



Lower Berse Farm Education Infrastructure Assessment

RUTH-FC-PRO-00-RP-ZM-01

August 2023

Version P04

Document Control Sheet

Project Title	Lower Berse Farm, Ruthin Road, Wrexham
Report Title	Education Infrastructure Assessment
Report Ref. No.	RUTH-FC-PRO-00-RP-ZM-01
Revision	P04
Status	S5
Report Date	August 2023

Record of Issue

Revision	Status	Author	Date	Checked by	Date	Approved by	Date
P01	S1	K.Norman	22/11/22	I.Yates	30/11/22	K.Norman	05/12/22
P02	S5	L.Mottram	02/06/23	K.Norman	05/06/23	K.Norman	05/06/23
P03	S5	L.Mottram	06/06/23	K.Norman	06/06/23	K.Norman	06/06/23
P04	S5	L.Mottram	01/08/23	K.Norman	01/08/23	K.Norman	01/08/23

BS EN ISO 19650-2: Revision & Status Codes

Revision Code	Status Code	Description
Design Development		
P01	S2	For Information (Received data only)
↓	S3	For review and comment
Pnn	S5	For Stage Approval (Final document at Stage)
Tender		
Pnn	A4	Design (Final Detailed Design document for Tender)
Construction		
C01	A5	Construction & Commission

Contents

Pre-ambble.....	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Site Location.....	3
3. Purpose and Scope.....	4
4. Primary School Baseline Conditions	6
5. Secondary School Baseline Conditions	7
6. Pupil Yield from the Development.....	8
7. Conclusions and Commitments	9

Pre-amble

This report is one of a suite of documents prepared in support of the application to be submitted on behalf of Redrow Homes for planning permission to develop land to the west of Wrexham as a residential-led mixed-use development to contain up to 1520 dwellings.

This report describes the impact on education infrastructure and the mitigations proposed. It should be read alongside the documents that comprise the full planning application.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Education Infrastructure Assessment has been prepared by Flinders Chase on behalf of the Applicant, Redrow Homes, in support of an outline planning application for permission to develop land to the West of Wrexham to construct up to 1,520 dwellings.
- 1.2 The land lying between Wrexham Road, Ruthin Road, Bersham Lane and Homestead Lane was originally identified in the proposed Local Development Plan (2013 – 2028) as a key strategic site for a mixed-use, residential-led scheme including community infrastructure and commercial uses and given the reference Key Strategic Site 1 – Lower Berse Farm. However, on 19 April 2023 Wrexham Councillors voted against adopting the local plan, creating an unprecedented situation, being the first authority in Wales to not adopt their local plan. The status of the Draft LDP is likely to be resolved over the coming months.
- 1.3 This *Education Infrastructure Assessment* assesses the pupil yield from the development, the capacity of existing schools in the area, school place planning information and relevant policies prepared by Wrexham County Borough Council, including the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance from the existing Unitary Development Plan.

2. Site Location

- 2.1 The site comprises land of c.73ha located immediately adjacent to the western edge of Wrexham. It is generally bound by the A483 Wrexham Road to the west, A525 Ruthin Road to the north, Homestead Lane to the east and B5099 Bersham Road to the south.
- 2.2 The land is currently in agricultural (arable) use.
- 2.3 Wrexham Central railway station and Wrexham Town Centre lie approximately 1 mile to the east of the site.
- 2.4 Wrexham is a predominantly rural borough, with urban development centred in Wrexham Town. The Local Development Plan (2013-2028) which is currently in a draft format awaiting adoption, sets out a hierarchy of key strategic sites with development primarily concentrated in Tier 1 (Wrexham Town) and then in smaller towns within Tier 2, 3, and 4 settlement areas to the south, north and east of the borough. The plan seeks to deliver a requirement of 7,750 new homes and concentrate development in sustainable locations.
- 2.5 It should be noted that the adopted plan at the time of planning application submission is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011). The proposals accord with Policy GDP2 in the Unitary Development Plan in providing community benefits and mitigating the effects of the development through the provision of community infrastructure.
- 2.6 The application site is identified as Key Strategic Site 1 (KSS1) in the draft Local Development Plan.

3. Purpose and Scope

- 3.1 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 forecasted pupils at nearby schools and demonstrate how the proposals meet the needs of the local area.
- 3.2 This assessment reviews how the proposals comply with policies in the Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011) and the draft Local Plan (Draft), in relation to education infrastructure, and the level of any developer contributions that may be sought.
- 3.3 This assessment also considers the methodology of any developer contributions for education in meeting the tests for Section 106 obligations. 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.
- 3.4 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 Wrexham Council policy documentation.
- 3.5 The developer is committed to working with Wrexham Council to ensure that any new education provision is based on sound evidence of need, responds to the needs of the local area, is viable and sustainable. The Unitary Development Plan (1996 to 2011) highlights that school capacity surpluses existed at the time of the UDP being updated in 2005 and Wrexham Council was seeking to address these imbalances through reducing the capacity of existing schools and through potential closures and mergers. This situation has arisen again in the context of historic low birth rates and falling rolls in the primary phase.
- 3.6 It should be noted primary pupil numbers have peaked nationally and regionally and are forecast to decline over at least the next seven years. The Office of National Statistics¹ reported historic low birth rates in 2018-19 and this trend is likely to continue². The total fertility rate in 2020 was the lowest since records began in 1939. This will result in lower demand for school places from existing residential areas and may reduce the actual pupil yield from new developments.
- 3.7 The Department for Education (which covers education provision in England) published updated pupil forecasts for primary and secondary demand up to 2032 that include the effects of lower numbers of actual births and ONS forecasts for lower birth rates. The data forecasts an overall reduction of 944,000 pupils across primary and secondary phases from 2022 to

¹ National Pupil Projections 2022, Department for Education, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/national-pupil-projections>, accessed 22/11/2022

² Births in England and Wales: 2020, Office of National Statistics, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsummarytablesenglandandwales/2020>, accessed 22/11/2022

2032. The number of under 5s in full-time education (Reception children) is forecast to decrease by 13.2% from 2022 to 2028. Although these forecasts are for England, the trends are directly applicable to Wales.

4. Primary School Baseline Conditions

- 4.1 The details of primary schools within two miles of the development site, measured by road from the outer edges of the development site, their capacities and most recently published numbers on roll are set out in Table 1 below.

School	Distance (miles)	Capacity (R – Yr 6)	Planned Admission Number	Number on Roll (R – Yr 6)	Nursery 2 NoR
Victoria Community Primary	0.7	420	60	406	55
St Mary's Catholic Primary	1.0	287	41	321	24
St Giles Controlled Primary	1.2	420	60	339	36
Rhostyllen County Primary	1.6	210	30	198	30
Rhosddu County Primary	1.7	301	43	255	35
Alexandra CP School	1.7	315	45	345	33
Ysgol Penrhyn New Broughton	1.8	210	30	195	21
Ysgol Bodhyfryd	2.0	420	60	308	25
Ysgol Tan-y-fron	2.0	140	20	129	20
Total All Schools		2,723		2,496	279
		Surplus	8.3%	227	

Table 1: Primary Schools within Two Miles of the Development Site³

- 4.2 The existing primary schools in Wrexham provide a good choice for parents as they are a mix of community schools, voluntary aided and Welsh Medium Schools.
- 4.3 Within two miles of the development site, which is the statutory travel distance for primary schools, all primary schools combined have a surplus of 227 places (8.3%). The size of lower year groups is beginning to fall, which reflects the lower fertility rates and this will increase the quantity of surplus places year-on-year
- 4.4 It is preferable in terms of ongoing financial viability for primary schools to be two forms of entry, although this is influenced by other factors such as the rurality of each location and site size. Only three of the nine primary schools within two miles of the development site are two forms of entry.
- 4.5 The ability or desirability for these schools to expand is unclear at present but should continue to be assessed by Wrexham County Council as part of their pupil place planning strategy for the area. The Lower Berse Farm development can support the long-term viability of the smallest schools by providing some additional pupils to support existing spare capacity or any increases to the capacity of these small schools.
- 4.6 The smallest schools are generally the most vulnerable when new primary schools are opened and if evidence of overall demand is not strong. A mix of a new provision and expansions to existing provision is likely to be the optimum solution to ensure long-term viability.

³ My Local School, Welsh Government, <https://mylocalschool.gov.wales/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>, accessed 22/11/2022

5. Secondary School Baseline Conditions

5.1 There are six maintained secondary schools in Wrexham Borough within three miles of the development site, which is the statutory travel distance for secondary schools.

5.2 Table 2 sets out the number of pupils on roll and the capacity of the schools.

School	Distance (miles)	Capacity	PAN	NoR (11 – 16)
Ysgol Clywedog	0.2	888	178	816
St Joesph's Catholic and Anglican High School	1.1	685	137	710
Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	2.4	965	193	763
Rhosnesni High School	2.6	1,200	240	973
Ysgol Cy Grango	3.0	590	118	559
Ysgol Bryn Alyn	3.0	895	179	693
Totals		5,223		4,514
No of Surplus Places				709
Available Surplus %				13.6%

Table 2: Secondary Schools within Three Miles of the Development Site⁴

5.3 The secondary schools within three miles of the development site provide a good mix of provision and a Welsh Medium School is located immediately adjacent to the development site.

5.4 There is a significant surplus of places across these secondary schools at present and this is likely to be maintained or grow in the medium term as the peak secondary school numbers is reached in 2024-2025. Pupil numbers are already falling in the lower year groups at Rhosnesni High School and at Ysgol Bryn Alyn.

5.5 It is unlikely that further expansion would be needed given the existing surplus places.

⁴ My Local School, Welsh Government, <https://mylocalschool.gov.wales/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>, accessed 22/11/2022

6. Pupil Yield from the Development

- 6.1 Wrexham County Borough Council has published a range of guidance relating to Developer Contributions; including education contributions. The guide was adopted in 2004 and revised in December 2018⁵.
- 6.2 Table 1 within the guidance provides pupil multipliers for primary (age 4 to 11), secondary (age 11 to 16) and post-16.
- 6.3 Table 3 below sets out the overall pupil yield based on the dwelling mix for the scheme.

Dwelling Type	% Split of 1520 homes	Number of Dwellings	Primary Multiplier	Primary Yield	Secondary Multiplier	Secondary Yield
1 Bedroom	0.3%	5	0	0	0	0
2 Bedroom	7.4%	112	0.12	13	0.07	8
3 Bedroom	33.2%	505	0.23	116	0.20	101
4 Bedroom	59.1%	898	0.31	278	0.31	278
Total	100%	1520		407		387

Table 3: Pupil Yield Based on Dwelling Mix over 1500 Homes

- 6.4 The pupil yield from the development will be spread across year groups from Reception up to Year 11. This yield will also be gradually realised as the development is phased at approximately 100 dwellings completed per year for a 15-year period ending in 2040.
- 6.5 The primary yield is a maximum of 407 additional pupils once the development is fully completed in 2040. At present there is some capacity for additional pupils to be accommodated within existing primary schools, although at least one additional form of entry is likely to be needed over the longer term, as a consequence of the development.
- 6.6 The secondary yield is 387 additional secondary school students once the development is fully completed. These additional pupils generated by the development would take up approximately half of the current surplus capacity at existing secondary schools located within three miles of the development site. These additional pupils will assist in supporting the viability of local secondary schools, especially as the lower fertility rate results in lower medium and long-term demand.

⁵ Local Planning Guidance 27 – Developer Contributions to Schools, Wrexham County Borough Council, Dec 2018

7. Conclusions and Commitments

- 7.1 There is a good mix of schools at both the primary and secondary phases with community, voluntary aided and Welsh Medium Schools.
- 7.2 Pupil numbers have peaked in the primary phase and will peak soon in the secondary phase due to lower fertility rates, although the numbers can be supported if significant house building takes place.
- 7.3 There is a significant number of surplus places in secondary schools within three miles of the development site (over 13%). The pupil yield from the development can easily be accommodated within existing schools without any expansion. No capital contribution towards new secondary school places can be justified.
- 7.4 There is some surplus capacity in the primary phase, and this is likely to grow over the medium term. However, the pupil yield from the development is likely to generate demand for one additional form of entry once some of the surplus is used at nearby schools. This should be carefully monitored with the forecast capacities and the development trajectory up to 2040.
- 7.5 The Developer has included a reserved primary school site within the Masterplan for Lower Berse Farm, in line with the emerging detail in the Local Plan. The reserved site is 5.4 acres, and it is located close to the existing secondary school.
- 7.6 The Developer commits to an education contribution for the additional pupils that may not be able to be accommodated within existing primary schools within two miles of the development site, in line with the contribution rates set out in LPG 27. This contribution can be allocated to the construction of a new primary school on the reserved school site.
- 7.7 In light of the falling pupil numbers in the primary phase due to the continuing low fertility rates, it is recommended that Wrexham County Borough Council continue to review their pupil place planning strategy to manage the overall capacity of existing schools.
- 7.8 If a new primary school is not required within 10 years of the commencement of the development, the reserved school site and any contribution towards the provision of new places should be returned to the Developer, in accordance with the terms of the legal agreement.



Suite 116-117 • Cotton Exchange • Bixteth Street • Liverpool • L3 9LQ



0151-556-1985



<http://www.flinderschase.co.uk>