

**TARPORLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

*Report from Vice-Chairman*

1. On the 16 July 2018 Parish Councillors Flynn, Lush and Ryan together with Borough Councillor Leather met Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) officers Mark Parkinson (Director of Education) and Carolyn Davies (Senior Manager, Education Infrastructure) to discuss Tarvin pupils accessing places at Tarporley High School (THS).
2. Councillors will remember that on the 2018 offer date (1 March) not all Tarvin children were allocated their first preference secondary school (THS). However, after the normal back-filling process 29 Tarvin pupils did get a place at THS, and this number equalled the 29 on-time applications received from Tarvin.
3. Given that 2019 is likely to see even higher demand for places at THS, councillors were concerned to find out what action could or would be taken to reduce the risk of Tarvin pupils failing to secure a place at THS.
4. The first point to note is that which children receive places at THS is determined by admissions criteria set by the school, not by CWaC. However, the school has to review its criteria at least every seven years and any changes must be the subject of consultation. At the next review all Tarvin parents should be encouraged to comment on the criteria.
5. Secondly, although Tarvin is a long-standing feeder school for THS, being in the catchment area (which in 2018 was a straight-line distance of 4.961 miles from the school) is not a guarantee of a place. It is therefore vital that parents, when asked to express their secondary school preferences, use all their preferences. We were told that CWaC's admissions team intends to work with primary schools, to ensure they are equipped to give good advice to parents about what will happen on offer day and what happens if they do not get allocated their first preference.
6. The meeting then considered capacity issues at THS. CWaC officers had met their Cheshire East counterparts to understand their plans for secondary education. This is important because two of the feeder schools for THS are in Cheshire East (Bunbury and Calveley). It appears that although expansion is planned in Cheshire East this is unlikely to reduce the demand from Bunbury and Calveley for places at THS. There had also been discussions with THS over capacity. Although THS has an official published admissions number (PAN) of 180, it has been operating at 210. It has been agreed that this higher number is the right one given the demand and, importantly, site constraints which militate against a higher intake. However, the forecast demand for places in 2019 is 225 (before falling back again in later years). The school has therefore been asked to identify the shortfall in permanent accommodation for an intake of 210, together with a plan for how the larger cohort of 225 could be taken through the school. Assuming this work is done and delivers the objective, up to £500,000 of capital resources could be earmarked for the school, and although the timescale would be tight the investment could be in place by September 2019. Although this would still mean temporary accommodation would be in use, councillors felt this was really positive.