

# Castle Point Borough Council Housing Scenario Test – Special Education Needs (Regulation 19 Plan), November 2025

## Background

Essex County Council's (ECC) Special Education Needs team has been working with Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) to assist in the preparation of their Local Plan and ensure sufficient SEND 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 on 30/10/2025. It has been carried out in accordance with the ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2025). Any development of 20 or more dwellings will be assessed and a request for SEND contributions requested. One-bedroom units and dwellings, such as student and elderly accommodation, are excluded from the calculation.

The scenario provided by CPBC includes a total of 5,780 homes of which 832 were qualifying houses and 3,908 were qualifying flats, with the rest being 'discounted units' (as defined in ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions). This mix reflects CPBC's housing strategy, which is to concentrate development in urban areas and require greater site densities. Any homes already built on relevant sites as of October 2025 are not included in these figures to avoid double counting pupils that may already be on roll at local schools (May 2025 numbers on roll used). The sites were matched to their 'nearest' schools using ArcGIS. Phasing information was not used, as this test considers only the full long-term impact of the growth scenario. Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the developer has determined the detailed housing mix.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, ECC has responsibilities to improve services, life chances and choices for vulnerable children and to support families. This underpins wider reforms ensuring all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background. The Act extended LA's SEND responsibilities from birth to the age of 25 where appropriate, giving children, young people and their parents/carers greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring their needs are properly met.

The Equality Act 2010 and Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 interact in several important ways, including a common focus to remove barriers to learning. Under the latter, duties for planning, commissioning, and reviewing provision, the Local Offer, and requirements for different agencies to work together apply to all children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

## Types of SEND Provision

A child or young person must have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) to access the following SEND services:

Enhanced Provisions

Enhanced provisions provide additional specialist facilities on mainstream school sites for a small number of pupils (typically less than 30). These children have EHCPs and require higher levels of support than mainstream schools can normally provide, but their needs are not so complex that special school placements are appropriate. The enhanced provisions support specific needs and Essex currently have provisions available for:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Learning Difficulties
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Deaf and hearing loss
- Speech, Language and Communication

This type of provision might typically consist of:

- Two Rooms – smaller than classrooms
- Accessible toilet
- Office Space
- Intervention/sensory room
- Kitchen – depending on distance from main school building
- Separate entrance/exit and external hard play space

A resourced provision, as a minimum, would require an adaptive SEN classroom, resources/small sensory room, large sensory room, accessible hygiene room with toilet and shower, separate ambulant toilet, toilet with changing facilities, cleaners store and plant room. Recently delivered projects elsewhere in Essex have included remodelling of existing space as well as new build.

### Special Schools

Special schools serve children and young people with a special educational need or disability that cannot be met in a mainstream school. They vary widely in their programmes of study: in some, the curriculum is essentially mainstream, while in others it can focus more on life skills and developing personal independence. Special Schools in Essex currently provide for:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Severe Learning Difficulties
- Physical and Neurological impairments
- Moderate Learning Difficulties
- Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## *Assessing the Need and Calculating Demand*

Based on 832 qualifying houses and 3,908 qualifying flats, the emerging local plan development proposals could result in SEN requirements for 30 pupils requiring an EHCP in mainstream school and a further 18 requiring a special school placement, which would be significant enough to warrant new provision within a mainstream school and the expansion of an SEN school within the district via a satellite provision.

There are currently no mainstream schools in Castle Point district hosting an enhanced provision. Any child or young person who requires such provision will have to travel to a school in another district. Any new mainstream school built in Castle Point would require dedicated space for its own EHCP cohort drawn from the local population. However, the overall number of children and young people generated as a result of the overall growth being planned for in the emerging local plan (30 in mainstream) would make it essential that enhanced provisions to meet the most prevalent presenting needs – autism, learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs – are developed within the district, to meet the growth plans and needs for the district.

Capacity in provisions in other districts is likely to be under greater pressure as a result of the growth in developments elsewhere. The space required for a resourced provision within a mainstream school will depend upon the type of need being met (e.g. autism, provision for deaf children) and their key stage. Primary resourced provision at present is typically between 8-15 children and provision at secondary schools would be a minimum of 15 children and young people. The facilities required will also depend upon whether the provision will be integrated (the children and young people spend more than 50% of their school day in mainstream lessons) or whether the provision is largely delivered in separate classrooms.

Both nationally and within Essex, the number of children and young people with an EHCP is increasing every year. Essex has seen a 32% increase in the number of EHCPs in the last 5 years. SEND infrastructure in Essex is currently at capacity, so ECC will seek contributions from all housing proposals that meet the threshold to mitigate this new demand.

There is currently two special schools in Castle Point. Cedar Hall School that caters for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Glenwood School, that caters for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). Both of these schools are at maximum site capacity.

We would strongly urge Castle Point District Council to work closely with Basildon, Rochford and Southend councils when considering the accumulative impact of the new developments in their local plans against current and future SEN cohorts. The number of children and young people with an EHCP likely to be generated by the new developments in Castle Point will not in themselves be large enough to warrant a new school but will generate significant growth across the 3-19 cohort typically educated in special schools. Additional pupil yield from neighbouring boroughs combined with the lack of capacity in existing special schools (either in present buildings or on the site to accommodate an expansion) will mean a site to develop a satellite special school is necessary if ECC is going to be able to meet our statutory duties.

The size and site requirements for a new special school will depend upon the type of need being met. At present the greatest pressure being placed on capacity in Essex special schools is for children and young people with severe learning difficulties with provision for profound

and multiple learning difficulties; this is likely to be a combination of ambulant and non-ambulant children and young people. The secondary special school being developed at South Woodham Ferrers is for 102-pupils (based on typical class sizes of 8). The school will be made up of classrooms, therapy space, group rooms, medical, staff room, library, dedicated educational learning rooms i.e. Food Tech, Drama, Music rooms, social areas and kitchen, administration offices, hall, and storage areas. In addition, there will be a need for outdoor spaces and car parking.

The minimum space requirements for special schools are set out in the Department for Education's BB104 which recommends a minimum gross area via a formula. To illustrate: the internal space required for the 102-place school at South Woodham Ferrers is 2690 sqm; external areas will depend upon whether space for games is included in the design.

The current estimated budget required for a 100-place secondary special school is approximately £20 million.

#### Build Contributions

The cost of delivering a SEND place has been based on a review of projects commissioned by ECC since 2016. The cost per place is £102,697 for both primary and secondary age ranges covering a broad range of SEND provision. These costs are likely to increase year on year. These costs include buildings, site works, professional fees plus furniture and equipment.

The precise cost of projects will be determined by ECC after reviewing the Land Compliance Study report that the developer must submit with any planning application that includes school land.

|   | <b>Per pupil</b> | <b>Per house</b><br><b>(Per pupil rate x SEND</b><br><b>pupil yield per house)</b> | <b>Per flat</b><br><b>(Per pupil rate x SEND</b><br><b>pupil yield per flat)</b> |
|---|------------------|--|--|
| <b>SEND contribution cost per place</b> | <b>£102,679</b>  | <b>£1,951.24</b>   | <b>£975.62</b>   |

ECC expect all SEND provision including site, land suitability and contributions to comply with the latest ECC Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2025).