

P26-0444

23 April 2026

Clara Davies
Head of School Place Commissioning
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA148 JN

Dear Clara

Request for financial contributions towards early years places in respect of Land south of Coate Road, Devizes (PL/2026/01963)

I have been forwarded the request for £[REDACTED] towards additional early years places to accommodate the demand arising from the proposed development at Land south of Coate Road, Devizes. I have been asked to seek the necessary justification for this which I hope you are able to provide.

The capacity of existing providers

I note that within the request it is assumed that existing providers have no capacity to accommodate any of the demand arising. However, no evidence is provided to demonstrate that existing providers cannot accommodate at least some of the demand arising. Indeed, the available evidence within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment suggests that there is at least some capacity within existing providers to accommodate some of the demand. In particular, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment sets out that:

- i. 85% is a comfortable rate of occupancy for a community area
- ii. However, only 58% of childcare places for 2-year-olds are occupied in Devizes Community Area at present, meaning that there are more than sufficient available places for 2-year-olds in the community area to accommodate at least some if not all of the demand arising from the proposed development.
- iii. Similarly, only 81% of childcare places for 3/4-year-olds are occupied in Devizes Community Area at present, meaning that there are more than sufficient available places for 3/4-year-olds in the community area to accommodate at least some of the demand arising from the proposed development.
- iv. The number of 0-4-year-olds in Devizes Community Area has reduced from 2017 to 2022 such that assuming existing trends are maintained, existing providers will have more

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capacity to accommodate the demands arising from the proposed development than they do at present.

- v. An additional 72 0-2-year old childcare places have been funded in the Devizes Community Area and were expected to be delivered by Autumn 2025. I understand that these are not accounted for in the preceding figures, such that the occupancy rates for 0-2-year-olds will be lower once these additional places are taken into account, and therefore there will be capacity within existing providers to accommodate a greater proportion of the demand arising.

The available information therefore suggests that at least some of the demand arising from the proposed development will be able to be accommodated in existing providers, and that as such the full contribution sought by the Council is not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms or fairly or reasonably related in scale.

I hope and trust that you are able to provide details of the number of forecast available places in existing providers as will be necessary to secure a contribution that is fairly and reasonably related in scale.

Pupil yields

I also note that the request assumes that 175 dwellings will give rise to a need for 20 childcare places, which appears to have been calculated using the approach set out in paragraph 5.11 of the Revised Wiltshire Planning Obligations SPD (October 2016). This paragraph identifies that these pupil yields were derived from the number of pupils arriving in early years settings over a 10-year period prior to 2016.

However, since this time, as I'm sure you are aware the DfE has undertaken comprehensive research on the number of pupils in every development of 10 or more homes nationally over the 14-year period from 2008-22 and the results are available in the DfE's Pupil Yield Dashboard. In paragraph 5 of the DfE guidance entitled 'Estimating Pupil Yield from Housing Development' it is recommended that the yields of the Pupil Yield Dashboard are used unless the Council holds more detailed and representative data over a longer period, or data shows a recent deviation from historic trends. The yields set out in the SPD are both dated and cover a shorter period, and so in accordance with the recommendations of the DfE, the yields of the Pupil Yield Dashboard should be used.

The Pupil Yield Dashboard identifies that 0.0836 early years places are required for every net additional dwelling.

However, since the Pupil Yield Dashboard was prepared, free childcare provision has been extended. The Government estimated in the Spring Budget 2023 that in addition to the existing 1.56M childcare places nationally, this would generate a need for an additional 170,000 places, which represents an increase of 10.9%. Therefore, making a 10.9% allowance for the effects of extended childcare provision, the available information suggests that there would be a need for 0.0927 places for every net additional dwelling ($=0.0836+10.9\%$) such that the proposed

development of 175 dwellings would generate a need for 16.2 places rather than for 20 places as assumed by the Council. Accordingly, the request to fund 20 places is not fairly and reasonably related in scale for another reason.

In light of the above, I trust that the Council will agree that the more recent and comprehensive yields that arise from the Pupil Yield Dashboard should be used in accordance with the recommendations of the DfE, and that with an appropriate adjustment to reflect the effects of extended childcare provision the proposed development would generate a need for 16.2 places minus any available places in existing providers. If not, I would welcome any justification that the Council is able to provide to support a different approach.

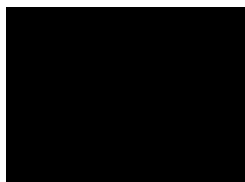
Summary

In light of the preceding comments, I would welcome:

- Forecasts of the available capacity of existing providers as will be necessary to demonstrate that a full contribution towards additional places is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and fairly and reasonably related in scale.
- Confirmation that the pupil yields arising from the more recent and comprehensive analysis of the DfE should be used, as adjusted to take account of the expanded childcare provision, or if not any justification for the use of alternative yields.
- A revised request reflecting the above information.

I trust that the Council will be able to readily respond to each of the preceding points to enable both parties to progress towards an agreement on the extent of contributions necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms in accordance with CIL Regulation 122.

Yours sincerely



Neil Tiley
Senior Director

