

Castle Point Borough Council Housing Scenario Test – Early Years and Childcare (Regulation 19 Plan), November 2025

Background

Essex County Council's (ECC) Early Years and Childcare team has previously worked with Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) to assist in the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure sufficient Early Years and Childcare (EYCC) places are provided, arising from new development, over the Plan period. This Scenario Test is based on a spatial scenario provided by CPBC for assessment. It has been carried out in accordance with the ECC [Local and Neighbourhood Planners Guide to School Organisation \(2025\)](#)

The scenario provided by CPBC includes a total of 5,780 homes. In assessing the future demand for childcare places the capacity from sites with planning permission are removed as they have already been considered as part of the planning application process. Consequently, the scenario for testing includes 5,041 homes, of which some 412 are qualifying houses (8%) and 3,731 qualifying flats (74%)with 898 discounted (18%). The sites were matched to the relevant ward using ArcGIS. Phasing information was not used, as this test considers the full impact of growth by the end of the emerging Local Plan period of 2043. Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.

ECC Responsibilities

Under the Childcare Act 2006, Essex County Council (ECC) must ensure that there is sufficient high quality and accessible early years and childcare places within the local area. Section 6 of the Act defines 'sufficient childcare' as sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. Unlike education, parents can choose to access childcare away from their home area, for example near to a place of work or training.

Some children are entitled to Funded Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE). These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year or 570 hours stretched across up to 52 weeks.

Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) includes:

- **FEEE1W and FEEE2W**– For eligible working families, from the term after the child turns 9 months. Offers up to **30 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **1140 hours/year** if stretched).
- **FEEE2** – For families receiving government financial support, from the term after the child turns 2. Offers up to **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).
- **Universal FEEE for 3–4-year-olds** – From the term after the child turns 3, all families can access **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).

- **Extended FEEE for 3–4-year-olds** – For eligible working families, from the term after the child turns 3 until school age. Offers an additional **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).

Early Years and Childcare provision includes full day care, pre-schools, childminders, School run nursery class, and ‘wrap around care’ (Breakfast, After school and Holiday clubs). This multiplicity of provision, working in partnership with the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors, enables a wide range of childcare options to be made available.

Assessment

The scenario has been assessed using ECC’s standard child yield factor as set out in the ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2025).

| | Qualifying House | Qualifying Flat |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Child Yield Factor | 0.12 | 0.06 |

ECC publishes a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which details where places are required across the county. These assessments give a snapshot of different providers in an area and the number of places that are filled. It should be noted that unfilled places at one type of provider cannot be taken as evidence that provision in an area is sufficient. The work patterns and incomes of parents are all different and so are their childcare needs.

All residential developments that are proposed as new site allocations and broad locations for growth in the Plan, have been assessed to identify the demand for childcare places over the plan period. In practice, ECC does not seek a developer contribution to those sites of less than 20 dwellings unless their co-location with other sites necessitates a holistic look at their cumulative impact. The latter has been assumed for this assessment. The Early Years and Childcare Service only require developer contributions where there is a current or forecast lack of capacity in the immediate area of the proposed development.

When estimating the number of children that a new housing development will generate and that will require additional provision (child yield), account has been taken of the number of houses and flats that are suitable to accommodate children. For Early Years and Childcare contribution purposes, houses are all dwellings with two or more floors (including chalet style bungalows with an attic room), and with sole access to private outdoor space. Maisonettes, single storey bungalows and trailers/caravans are treated as flats whilst one-bedroom units and dwellings such as student and elderly accommodation, are excluded from the calculation. It should be noted that 100% affordable housing sites will be expected to contribute using the same criteria.

Where demand is of such a scale, a new facility will be sought, either co-located with a new primary school or as a stand-alone facility along with the land.

The process for agreeing a suitable piece of land is explained in ‘Section 4’ of the Developers’ Guide. Department for Education (DfE) Guidance ‘Securing Developer Contributions for Education’ (Aug 2023) states that all new primary schools should be co-located with new nursery provision where there is capacity to do so. In addition, the Education and Skills

Funding Agency currently looks to establish two form entry primary schools (420 places), to ensure financial viability. ECC supports this approach and 2.18ha sites are usually requested for new primary schools based on the DfE guidance set out in [Building Bulletin 103](#), this is ideal for a 2fe primary with commensurate Early Years & Childcare provision (EY&C) but also provides space for the school to temporarily expand by up to a form of entry during 'bulge' periods. Larger sites may be requested if the scenario suggests greater demand in an area without there being a need for two schools.

Any new early years and childcare facility could be built by ECC, a developer or one or more early years and childcare providers. However, it is important that any provider is agreed by ECC to ensure the required type and standard of provision is delivered in the locality. ECC has a robust process in place to allow early years and childcare providers to apply for capital funding and/or lease opportunities to create new early years and childcare places to meet the increased demand generated by developments.

Scenario test results

| | Total | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Capacity | Qualifying | Qualifying | EYCC |
| Ward/Parish | Homes | Houses | Flats | Places |
| | | | | |
| Appleton | 10 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Canvey Island Central | 2,083 | 369 | 1,403 | 128 |
| Canvey Island East | 240 | 21 | 183 | 14 |
| Canvey Island South | 993 | 0 | 697 | 42 |
| Hadleigh St James | 388 | 0 | 330 | 20 |
| St Mary's | 27 | 0 | 23 | 1 |
| <i>St Michaels's</i> | 128 | 22 | 87 | 8 |
| Tarpots | 191 | 0 | 163 | 10 |
| Thundersley North/South | 981 | 0 | 837 | 50 |
| | | | | |
| Total | 5,041 | 412 | 3,731 | 273 |

The Qualifying houses and flats generate the demand for 273 additional early years and childcare places.

This assessment identifies the site locations where new early years and childcare nurseries will be required, most probably as stand-alone nurseries depending on the separate primary and secondary assessment. The demand is generally generated by the site allocations themselves, but in some circumstances a new nursery will serve the demand generated by proposed cumulative demand in the locality, namely ward.

At present there is a shortfall of early years and childcare (EYCC) places in many wards across the borough, with a particular need for a mix of additional provision across the Benfleet/ Thundersley/ Hadleigh area and the phased roll out of the Childcare Reforms has only placed further pressure on the provision available. Recent sufficiency data begins to capture the additional pressure in the sector from the places required because of the roll out of the reforms, it still does not reflect the uplift in likely demands for places from September 2025.

Providers who are seeking to set up new EYCC provision in the borough stress that they are unable to find any available, suitable premises to start up their new setting, or expansion on existing provision is not an option. Therefore, with the additional childcare places that these developments will create for working families, ECC will be seeking land to create new EYCC provision, where possible, in addition to developer contributions from sites to potentially enable the expansion of existing provision.

Broad location – Policy C4 - West Canvey

The potential development of 2,000 homes at this location will generate the need itself for around 122 places, which should be provided by new 72 place and 56 place stand-alone nurseries. There are 5 providers in Canvey Island Central ward with 30 vacancies available, all with 1 provider and the rest have reached capacity.

The cost of a new standalone 72 place early years and childcare nursery is $72 \times £24,416 = £1,757,952$.

The cost of a new 56 place early years and childcare nursery £1,367,296.

Any policy should refer to the following requirement:

A new 72 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.22 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use

A new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.18 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use

Canvey Town Centre

The Plan is proposing some 820 homes in Canvey Town Centre which would generate the need for some 42 places. There is presently 8 providers in Canvey Island South Ward with some 48 vacancies available. Consequently, there is no present requirement for any allocation of land or developer contributions.

Hadleigh Town Centre

The Plan is proposing some 388 homes in Hadleigh Town Centre which would generate the need for some 20 places. There is presently 7 providers in Hadleigh St James Ward with some 46 vacancies available. Consequently, there is no present requirement for any allocation of land or developer contributions.

Tarpots Ward

The Plan is proposing some 191 homes in Tarpots Ward on four separate sites which would generate the need for some 10 places. There are presently 7 providers in Tarpots Ward with 1 vacancy available. ECC is aware that local providers have limited land available to expand, and there will be pressure for additional places in the future. ECC would request developer contributions towards the creation of the necessary places.

St Mary's Ward

The Plan is proposing some 27 homes in St Mary's Ward on a single site. ECC would request developer contributions towards the creation of 1 place.

Appleton Ward

The Plan is proposing some 10 homes in Appleton Ward on a single site. ECC would request developer contributions towards the creation of the necessary single new place.

Canvey Island East Ward

The Plan is proposing some 240 homes in Canvey Island East Ward on five separate sites which would generate the need for some 14 places. There is presently 3 providers in Canvey Island East Ward with 30 vacancies available. At present, there is no requirement for any allocation of land or developer contributions

St Michaels Ward

The Plan is proposing some 128 homes in St Michael's Ward on two sites which would generate the need for some 8 places. There is presently 6 providers in St Michael's Ward with 6 vacancies available. ECC would request developer contributions towards the creation of the necessary places.

Thundersley North and South Wards - Policy Thun2 – Kiln Road Campus

These two wards have been grouped given the close relationship between the site allocations - Council Offices, Kiln Road and USP College, Kiln Road. These two sites combined provide for around 730 homes and will generate the need for around 37 places of the 50 total places for the wards combined. There are 4 providers in the two wards who presently have 4 vacancies available.

ECC would seek land and contributions for a new 56 place nursery on 0.18 ha of suitable land and contributions to be provided by relevant sites on a proportionate basis. Any new provision should not be shared use, be based on the ground floor and have suitable access to it's own outdoor area.

ECC supports reference in Policy Thun2 – Kiln Road Campus, bullet 2 for the provision of a new 56 place nursery but this should be provided on 0.18 ha of suitable land rather than 0.13 ha.

ECC recommend bullet two is amended to read:

A new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.18 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use

The cost of a new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery is 56 x £24,416
= £1,367,296

Further discussion will be required through the masterplanning of these sites where the nursery will be located and the proportionate developer contributions.

Developer contributions

Given the existing shortfall in provision across the borough a developer contribution will be sought to expand existing facilities, where feasible.

The cost of each project and, thereby, any appropriate developer contribution must be considered on a case-by-case basis. By way of guidance, the provision of new, stand-alone facilities will cost around £24,416 per child place whilst expansion projects will cost £20,450 (DfE Scorecard, Q1 2025).

Key Points

- The impact of the development set out in the scenario, on early years and childcare provision, can be mitigated through the allocation of the land for early years and childcare as stand-alone nurseries and developer contributions (set out the ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions).
- ECC would further welcome consideration be given to any opportunities to provide additional provision through any redevelopment/regeneration of clusters/sites. This is further necessary given that some 81 places (all qualifying houses) will be generated through windfall development of 675 homes, but it is not possible to determine its impact given the lack of any spatial distribution.
- Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.
- Any new provision should not be shared use, be based on the ground floor and have suitable access to it's own outdoor area.
- ECC will need to closely monitor capacity given the implications arising from the new access to childcare, as its full implications are not yet fully known.
- Any site required to provide a new early years and childcare nursery will be expected to provide the 'land' and a proportionate financial contribution based on the ECC Developers' Guide.

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