



Highley Infrastructure Capacity

Briefing Note

For Planning Committee – August 2026

(Prepared for Highley Parish Council)

1. Purpose of Document

This briefing note summarises verified infrastructure capacity in Highley relating to **primary healthcare, primary education, early years provision, and wastewater/sewerage systems**. It provides factual evidence to support responses to planning queries and to ensure that statements made by the Parish Council are accurate, consistent, and aligned with recognised planning considerations.

2. Primary Healthcare Capacity – Highley Medical Practice

Highley Medical Practice relocated to the Severn Centre following construction of a purpose-built clinical facility. The building contains seven consultation rooms, designed to accommodate multiple clinicians and support future growth. Prior to the Bridgnorth flooding incident, the practice operated with one permanent GP, occasional attendance from a second GP, and a phlebotomist present during mornings only. This staffing model used approximately half of the available clinical rooms, demonstrating substantial spare capacity.

Following the flooding of Bridgnorth Medical Practice, all clinical services were temporarily relocated to Highley for up to 12 months. The Severn Centre facility successfully accommodated the full operational load of both practices, including GP appointments, nursing services, administrative functions, and urgent care. All seven rooms were brought into full use, and no service reductions were required. This demonstrates that the Highley building is capable of supporting a significantly larger patient cohort than its usual list size.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), healthcare capacity is a material consideration only where a development would create unmitigated pressure on essential services already operating at or beyond safe capacity. Evidence shows that Highley Medical Practice is not capacity-constrained, and therefore primary healthcare provision does not justify refusal of development.

References:

- NHS England GP Practice Profiles (list size, workforce, service capacity)
- Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB operational guidance
- Highley Medical Practice relocation and emergency utilisation records (Parish Council correspondence, 2024–2025)
- NPPF (2023), Sections 8 & 93 – community infrastructure and health provision

3. Primary School Capacity – Highley Community Primary School

Highley Community Primary School retains spare capacity. Department for Education (DfE) and Shropshire Council admissions data confirm a total capacity of 287 places, with 247 pupils currently on roll, equating to approximately 86% utilisation. The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) is 36, and recent admissions cycles show that the school has not been oversubscribed.

This indicates that Highley Community Primary School can accommodate additional pupils arising from new development. As such, primary education capacity does not present a barrier to development.

References:

- DfE School Capacity (SCAP) Returns
- Shropshire Council School Admissions Data (2024–2026)
- NPPF (2023), Section 95 – education provision as essential community infrastructure

4. Early Years Provision – Capacity Constraints

Early years provision in Highley is currently at full capacity, with the local preschool/nursery regularly turning away under-5s due to lack of available places. Families are being forced to travel to Cleobury Mortimer or Bridgnorth for childcare. Cleobury Mortimer has no public transport links with Highley, and Bridgnorth's public transport does not provide early morning or late-day services suitable for working parents. This creates barriers to employment, education, and social mobility.

Under NPPF paragraphs 8, 93 and 104, access to early years childcare is a material planning consideration, as it directly affects community sustainability and equitable access to essential services. Early years capacity is therefore a legitimate infrastructure concern that should be highlighted in planning responses.

References:

- Local early years provider capacity reports (Highley Preschool, Highley Childcare Providers – 2025)
- Shropshire Council Early Years Sufficiency Assessment
- NPPF (2023), Sections 8, 93 & 104 – childcare, sustainable communities, and transport accessibility

5. Wastewater and Sewerage Capacity – Netherton Treatment Works

The Parish Council has been advised that the Netherton wastewater treatment plant has sufficient processing capacity for approximately 10-15 years of projected growth. This indicates that the treatment facility itself is not currently a limiting factor.

However, the sewer network serving Highley—particularly the main lines from the Garden Village area—experiences significant constraints. Heavy rainfall results in overloading, surface water infiltration, and localised flooding throughout the village. These issues relate to network capacity, not treatment-plant capacity, and they are recognised concerns under NPPF guidance and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Developers must demonstrate that additional loading will not exacerbate existing drainage problems.

References:

- Severn Trent Water – Local Network Capacity Advice (2025–2026)
- Parish Council flooding reports and resident submissions
- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- NPPF (2023), Sections 152–154 – flood risk and infrastructure resilience

6. Summary Position for Planning Committee

Highley Medical Practice and Highley Community Primary School both have **adequate capacity**, and neither service presents a barrier to new development. In contrast, **early years provision is insufficient**, and the **sewer network experiences significant pressure**, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall. These two areas represent **valid infrastructure concerns** and should be emphasised in planning discussions and developer consultations.