SCHOOL FORECASTS - Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Could an increase in numbers of pupils in the catchment area of other schools mean they will become full and pupils who cannot secure a place at their catchment school, will be offered a place at my school?

A: Yes this is correct. The forecast you have is an individual school based forecast should current preference trends continue. If parental preference, housebuilding or increased birth rates mean that other schools in the group of schools are full, children will be offered a place at the closest school with capacity.

Q: We are concerned that our numbers under-forecast future need as actual admissions in September 2019 are much higher than were forecast. The reason for this is that historically the school has been underperforming but is now providing a good standard of education.

A: Our forecasts are based on previous trends (generally this is a very accurate method for forecasting). But immediate changes do take time to become established, so it may be that in this instance the forecast doesn’t reflect the current picture. We understand this and do not rely solely on these forecasts for decision making. As explained, we use a variety of data sources and local knowledge when making our decisions.

Q: There is forecast to be a lot of growth in an area where the County Council have previously said there is insufficient basic need. Can you explain why this is?

A: Remember, these are school roll forecasts. So if a school is popular and attracts pupils from outside its catchment area this trend is projected forward in the forecasts. If the pupil cohorts are growing at the same time the trend is attached to the larger cohorts. This can then feed into forecasts that show a rapidly increasing roll. Again, we would use a range of data sources when making decisions. In particular here we would look at how many pupils are living in catchment compared with the numbers travelling in from other catchments. In addition, in rural areas some of our schools (particularly our secondary schools) have geographically large catchments. So from these school roll forecasts it might look like one school needs expanding, when actually due to cycle paths/road networks etc. a number of schools may be options for expansion due to the location of the demand.