1. Every year the Department for Education (DfE) asks local authorities to provide a variety of data to enable Government to predict funding requirements in future years. The Local Authority returns an annual report on the capacity of maintained schools in Doncaster and numbers of surplus places in those schools.

2. Schools with more than 25% surplus and at least 30 spare places are identified and the Authority has to report what measures are being taken to reduce the level in each school named. The report also includes a forecast of future numbers on roll to assist with predicting shortfalls in school places.

3. Prior to 2010 the report was called the "Supply of School Places" return. From 2010 it is known as the School Capacity Survey. Note that Academy schools are not included in this return.

4. The reduction in surplus places increases the efficiency of the school system and redirects funds from buildings back into teaching. The LA can address issues of surplus places through a programme of school closures, amalgamations and Academy conversions.

5. In April 2010 it was clear that a School Organisation review was required to assess the issues and potential solutions for Doncaster. This review is a continuous process focusing on updated data and better forecasting of pupil numbers. This has more recently been complicated by the National Academy programme. The review is identified as a key priority in the Children and Young People's Improvement Plan (reference D6) to enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to school place planning, and to reduce surplus places to below 15% and support the drive to increase choice and diversity in the school system.

### Surplus places in 2011/12

6. Total Primary and Secondary Provision 6,958 surplus places equivalent to 14.07%. For the Primary sector there are 3,884 surplus places equivalent to 14.68% and in the secondary sector 6,958 surplus places equivalent to 13.37%.

7. Both Sectors show an improvement from 2010/11 when there were 7,677 (15.22%) total surplus places; 4,524 (16.71%) in the Primary sector and 3,153 (13.5%) in the Secondary sector.

8. There are, however, significant variations between areas and individual schools and the surplus places are not usually in the right place to meet demand from parents and demographics. This is exemplified by the fact that surplus places in individual schools range from under capacity to 50% in the Primary Sector and 40.59% in the Secondary Sector.

9. Further improvements and efficiencies are being pursued through school organisation proposals, reassessment of net capacities and building changes.

10. A number of significant milestones have been approved by the Council's Cabinet and delivered in the last 12 months which has reduced surplus places and improved the standards in education and these include the following:
11. For the Primary School Sector the number of schools has reduced by 3:

- The closure of Cantley Sycamore Primary School on 31 August 2011 and the consequent removal of 203 surplus places in the Hall Cross pyramid;
- The amalgamation of Mexborough Park Road Infants School and Mexborough Montagu Junior School to form Montagu Primary School, on 1 April 2011;
- The amalgamation of Hatfield Travis Church of England Infant and Nursery School and Hatfield Manor Church of England Junior School to form Hatfield Travis St Lawrence Primary School on 1 September 2011;
- Cabinet approval has been secured to pursue options related to Marshland Primary School which is currently in special measures, discussions are on-going with the United Learning Trust around academisation.

12. For the Secondary School Sector:

- The statutory closure of Rossington All Saints and it's reopening as an academy on 26 April 2011;
- The statutory closure of Hatfield Visual Arts College and its reopening as an Academy on 1 September 2011.

Current and Future Work

13. Work is also underway to further support Academy Conversions, to provide information, advice, support and guidance to Primary and Secondary schools on Academies. A number of briefings have been held for Primary Heads and Governors and a booklet on “Guidance For Schools On Academy Conversion” has been produced. Specific briefings have also been provided on request to groups of schools on school organisation issues, Traded Services and Brokerage and Academies.

14. The Current position in respect of Academies is as follows:

- of Doncaster’s 17 Secondary Schools 7 have converted to Academies and 7 have shown intent
- of Doncaster’s 100 Primary Sector Schools 4 have converted to Academies and 10 are considering such options
- none of Doncaster’s Special Schools have expressed an interest in becoming an Academy.

15. The CYPS is committed to pursuing the most efficient and best quality education for Doncaster children and will consider opportunities to rationalise further the school estate when appropriate or when situations change, for example, the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where the leadership changes and/or standards drop.