

<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
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Shropshire Primary Schools for the Future

Responsible Officer Ian Budd
e-mail: ian.budd@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 254312 Fax (01743) 254500

Summary

This paper sets out a series of draft proposals for the implementation of the new Shropshire Primary School Organisation policy and requests Cabinet to commission consultation on the proposals.

Recommendation

That cabinet requests the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services to consult on the proposals for review of individual schools set out in appendix A, in line with the Council's Primary School Organisation Policy and Stages 4 and 5 of the procedure for school organisational review.

1. School Organisation Policy - Background

On 14 December 2007, Council adopted a new Vision and School Organisation Policy for primary schools. Officers have now undertaken a series of assignments to apply the new policy to the network of primary schools. The process of application of the policy is set out below. The results of this process were shared with the Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services, in line with Stage 1 of the process for consideration of school organisation proposals. The Lead Member authorised further investigation (Stage 2) and received a report on the outcome of these investigations (Stage 3), following which this report was prepared.

2. Application of the School Organisation Policy

The new School Organisation Policy is expressed as a series of statements covering access to education, sustainability of the school network, continuity of education, diversity of provision, inclusive education and access to other children's services. The application of the policy was structured on the same basis. This took the form of starting with the full list of primary schools and looking at each policy statement in turn as a series of filters to reach a list of schools which require more detailed review.

2.1 Access to Education – Filters 1 and 2

The following schools were filtered out of consideration at the first stage because their position as large schools in towns mean that they were overwhelmingly likely to meet both the criteria for access and sustainability criteria.

Table: Filter 1

Albrighton Primary	Market Drayton Junior
Albrighton St Marys	Market Drayton Longlands
Bridgnorth Castlefields	Oswestry Meadows
Bridgnorth St Johns RC	Oswestry Our Lady & St Oswalds RC
Bridgnorth St Leonards	Oswestry Woodside
Bridgnorth St Marys Bluecoat	Shrewsbury Belvidere Primary
Broseley	Shrewsbury Coleham
Broseley John Wilkinson	Shrewsbury Crowmoor
Church Stretton St Lawrence	Shrewsbury Greenacres
Cleobury Mortimer	Shrewsbury Greenfields
Craven Arms Stokesay	Shrewsbury Martin Wilson
Ellesmere	Shrewsbury Oxon
Ludlow Infant	Shrewsbury Radbrook
Ludlow Junior	Shrewsbury St Giles
Ludlow St Laurence	Shrewsbury St Marys RC
Market Drayton Infant & Nursery	Shrewsbury Wilfred Owen

The following schools are currently required to meet the criteria for access to primary education in rural areas: that is, a primary school place within six miles of each home in Shropshire.

Table: Filter 2

Bucknell St Marys	Chirbury
Clun St Georges	Corvedale
Newcastle	Norbury
Sheriffhales	Westbury St Marys
Woore	

Norbury was added after the information check at Stage 2 of the procedure.

2.2 Continuity of Primary Education

The new policy is clear that there is a preference for all-through primary education except where the school resulting from amalgamation of an infant/junior pairing would either be admitting over 2 forms of entry in the medium term, or on two sites.

The following infant and junior pairs have been filtered out of automatic consideration because they would currently not meet these requirements. However, this does not rule out a joint approach from the Governing Bodies of a pair to seek amalgamation or reorganisation outside of the current policy.

Table: Filter 3

Ludlow Infant and Junior	Market Drayton Infant and Junior
Sundorne Infant and Harlescott Junior	Whitchurch Infant and Junior
Woodfield Infant and St. Georges Junior	

2.3 Sustainable network of schools

The Policy considers schools with the prospect of a long term roll of 92 or above to be viable in terms of a sustainable network of rural schools. The following schools have been filtered out of further consideration because they have at least a reasonable prospect of maintaining a roll of 92 pupils in the medium to long term.

Table: Filter 4

Baschurch	Bicton
Bishops Castle	Bitterley
Bomere Heath	Burford
Ditton Priors Brown Clee	Ford Trinity
Gobowen	Highley
Hodnet	Ifton Heath
Kinnerley	Minsterley
Morda	Much Wenlock
Newtown	Pontesbury
Prees	Ruyton-XI-Towns St John the Baptist
Shawbury	Shawbury St Marys
Shifnal	Shifnal St Andrews
Stoke-on-Tern	Trefonen
Wem St Peters	Weston Rhyn
Whittington	Whixall
Worfield Endowed	Alveley*

*The projections for Alveley show less likelihood of reaching and maintaining 92 pupils than for other schools in the list. However, many pupils at Alveley would be unable to reach Highley by vehicle within six miles, although those within the town and ambulant would be able to use the footbridge. The combination of these factors results in the school being filtered out of further consideration.

2.4 Further Consideration

The remaining schools do not individually meet the initial policy filters. However, any changes to the network of schools affect the position of neighbouring schools. The remaining schools were therefore considered in relation to their local groupings. This deliberation involved consideration of the educational and social factors involved in potential changes to school organisation, the potential for relocation of pupils, the effect on the environment and the balance of school places in schools with a religious character. Certain aspects of the deliberations are summarised in the table of proposals for consultations on school closures set out below. However, each school was given detailed individual consideration, more details of which are set out in Appendix A. In each case where closure is proposed, one or more alternative schools are identified as possible destinations for pupils. In a small number of

destination schools, additional class bases would be required in the short term. However, these schools would also be considered for investment through the primary capital programme (see Financial Implications below). Pupil numbers in the table below are based on January 2008 returns from schools. However, other figures are based on September 2007 returns as the January 2008 figures (collected on 17 January) are still being processed.

Table: Planned list of proposed closures for further consultation

School	Comment
Adderley	47 pupils, 64% out of area. Some pupils will go to Norton-in-Hales (where there are currently 92 pupils in four classes) with others going to Woore (currently with 45 in two classes). Pupils from Market Drayton would be planned to go to schools in the town (where there are 99 unfilled places). There are no immediate capital requirements. However, in the medium term consideration could be given to the development of a new "Market Drayton North" rural school.
Barrow	31 pupils, 79% out of area. Pupils will be planned to go to Broseley schools (109 unfilled places).
Beckbury	53 pupils, 38% out of area. Pupils will be planned to go to Albrighton schools (currently with 165 unfilled places, prior to any developments at Cosford) or Shifnal schools (with 89 unfilled places).
Buildwas	84 pupils, 56% out of area. Pupils will be planned to go to Cressage Christ Church (currently with 49 unfilled places), Upton Magna St Lucia (where there are 106 pupils in four classes) or Broseley (77 unfilled places net of Barrow pupils). However, some fall back to Telford and Wrekin is expected.
Cheswardine	81 pupils (falling to 66 by 2012), 17% out of area. Pupils will be planned to go to Hinstock (currently with 14 unfilled places). Additional investment at Hinstock would include an additional classroom.
Church Preen	69 pupils, 22% out of area. Pupils would be planned to go to Brockton (currently with 22 unfilled places). Additional investment at Brockton would include one new class base and some further extension works.
Dorrington	74 pupils, 23% out of area. Pupils would be planned to go to Longnor (currently with 4 unfilled places). Additional investment at Longnor would include an additional class base.
Farlow	47 pupils, 19% out of area. Pupils would be planned to go to Stottesdon (currently with 19 unfilled places). Additional investment at Stottesdon would include an additional class base.

School	Comment
Hope	50 pupils, 60% out of area. Pupils would be planned to go to Minsterley (currently with 31 unfilled places), Worthen (16 unfilled places) and Stiperstones (6 unfilled places).
Hopton Wafers	44 pupils (60% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Clee Hill (currently with 15 unfilled places) or Cleobury Mortimer (17 unfilled places, but the potential for expansion).
Kinlet	37 pupils (64% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Stottesdon (with investment to enhance the facilities at Stottesdon—see above).
Maesbury	54 pupils (55% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Morda (currently with 24 unfilled places) and West Felton. Investment at West Felton would include an additional class base.
Moreton Say	80 pupils (64% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Lower Heath (where investment would include an additional class base) or Buntingsdale (where investment would result in conversion to a primary school)
Morville	68 pupils (54% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Bridgnorth St Leonard (currently with 70 unfilled places) or Brown Clee (25 unfilled places)
Myddle	66 pupils (24% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Clive (currently with 21 unfilled places), Hadnall (4 unfilled places) or Baschurch (which would have 28 unfilled places as a “one form entry” school. The latter school requires investment for extension.
Nesscliffe St. Andrews	62 pupils (33% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Bicton (currently with 40 unfilled places), Kinnerley (24 unfilled places) or Ford Trinity (31 unfilled places).
Onny	67 pupils (74% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Stokesay (currently with 33 unfilled places), Corvedale (41 unfilled places) or fallback to Ludlow (42 unfilled places).
Rushbury	63 pupils (28% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Brockton (see above), Corvedale (currently with 41 unfilled places) or Church Stretton St Lawrence (24 unfilled places)
Selattyn	74 pupils (58% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Weston Rhyn (currently with 31 unfilled places, but could be expanded to one form entry) or Trefonen (37 unfilled places). Some fall back to Oswestry would be expected.
Tilstock	44 pupils (74% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Whixall (currently with 25 unfilled places) or Prees (46 unfilled places)

School	Comment
Welshampton	81 pupils (22% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Ellesmere (currently with 56 unfilled places), Cockshutt (30 unfilled places) or Criftins (15 unfilled places). Additional investment at Criftins could include an additional class base, depending on expressed parental preferences.
Weston Lullingfields	28 pupils (50% out of area). Pupils would be planned to go to Cockshutt (30 unfilled places), although parental preference could lead to pupils going to Baschurch or West Felton.
Amalgamations of Primary Schools	
Ashford Carbonell (37 pupils, 62% out of area) and Caynham 49 pupils 55% out of area)	Early Primary Capital Programme investment with this proposal would include a new three class school building.
Lydbury North (41 pupils, 40% out of area) and Clunbury (65 pupils, 24% out of area)	Early Primary Capital Programme investment with this proposal would include a four class school building.
Oakland (108 pupils, 9% out of area) in favour of Longmeadow (228 pupils)	The Longmeadow site is large enough for all pupils in a combined school. The building would be refurbished. The county-wide service based at the school would be relocated.

The schools listed above for consultation on proposals for closure currently house 7.4% of the primary school population in total (1496 pupils).

The table below lists the Infant/Junior pairs which are suggested for consultation on amalgamation. There are three ways this can be accomplished. The ways include closing the Junior School and increasing the age range of the infant school, closing the infant school and increasing the age range of the Junior school or by closing both schools and opening a new school in the existing buildings. The Council's Primary School Organisation Policy does not express a preference for any particular pathway, and it is proposed that this should be part of the consultation.

Table: Planned list of Proposed Infant/Junior Amalgamations for Consultation

School	Comment
Mount Pleasant Infant and Junior Schools	Retain both buildings for now
Grange Infant and Junior Schools	Retain both buildings for now
Meole Brace Infant and Junior Schools	Retain both buildings for now

Springfield Infants and Holy Cross Junior Schools	Retain both buildings for now
Oswestry Infants and Beech Grove Juniors	Retain both buildings for now

The schools listed above for consultation on proposals for amalgamation currently house 9.0% of the primary school population in total (1807 pupils). These pupils would not change site under the proposals set out above.

In addition to the proposals set out above, there are two other planned school organisation proposals which would require consultation. These are set out in the table below.

Table: Planned list of Proposed Other Proposals for Consultation

School	Comment
Buntingsdale Infant School	Extend age range to four class full primary age school. This will provide more continuity of education to children from service families who often spend on part of their primary schooling in Shropshire.
Our Lady and St Oswald's RC Primary	Expand to one form of entry due to increased demand for Catholic school places.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 Revenue Funding

Previous papers have set out the need for reductions in the sum allocated to schools as support for the current unsustainable network of schools. The projected shortfall between government grant and allocations to schools in 2009/10 is £1,439,270 and in 2010/11 £1,864,028. If the proposals listed above for consultation are implemented in September 2009, 7/12ths of the full year savings would be achieved in 2009/10 and full year savings in 2010/11. The projected full year savings from the listed proposals would be £2,076,011, but there are also some expected costs to be offset. The following table sets out the reconciliation between the projected savings, additional costs and shortfall in grant income.

	Year 1	Future Years
Expenditure to be Offset		
Additional Transport	£ 140,000	£ 200,000
Redundancies	£ 250,000	£ -
Gross Savings	£ 1,123,652	£ 2,076,011
Net Savings	£ 733,652	£ 1,876,011
Savings Target	£ 1,439,270	£ 1,864,028
Shortfall/Surplus	-£ 705,618	£ 11,983

Note that the projected additional travel and one-off severance costs are projected figures based on experience of similar proposals in Shropshire and elsewhere.

From 2010/11, there is a good match between the projected savings and the projected shortfall in DSG. In 2009/10, the 7/12ths effect means that not all the savings required to meet the shortfall can be made through school organisation proposals. However, it is expected that the required savings can be managed from one off savings items.

Details of the projected savings from each proposal are included at Appendix B.

3.2 Capital Expenditure

It is not possible to identify the exact pattern of capital expenditure which will be required, as it will depend to some extent on the preferences of parents seeking alternative schools for their children. However, the list above identifies approximately 8 additional class bases, at an estimated cost of £1.5m, and some additional refurbishment at an estimated cost of £0.5m (based on experience of similar schemes in recent years). However, Shropshire primary schools are on the verge of a major investment programme which, over a 14 year period could amount to as much as £129m. In the first three years, the proposed budget is approximately £16m, composed of £8.45m of government grant through the Primary Capital Programme, £3.19m from other government grants, £2.47m of devolved formula capital and £1.89m from the Local Controlled Voluntary Aided Programme of capital expenditure (LCVAP). In addition, in some, but not all, cases receipts might be raised by the sale of redundant land and/or buildings and reinvested in the schools estate. The availability of receipts from redundant facilities in all sectors will depend on a detailed examination of the ownership of each site.

The cost of the current proposals will also be offset by reductions in the cost of maintenance required at schools proposed for closure. In the community and voluntary controlled sectors, this is £1.41m. Voluntary Aided schools maintenance is not included in the Council's Asset Management Plan, but will increase the savings. The proposed reduction in the extent of the school's network will also reduce future calls on the investment budget as the Council refurbishes schools through the Primary Capital Programme.

4 Consultation Process

Individual consultation processes will be set up for each proposal or set of linked proposals. These will be conducted in line with the Council's policy on consideration of school organisation proposals (Appendix C). Stages 1 to 3, which involve confidential consideration by officers and the Lead Member and discussion with headteachers and governors have already been completed ahead of this report, which has been prepared in accordance with Stage 4. The proposed timetable for further consultation is set out below

Stage	Dates	Description
5	4 February – 18 April 2008	Public consultation on pre-statutory proposals. A consultation document will be distributed containing some common elements and some which are related to individual proposals (See draft at Appendix D). This stage also includes meetings at each school with staff, governors, and parents and other interested parties, to take place in the three weeks following half term (18 February to 7 March). Other key partners, including District and Parish Councils, Diocesan Authorities, neighbouring County and Unitary Authorities, etc. will also be consulted by letter.
6	29 April 2008	Report back to Cabinet on consultation.

Stage	Dates	Description
7		Publication of statutory notices for proposals which Cabinet agrees should proceed. Comments and/or objections can be made by organisations and the public during the following six weeks.
8 and/or 9	Week beginning 14 July 2008	Cabinet receives a report on any comments or objections to statutory notices, and makes the final local decision on the process.
10 and/or 11		The Schools' Adjudicator will rule on any proposals which are referred to him.
		Officers will work with schools and parents to prepare for implementation of agreed changes on 31 August 2009.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Primary School Organisation Report to Cabinet - 26 September 2007

Primary School Organisation Report to Cabinet - 28 November 2007

Primary School Organisation Report to Council – 14 December 2007

Human Rights Act Appraisal

Children have a right to education. However, there is no right to a place within a specific maintained school. A proposed closure of a school does not, therefore, affect an individual pupil or parent's human rights.

Environmental Appraisal

A full environmental appraisal is a key component of any individual school organisation proposal. However, the broad environmental appraisal shows that the proposals will be largely neutral and might well involve some environmental benefits. This is because the proposals would take out of use a number of energy inefficient school buildings with high investment needs and in some cases replace them with new, energy efficient facilities. Although there would be some increase in transported pupils, there will be also be an increase in pupils travelling by shared transport and decrease in the number of journeys undertaken in support functions to schools, so the increase in traffic will be limited and any increase in carbon emissions will be broadly offset by the reduction in energy usage as a result of efficiency savings.

Risk Management Appraisal

Pupil number changes are projected to drive a reduction in Dedicated Schools Grant from £139.2m to £132.5m (at today's costs). This represents a significant risk in educational resources and outcomes for all Shropshire schools unless action is taken.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The report proposed detailed consultation on the implementation of the Council's policy on primary school organisation. A full community planning appraisal is a key component of any school organisation proposal.

Cabinet Member

Cllr. Ann Hartley

Local Member

All areas of the County.

Appendices

- A. Details of individual consideration and proposals for each school
- B. Projected savings from each proposal
- C. Procedure for the consideration of school organisation proposals
- D. Draft consultation document