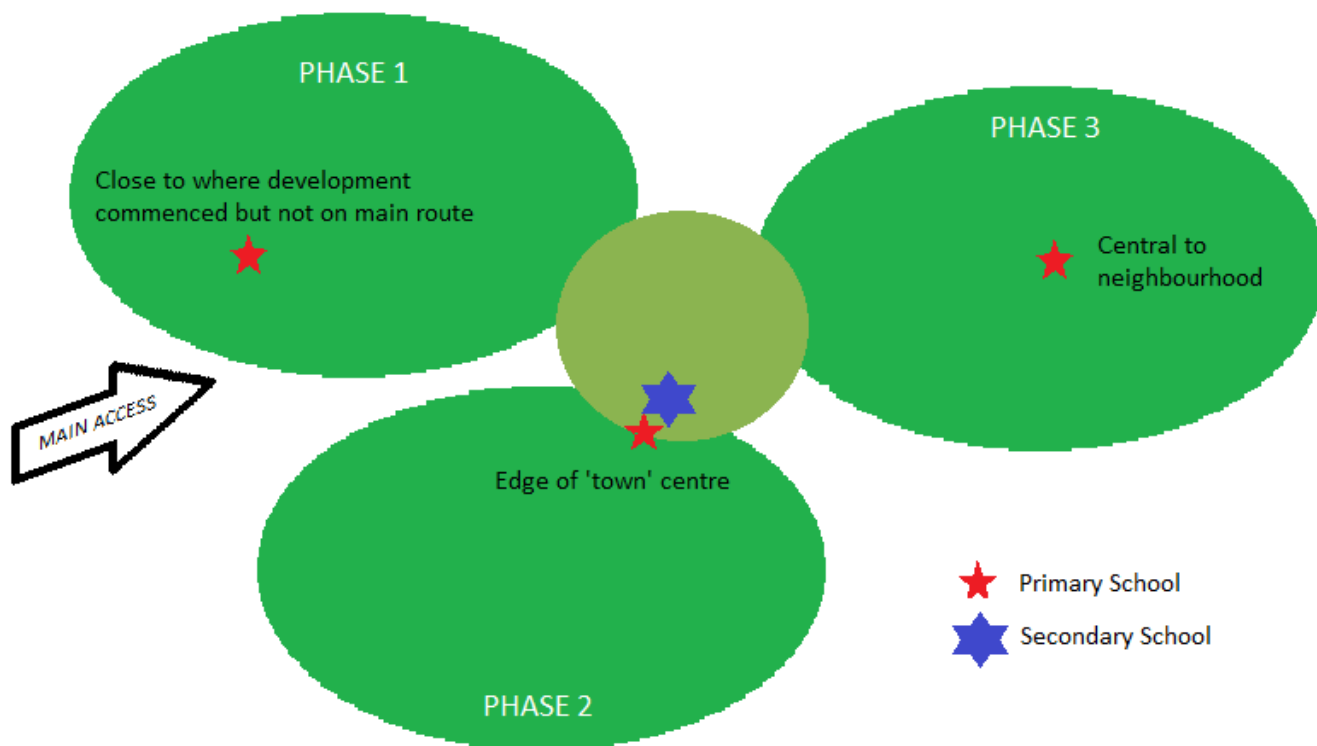
Primary Schools

- 4,000 houses multiplied by 0.3 pupils per house = 1,200 pupils
- 1,200 pupils divided by 210 (a form of entry) = 5.7 forms of entry
- 6 forms of entry (rounded up) divided by 2 form entry schools = 3 schools
- Land budget = 3 schools x 2.1 hectare sites = 6.3 hectares

Secondary Schools

- 4,000 houses multiplied by 0.2 pupils per house = 800 pupils
- 800 pupils divided by 150 (a form of entry) = 5.3 forms of entry
- Smallest school supported = 6 forms of entry
- Land budget = 7.9 hectares

Note: In this example, the 800 secondary pupils generated are fewer than is required to fill a six form entry school. If the Garden Settlement is close to an existing community, with a range of schools on generous sites, a programme of expansions may be more feasible than a new school. However, this would not be Essex County Council's preferred option. A better solution, particularly in more remote locations, would likely be to incorporate surrounding villages into the priority admissions area of the new school at the Garden Community and, thereby, generate sufficient demand to sustain a six form entry school.



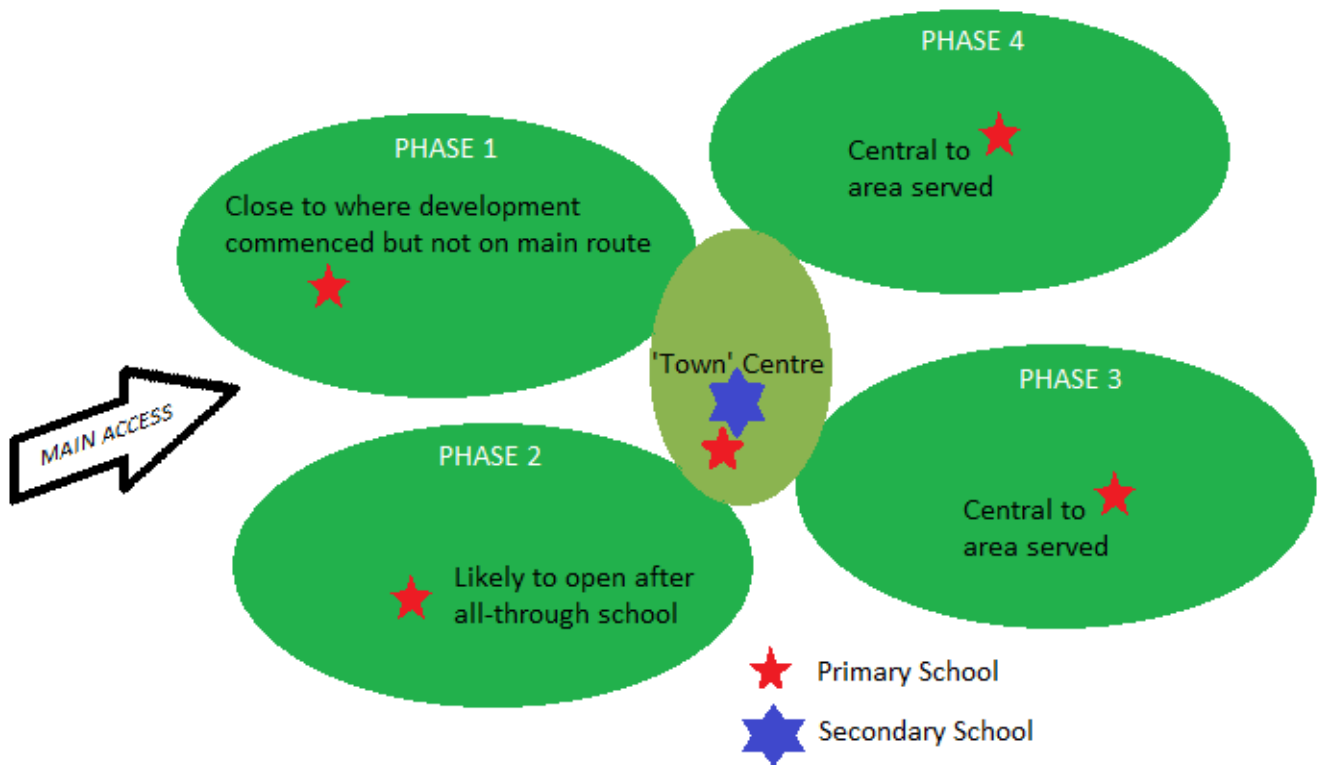
Case B: 7,000 Home Community

Primary Schools

- 7,000 houses multiplied by 0.3 pupils per house = 2,100 pupils
- 2,100 pupils divided by 210 (a form of entry) = 10 forms of entry
- 10 forms of entry divided by 2 form entry schools = 5 schools
- Land budget = 5 schools x 2.1 hectare sites = 10.5 hectares

Secondary Schools

- 7,000 houses multiplied by 0.2 pupils per house = 1,400 pupils
- 1,400 pupils divided by 150 (a form of entry) = 9.3 forms of entry
- Rounded up = 10 form of entry school
- Land budget = 12.4 hectares



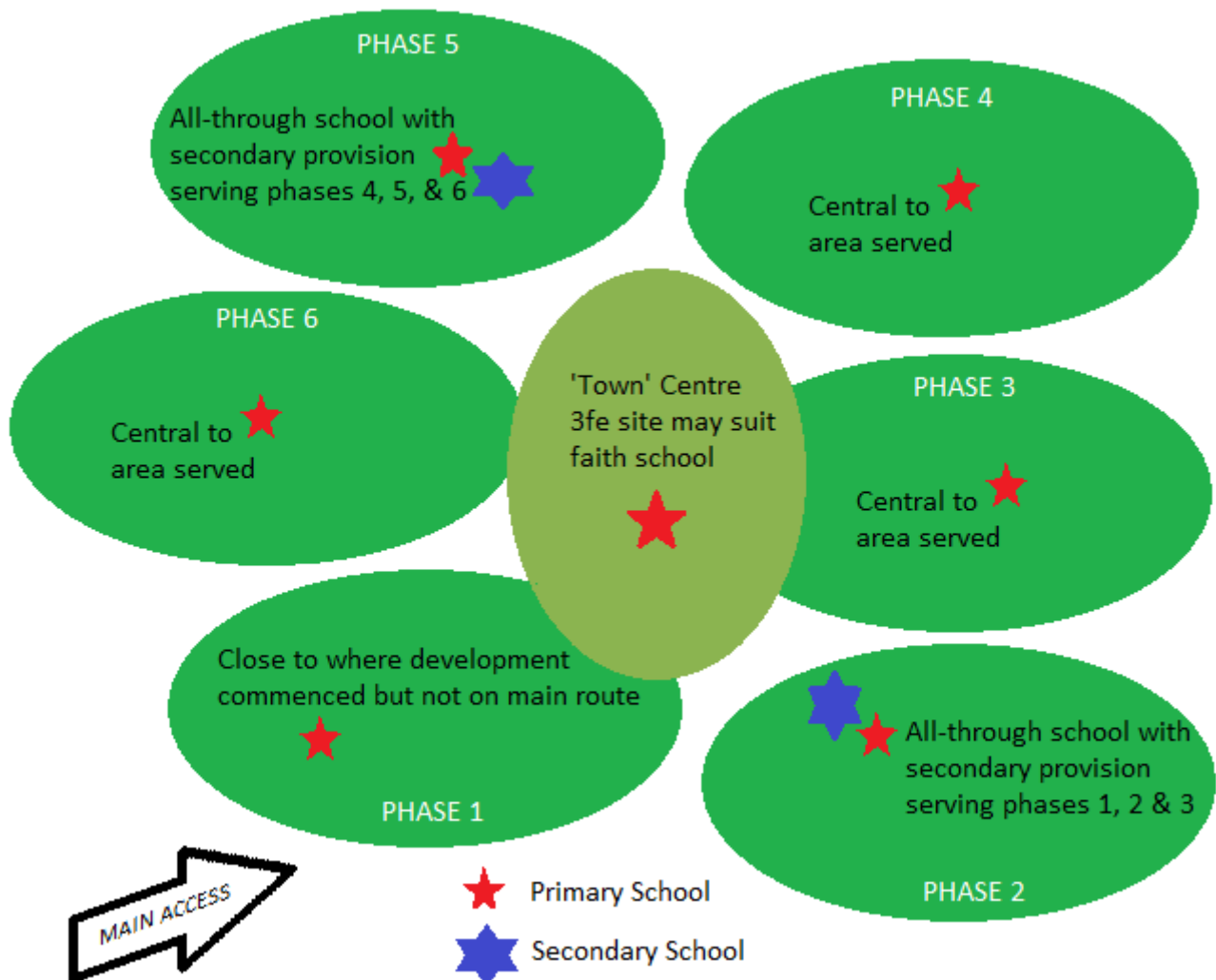
Case C: 10,000 Home Community

Primary Schools

- 10,000 houses multiplied by 0.3 pupils per house = 3,000 pupils
- 3,000 pupils divided by 210 (a form of entry) = 14.3 forms of entry
- 15 forms of entry (rounded up) = 6 x 2 form entry plus 1 x 3 form entry schools
- Land budget = 6 x 2.1 hectare sites plus 1 x 2.9 hectare sites = 15.5 hectares

Secondary Schools

- 10,000 houses multiplied by 0.2 pupils per house = 2,000 pupils
- 2,000 pupils divided by 150 (a form of entry) = 13.3 forms of entry
- Rounded up = 14 forms of entry = 2 x 7 forms of entry
- Land budget = 2 x 9 hectare sites = 18 hectares



Glossary

Admissions Round	The annual application process for school places. This refers to children looking to join a school's youngest year group in September. Applications to join at other times of the year or to join other year groups are not part of the annual Admissions Round.
Bulge	The term is used to apply to a larger than average cohort or longer term temporary inflation of pupil numbers. Rather than permanently expand a school across all year groups, it may be sufficient to add an extra class or 'bulge group' for the affected year(s).
Community School	A school that is funded through the Local Authority.
Key Stage (KS)	Statutory education is made up of four 'Key Stages': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS1: Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (Infants); • KS2: Years 3 to 6 (Juniors); • KS3: Years 7 to 9 (Secondary lower school); • KS4: Years 10 & 11 (Secondary upper school).
Primary education	The first seven years of compulsory education starting with Reception and ending at Year 6. In some areas this phase is split between Infant (Key Stage 1) and Junior (Key Stage 2) schools.
Priority Admissions Area (PAA)	These geographical areas are one of a number of potential Admissions Criteria that can be used by a school to decide which pupils to offer places to in the event of oversubscription. They are sometimes referred to as 'catchments'.
Published Admission Number	The maximum number of pupils that a school is legally required to offer places to as part of an annual Admissions Round. The number for each school is published at the start of the process and, for Essex schools, can be found in the Admissions Booklets. www.essex.gov.uk/admissions-booklets-policies-and-forms/admission-booklets Any change to the number must be consulted on prior to the start of the relevant Admissions Round but schools may choose to admit more pupils than the number that is published.
Reception	The entry year group in Infant and Primary schools. This is for children whose 5 th birthday occurs within the academic year.
Secondary education	Years 7 to 11 of compulsory education. In some areas this phase is split between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 schools. Some secondary schools also take Year 12 and 13 pupils in 'sixth forms'.
Sixth Form	Some secondary schools teach older 'post 16' pupils in addition to their five 'statutory age' year groups. The Sixth form is made up of two cohorts: Year 12 (lower 6 th) and Year 13 (upper 6 th).
Year Group	Pupils born during the same academic year. In some schools, pupils from different Year Groups may be taught in the same class. This is often referred to as mixed age teaching.

This information is issued by:

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The information contained in this guide can be translated, and / or made available in alternative formats, on request.

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