

**Lancashire County Council Education Hearing Statement 2nd April 2019**

As part of Lancashire County Council's (LCC) engagement with Lancaster City Council in relation to the Local Plan Examination, the LCC School Planning Team have reviewed the proposed housing projections and have provided assessment of the forecast school place demand anticipated from this new housing. The summary information has been provided to Lancaster City Council and has been included within the Statement of Common Ground.

Based on the information provided by Lancaster City Council, the school place assessments summarise information for specific areas for primary places, primary planning areas, and summarise the secondary place position at a district level. Although the information provides an indication of the expected financial requirement, a specific assessment would be required for each individual housing development to ensure that the contribution sought was in line with the tests of CIL. An adopted Education Contribution Methodology, part of LCC's planning obligations for developers policy, is used to calculate specific contribution requirements, with actual contributions calculated at the point that specific bedroom mix information is determined, using DfE costs per place as indicated in the Statement of Common Ground.

The Strategy for the provision of school places and school's capital investment 17/18 to 19/20 informs how school places are delivered within Lancashire. It is essential that school sites are secured at the outset because existing schools may have constraints over land capacity to enable expansion, or limited ability to increase admission number to accommodate the additional pupil yield from new housing development. This was reiterated in a letter from the DfE to all Chief Executives, the Minister of State for Housing and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools jointly stated that 'where major new housing developments create an additional need for school places, then the local authority should expect a substantial contribution from the developer towards the cost of meeting this requirement.'

Whilst Lancaster have demonstrated a strong commitment to address the impact of the new housing on school places through engagement, there does remain some uncertainty regarding the sustainability of the Local Plan and whether sufficient school place infrastructure could be provided, ensuring that local school places are available for all pupils residing in the projected new housing. LCC's concern is that Lancaster have indicated that viability could be an influencing issue when bringing development forward. Although an initial discussion regarding viability took place prior to the commencement of the examination it is still unclear how school place infrastructure could be provided to meet the anticipated demand.

Lancaster City Council have enquired about alternative sources of funding, for example Basic Need funding. This budget which funds additional places across Lancashire, would not be sufficient to meet the anticipated viability funding gap. Taking all of the above into account it is unclear how the Local Plan would deliver sufficient education infrastructure to ensure the plan was sustainable.