



# Land at Augustus Way, Cheadle Education Infrastructure Assessment

**AUGUS-FCL-GEN-FS-RP-Z-0001**

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## Document Control Sheet

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| <b>Design Development</b> |             |                                                    |
| P01                       | S2          | For Information (Received data only)               |
| ↓                         | S3          | For review and comment                             |
| Pnn                       | S5          | For Stage Approval (Final document at Stage)       |
| <b>Tender</b>             |             |                                                    |
| Pnn                       | A4          | Design (Final Detailed Design document for Tender) |
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Education Infrastructure Assessment has been prepared by Flinders Chase on behalf of Keepmoat Homes Ltd (Keepmoat), in support of a full planning application for Phases 2 and 3 of the overall development at Augustus Way, Cheadle (planning reference SMD/2026/0188).
- 1.2. A Section 106 Agreement is in place for Phase 1 of the development, which was granted outline planning consent (planning ref – SMD/2020/0502) for up to 40 dwellings. Phases 2 and 3 of the development will include 135 dwellings.
- 1.3. The Section 106 Agreement for phase 1 includes an education contribution of £303,842 (index linked) towards the construction of new primary school places at a new school or the expansion of an existing primary school. The agreement allows for the contribution to be recalculated by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) **if the number of dwellings at RM stage varies from the 40 dwellings included in the Outline Consent.**
- 1.4. A consultee response has been received from the Education Authority at Staffordshire County Council dated 16 June 2026. This response advises the Local Planning Authority to seek a planning obligation of £1,219,199.80 (index linked) for the construction of 28 primary school places at a new 1FE primary school.
- 1.5. There are three primary schools within the two-mile statutory walking distance of the development site. Two of the three primary schools currently have substantial levels of surplus places. There are two secondary schools within the three-mile statutory walking distance of the development.
- 1.6. This Education Infrastructure Assessment reviews the pupil yield expected from the development at Land to the South of Thorley Drive, Cheadle, the capacity of existing schools in the area, school place planning information and relevant national and local policies, including any existing Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.7. It also assesses whether any planning obligations relating to education are required to mitigate the effects of the development and are compliant with Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to assess the education infrastructure needs arising from the proposed development, review school place planning policy documentation, review capacity and forecast pupils at nearby schools and demonstrate how the proposals could meet the needs of the local area.
- 2.2. This document assists the planning process in identifying the education infrastructure needs of the development and the compliance of any planning obligations for education in the context of Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010.
- 2.3. Staffordshire County Council (SCC) operates within a two-tier system of local government, where education (with the county council) and planning (with district and borough councils) responsibilities are not held within the same authority. SCC provides consultation responses to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) as a statutory consultee for education and highways.
- 2.4. This assessment reviews how the proposals comply with the published requirements of the SMDC Local Plan (adopted September 2020), the SMDC Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Developer Contributions adopted in October 2023, and the SCC Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy (July 2023).
- 2.5. This assessment also considers the methodology of any developer contributions for education in meeting the tests for Section 106 obligations as set out in Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010. Developer contributions must be:
  - a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - b) Directly related to the development; and
  - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 2.6. The data used for this assessment is from publicly available sources, such as School Capacity Data, school performance tables, Office for National Statistics Information and both SMDC and SCC policy documentation.
- 2.7. The developer is committed to working with both SMDC and SCC, to ensure that any new education provision is based on sound evidence of need. This includes ensuring that developer contributions do not result in overprovision that undermines the quality of education at existing schools.
- 2.8. It should be noted that primary pupil numbers have peaked nationally and are forecast to decline over at least the next eleven years. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently reported that in 2025 there was the lowest number of births since 1977 with only 585,396 babies being born. This compares to 729,674 babies being born at the most recent peak which was in 2012 and is a dramatic decrease of 20%.

- 2.9. In addition to sustained low birth rates, there is a long-term trend of decreasing Total Fertility Rate (TFR). The TFR for England and Wales decreased from 1.58 children per woman in 2020 to 1.39 children per woman in 2025.
- 2.10. This progressive decrease in TFR will result in lower demand for school places from existing residential areas and is likely to substantially reduce the actual pupil yield from new developments. It is unlikely to be reflected in the pupil yield methodologies for most local authorities, as many have not been updated for substantial periods and rely on backwards looking data collection.
- 2.11. Recent changes to immigration policy since 2023 have caused pupil demand generated by inward migration to sharply decrease. This is because of restrictions on family members being able to join a parent in the UK with certain categories of visa. These effects are being seen with secondary numbers nationally peaking two years earlier than originally forecast.
- 2.12. The latest long-term statistical release shows long term net migration for the twelve months to December 2025 was 171,000, which is half the figure from the previous year. This figure is also drastically down from the most recent peak in 2024, which was 649,000.
- 2.13. The Department for Education has published updated pupil forecasts for primary and secondary demand up to 2030. The data forecasts an overall reduction of 300,000 primary pupils and a fall of 97,000 secondary pupils from 2025 to 2030.<sup>1</sup> Primary school pupil numbers peaked in 2019, and secondary school pupil numbers peaked in 2024.
- 2.14. Within the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area, the reduction in demand, due to lower birth rates and demographic changes, is being seen across the borough with rising levels of surplus places in many primary schools and the beginning of decreasing demand for secondary school places.
- 2.15. It is likely that a substantial increase in house building within the region will assist in counteracting the effects of low birth rates and supporting the stability of existing schools. The housing crisis is recognised as one of the leading causes of low birth rates with prospective parents delaying or forgoing starting a family due to a lack of secure, suitable family housing.
- 2.16. The Education Authority for this area is SCC, who has a statutory duty to secure the sufficient supply of school places.
- 2.17. The information in this assessment is based upon published information on school capacity and pupil forecasts, as well as the most recently published admissions data for applicable schools.
- 2.18. The published school capacity information submitted to the Department for Education as part of the annual School Capacity Survey (SCAP) includes pupil forecasts for primary and secondary

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<sup>1</sup> Gov.uk National Pupil Projections Reporting Year 2025, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/national-pupil-projections/2025>, accessed 22/03/2026

provision. These forecasts include demand from developments with consent and show rising levels of surplus places over the next five years.

### 3. Policy Review

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 3.1 In December 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published an update of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework for Local Authorities to develop their own Local Plan, which reflects the needs and priorities of their communities, favouring sustainable development.
- 3.2 The NPPF outlines that developments should be approved, without delay, if they are following the Local Development Plan. If the Local Development Plan is out of date, silent or absent, permission should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 3.3 Paragraph 100 of the NPPF sets out that it is important that there is sufficient choice of school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement.
- 3.4 Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 applies for the purposes of any planning obligation. The three “CIL Tests” that must be met for a planning obligation to be compliant are:
- Necessary to make the Development acceptable in planning terms,
  - Directly related to the Development, and
  - Fairly related in scale and kind to the Development.

#### **Securing Developer Contributions for Education – Department for Education**

- 3.5 In 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) published a non-statutory guidance note for the first time called “Securing Developer Contributions for Education”. This guidance was updated in August 2023.
- 3.6 The guidance note is clear that it is non-statutory and does not replace local approaches. It states that it is for local authorities to ensure any guidance or contributions sought are compatible with the planning tests set out in Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.7 The DfE guidance sets out several recommendations for local authorities to consider when formulating their guidance on contributions. Several of these key points relevant to this assessment are summarised below:

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<sup>2</sup> Page 4, Securing Developer Contributions for Education, Department for Education, Aug 2023

1. Pupil yield factors should be based upon up-to-date evidence from previous local housing developments and should be refreshed every five years.
2. Local authorities are advised to base the assumed cost of mainstream school places on the DfE Local Authority Scorecard costs.
3. Children may attend any school in a pupil planning area or within the statutory travel distances so capacity should be assessed over these areas.
4. Local authorities should assess whether there will be enough capacity in existing schools **at the time the development is expected to be built, and the demand is forecast to materialise.**
5. Paragraph 19 of this guidance clearly states:  

“When assessing development proposals and their impact on local education provision, you can only justify securing developer contributions for **the proportion of pupils that would have no available school place when local school capacity has been taken into account...**”

#### **Staffordshire County Council Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy (July 2023)**

- 3.8 The SCC Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy (SEICP) sets out a transparent policy and process for how pupil yield and education contributions are assessed. Developments with 10 or more dwellings are included within the scope. Any dwellings that are smaller than two bedrooms or age restricted are excluded from the calculations.
- 3.9 Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the SEICP provide information on how SCC will assess pupil yield, calculate capacity and calculate any required contribution.
- 3.10 The policy states that an analysis of impact will be undertaken using current pupil numbers, school capacity, pupil projections, committed developments and housing allocations in Local Plans (as advised annually by local authorities) and any other relevant factors.
- 3.11 Standard Pupil Product Ratios (PPRs) are set out within the policy, which are used to calculate the projected pupil yields for the numbers of new qualifying dwellings.

#### **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 to 2033 (adopted 2020)**

- 3.12 SMDC’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies education as a key consideration, with future capacity constraints (at the time it was prepared in 2018) in certain settlements, including Cheadle. The IDP was published in 2018 and does not consider the major changes in pupil place planning demand that have occurred since this time.
- 3.13 The SMDC Local Plan identified the delivery of a new 1FE primary school within one of the residential development sites to the northeast of the town.

- 3.14 It appears that SCC adopted an approach where developments have been required to contribute proportionally towards the cost of providing a new primary school. This appears to be irrespective of whether there are already sufficient primary school places in existing primary schools to serve the relevant developments.

## 4. Primary School Baseline Conditions

4.1 The statutory travel distance for primary aged pupils is two miles from their home to school measured by road or safe walking route. If a mainstream school place is not available to be provided within two miles, the local authority is obligated to provide free home to school transport.

4.2 There are three primary schools within a two-mile walking distance of the proposed development site in Staffordshire. Their distances, net capacities and most recently published numbers on rolls<sup>3</sup> are set out within Table 1 below.

| Ref | School                     | Distance | Net Capacity | Number on Roll | Surplus    | Nursery Class | Reception PAN | Over subscribed in 2025 |
|-----|----------------------------|----------|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1   | Cheadle Primary            | 0.9      | 420          | 312            | 108        | Yes           | 60            | No                      |
| 2   | St Giles' Catholic Primary | 0.8      | 210          | 211            | -1         | No            | 30            | Yes                     |
| 3   | Bishop Rawle CofE Primary  | 1.0      | 210          | 144            | 66         | No            | 30            | No                      |
|     |                            |          | <b>840</b>   | <b>667</b>     | <b>173</b> | <b>20.60%</b> |               |                         |

*Table 1 - Primary Schools within Two-Miles Walking Distance of the Development Site*

4.3 Two of the three primary schools within two miles of the development site have very substantial levels of surplus places and these levels are likely to grow. Table 1 above demonstrates that there are currently approximately 173 unfilled primary school places within two miles walking distance of the development site. This number has risen significantly over the past twelve months and indicates a trend for substantially decreasing demand for primary school places.

4.4 The DfE administers an annual School Capacity Survey (known as SCAP), which requires local authorities to submit pupil forecasts across a five-year trajectory for primary and across a seven-year trajectory for secondary.

4.5 SCC forecast that primary place demand across the whole county of Staffordshire is projected to fall slightly from a recent peak of demand in 2024-25 and will remain broadly steady for the next five years. This is shown in the Primary Place Forecasts submitted to the DfE by SCC in 2025 and replicated in Table 2 below.

4.6 This will increase surplus places further at the two schools with the weakest demand, if not offset with additional demand generated from new housebuilding.

<sup>3</sup> Get Information about Schools Database, Department for Education, accessed 20/07/2026

|              | 2024-25      | 2025-26      | 2026-27      | 2027-28      | 2028-29      | 2029-30      |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Reception    | 9050         | 8877         | 9163         | 9030         | 8799         | 9192         |
| Year 1       | 8999         | 9067         | 8985         | 9262         | 9115         | 8869         |
| Year 2       | 9283         | 9014         | 9155         | 9059         | 9330         | 9176         |
| Year 3       | 9404         | 9292         | 9109         | 9245         | 9133         | 9392         |
| Year 4       | 9663         | 9414         | 9383         | 9194         | 9317         | 9193         |
| Year 5       | 9506         | 9701         | 9559         | 9511         | 9336         | 9432         |
| Year 6       | 9646         | 9519         | 9774         | 9622         | 9564         | 9381         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>65551</b> | <b>64884</b> | <b>65128</b> | <b>64923</b> | <b>64594</b> | <b>64635</b> |

*Table 2: Primary Pupil Forecasts for Staffordshire*

- 4.7 In common with most areas across England, primary pupil demand is generally falling in Key Stage 1 in line with the historic low birth rates. New housebuilding in areas across the district and the wider county will assist in slowing the decline in pupil demand but are unlikely to fully counteract these falls in demand.
- 4.8 There is no evidence of any increased demand for Reception places at existing primary schools local to this development site thus far, and the levels of surplus places are at a level that would usually cause viability concerns
- 4.9 The pupil forecasts are in line with the national position and the position for most local authorities with demand having already peaked in Key Stage 1 and a final bulge of pupils in Key Stage 2 making their way through the primary phase and into secondary schools over the next two years. The reductions in demand are substantial and will be rapid for most year groups.

## 5. Secondary School Baseline Conditions

- 5.1. The statutory travel distance for secondary aged pupils is three miles walking distance from their home to school.
- 5.2. There are two existing secondary schools in that are within the three-mile statutory walking distance of the development site. These schools are set out in Table 3 below.

| Ref | School                    | Distance | Net Capacity | Number on Roll | Surplus    | Sixth Form   |
|-----|---------------------------|----------|--------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 1   | Painsley Catholic College | 1.1      | 1447         | 1340           | 107        | Yes          |
| 2   | The Cheadle Academy       | 1.1      | 1000         | 380            | 620        | No           |
|     |                           |          | <b>2447</b>  | <b>1720</b>    | <b>727</b> | <b>29.7%</b> |

*Table 3: Secondary Schools within Three Miles Walking Distance of the Development Site*

- 5.3. There are currently circa 727 unfilled places at secondary schools within the statutory travel distance of the development site. The Cheadle Academy is operating at only 40% of its capacity, leaving very substantial spare capacity, and pupil numbers appear to have declined from 2025 to 2026.
- 5.4. This level of surplus places is expected to grow in line with the secondary place forecasts for the whole of Staffordshire. Table 4 below shows the most recently published secondary pupil demand forecasts for Staffordshire. These show the peak in secondary pupil demand in 2027-28 with steady declines after this time. This position is in line with national trends as a temporary bulge in pupils in Key Stage 2 continues to make its way through the secondary phase.

|              | 2024-25      | 2025-26      | 2026-27      | 2027-28      | 2028-29      | 2029-30      | 2030-31      | 2031-32      |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Year 7       | 9878         | 9823         | 9748         | 9936         | 9815         | 9738         | 9567         | 9650         |
| Year 8       | 9770         | 9885         | 9840         | 9756         | 9941         | 9812         | 9731         | 9553         |
| Year 9       | 9785         | 9858         | 9941         | 9896         | 9826         | 10050        | 9918         | 9843         |
| Year 10      | 9266         | 9722         | 9740         | 9812         | 9756         | 9683         | 9927         | 9776         |
| Year 11      | 9047         | 9220         | 9628         | 9639         | 9699         | 9639         | 9564         | 9816         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>47746</b> | <b>48508</b> | <b>48897</b> | <b>49039</b> | <b>49037</b> | <b>48922</b> | <b>48707</b> | <b>48638</b> |

*Table 4: Secondary Pupil Forecasts for Staffordshire*

- 5.5. Secondary pupils yield from new housing developments around 8 to 10 years post-completion. This will be well after the peak in secondary place demand has passed, so there is sufficient existing and forecasted capacity to accommodate secondary demand from this development.
- 5.6. There are very substantial levels of unfilled secondary school places near to this development site.

## 6. Pupil Yield and Impact of the Development

- 6.1. SCC has a 'Staffordshire Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy' (SEICP) which sets out the pupil yield factors that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council will apply to developments for the primary and secondary phases of education.
- 6.2. All dwellings that are two bedrooms or larger will be included in the calculations, except housing that is age restricted. Different pupil yield factors are published for flats or houses.
- 6.3. Table 5 below summarises the pupil yield for the dwellings included in the full planning application using the SCC pupil yield factors set out in the SEICP.

|                    | Number of Dwellings | Primary Yield Factor | Primary Yield | Secondary Yield Factor (inc Post-16) | Secondary Yield (inc Post-16) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Phase 2 (full app) | 135                 | 0.21                 | <b>28.35</b>  | 0.18                                 | <b>24.3</b>                   |

*Table 5: Pupil Yield Calculations for the Development*

- 6.4. There is a Section 106 Agreement already in place for Phase 1 of the development, which sets a contribution for up to 40 dwellings. The agreement has a provision for this to be recalculated if the number of dwellings in that phase at RM stage exceeds 40 dwellings.
- 6.5. The number of dwellings in the RM application for Phase 1 is 37, so no recalculation is applicable. Table 6 below shows the primary and secondary pupil yield for phase 1, for information.

|              | Number of Dwellings | Primary Yield Factor | Primary Yield | Secondary Yield Factor (inc Post-16) | Secondary Yield (inc Post-16) |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Phase 1 (RM) | 37                  | 0.21                 | 7.77          | 0.18                                 | 6.66                          |

*Table 6: Mainstream School Pupil Yield for Phase 1 (RM App)*

- 6.6. The pupil yield calculations indicate that 28 primary pupils are expected to be generated by phases 2 and 3 of the development (the current full application). In addition, the pupil yield calculations indicate that there are 8 primary pupils expected to yield from Phase 1 of the development, which already has primary pupil contributions secured in a Section 106 Agreement. These additional numbers are not likely to materialise at this level for 5 to 6 years post-completion.
- 6.7. There are currently circa 173 unfilled primary places at primary schools within two miles of this development site. Two of the three primary schools within two miles of the development site were undersubscribed in Reception in 2025, so these surpluses would be expected to grow over the medium term. It appears that pupil numbers on roll fell at all three primary schools within the past twelve months.

- 6.8. It is clearly not necessary to construct additional primary places because of this development.
- 6.9. Any expansion of local schools or the construction of places in a new primary school is likely to destabilise existing schools. There is no justification for a planning obligation relating to primary education as additional places are not necessary and a contribution would not meet the tests of Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010.
- 6.10. The development will generate additional secondary pupil demand with up to 25 additional secondary pupils.
- 6.11. Secondary pupil numbers across Staffordshire will peak soon and fall substantially over the next 14 years in line with the historic low birth rates and collapsing demand for Reception places in many areas.
- 6.12. Presently, there are circa 727 unfilled secondary places, and this is forecast to rise substantially over the next 8 to 10 years. This will coincide with when secondary pupil demand will yield from this development.
- 6.13. The construction of additional secondary school places is not necessary and would not meet the tests of Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations 2010.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Staffordshire County Council has an adopted Policy (SEICP) for Developer Contributions that sets out that developer contributions to primary and/or secondary education will be sought if the pupil yield from a development cannot be met by forecast capacity at schools within a reasonable distance of the development.
- 7.2 There are three primary schools within two miles walking distance of the development site that are in the Cheadle area. Two of these three primary schools have very substantial, and growing, levels of unfilled primary places.
- 7.3 There appears to be 173 existing surplus primary places at schools within two miles of the development site. This is a very substantial level of surplus places, and it appears to have grown in the past twelve months.
- 7.4 Applying the pupil yield factors in the SCC SEICP to this development shows that 28 additional primary pupils could be generated. This aligns with the pupil yield stated by SCC in their most recent statutory consultee response.
- 7.5 In response to the full planning application, SCC has requested a sum of £1,219,199.80 for the construction of 28 additional primary places at a new build primary school.
- 7.6 The existing data does not show any justification for constructing additional primary places. A primary education contribution is not necessary, and the construction of additional primary school places is likely to have a detrimental effect on the viability of existing schools.
- 7.7 There are two existing secondary schools in Cheadle that are within three miles of the development site. These schools have approximately 727 existing unfilled places.
- 7.8 The level of surplus places will rise significantly over the next ten years as falling demand primary and sustained low birth rates impact on the secondary sector.
- 7.9 SCC has not requested a planning obligation in relation to secondary education, and this is agreed, given the existing and forecast levels of surplus places.
- 7.10 Education contributions towards expanding primary and secondary education are not justified based on the available data and would not meet the requirements of Regulation 122(2) in the CIL Regulations 2010.