

Pollock (215)

Matter 4 : Proposed Secondary school

Rebuttal of late evidence by GCC (under linked Matter 3)

1

Concerning the Secondary school proposed in Leckhampton, Matters 3 & 4 may shade into one another, as GCC's proposed Secondary school is now requesting to move from MD5 into the JCS-indicated LGS area.

Just a week before the hearings, GCC's consultant (439) submitted and had published a cut-down version of Gloucestershire's 'School Places Strategy' document (labelled "**SPS Document - Edited Extract**"), under Matter-3.

As it excludes the data for the Cheltenham "feeder" Primary schools, and for the very relevant Secondary schools just outside CBC's boundary, I emailed the Director of Education yesterday asking for a complete copy and was directed to a webpage:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-planning-and-projects/gloucestershire-school-projects/>,

where the document is now available as a blue bar/button, (14.5 Mb).

I believe the complete document should be available as an Examination document. 'External' webpages have a habit of changing/vanishing in Gloucestershire (and undated additions being inserted).

As this document has been adduced by GCC, at a late stage, and as it is not yet clear to what extent the Examination will fully assess the evidence basis for this school (grabbing most sensitive land at Leckhampton), fairness demands that I be allowed to formally submit these comments on the document, at this earliest opportunity.

2

Table 1 (below) shows that **37% of Cleeve secondary school** (located north of Cheltenham in Bishops Cleeve) **is drawn from mostly the North and West of Cheltenham.**

Yet Bishops Cleeve has extensive new housing being built out, from which it needs to accommodate local pupils. Moreover, Cleeve School is one of the handful of Gloucestershire Secondary schools which now 'require improvement', a rating which will increase the demand to revert to Cheltenham schools for pupils originating in the North of Cheltenham.

See Gloucestershire Echo article, 20-1-19:

<https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/gloucester-news/every-school-gloucestershire-rated-inadequate-2431121>.

Already, parents in North Cheltenham probably do not want to send/travel to Bishops Cleeve, but they are less vocal than affluent Leckhampton seeking more "choice".

TABLE 1

Cheltenham's Primary Groups - Summarised

Taken from Sections D30 to D34, pages 157 to 179 of the Full 'SPS' document

(Table 1 continued)

	<u>Births</u> <u>Trend</u>	<u>Surplus</u> <u>Places</u>	<u>Estimated pupils from</u> <u>New Housing by '22/23</u>
Charlton Kings	Down	Many (N2)	12
Hatherley-Leckhampton	Down (N1)	Shortage (N3)	230
Hesters Way	Down	Some	59
Swindon Road	Down	Some	56
Whaddon	Level	Level	155

Notes:

- N1 Trend over past four years in generally is downward in the Chart on page 176. 2016 figure is higher than back in 2011, but only by 5% (as the y-axis is truncated and expanded). That 2012 jump-increase was due to the estate built around Symphony Road, off Cold Pool Way, Up Hatherley.
- N2 Chart on page 173 shows a surplus of 100 places in '22/23.
- N3 The 230 shortage shown in the Chart on page 178 is entirely based on GCC's prediction of Leckhampton's housing expansion.

None of the five Primary groups shows any Increasing Births or Shortfall of Places, except Hatherley-Leckhampton, which is also where all the Housing growth is shown (incorrectly).

A glaring inconsistency in GCC's 'SPS' document is as follows:

The table on page 178 shows 230 pupils arising from new housing. At the current 'product ratio' of circa 27 per dwelling, that assumes an incredible 850 new houses built in Leckhampton/Hatherley (and by 2022).

Moreover, for the eventual 377 houses in Tewkesbury District (at 'Site SD2' in Farm Lane, Leckhampton), provision is already paid for and constructed, at Shurdington Primary School.

3

GCC's view that "*forecasting school places is an art not a science*" (SPS document, page 13) gives far too much scope for the manipulation of figures to 'justify' a policy driven by other factors (e.g. encashing GCC's landholdings).

It could even be a back-of-envelope art, with little grip on precise and transparent data.

Certainly the Leckhampton figures have moved around very curiously over the past two years; and the data provided has always been selective and incomplete.

To support the recent Leckhampton Primary school expansion, GCC has announced an increased 'Pupil Product Ratio', a puzzlingly large percentage increase based a study by Cognisant which considered two areas (Kingsway, South Gloucester and an undefined area called "GCHQ" in Hester's Way), areas which are not similar to affluent, expensive Leckhampton, and therefore serve to inflate the requirement for Leckhampton.

SPS page 222 cites "very high pupil product ratios" from new housing around Quedgeley, South Gloucester, which is not likely in Leckhampton or in 'retirement town' areas of Cheltenham.

GCC are expanding Leckhampton and Warden Hill primary schools (upon questionable need in the South of town), and doing so ahead of any MD5 housing permissions. This risks allowing Miller Homes to escape making any contributions (if the capacity by then pre-exists).

'Feeder group' is too blunt a definition for a Secondary school's proper catchment; it would be more accurate if based on Ward of residence (as in my FoI Request data).