



Directorate of Children's Services

Learning for the Future Primary Review

Report on Consultation and Responses

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Executive Summary

Dudley is once again facing the challenges of significant demographic change. Over the last few years there has been an incremental drop in the birth rate from 4,125 per year in 1990 to 3,514 in 2004. Long term predictions indicate that the birth rate will stabilise at around 3,300 per year. This has added to the surplus places noted by KPMG in 1999 and reported by OFSTED in 2000 and 2002. As the lower numbers of children work their way through primary schools the surplus places figure will rise to over 5,000.

The main impact of surplus places and the fall in pupil numbers will be seen in school budgets. The DfES calculate the education budget for Dudley on the basis of pupil numbers. As pupil numbers fall the education budget and school budgets follow. By 2010 using current prices, the 82 primary school will have £7.8m less than they have in this year's budget. This is not sustainable and action must be taken to ensure that schools are able to continue to improve the overall quality of education and drive up standards for all. Doing nothing will result in a rapid reduction in the capacity of schools to provide the quality of education that children are entitled to.

Proposals to change schools provoke a wide range of questions. This report seeks to address those questions which in some cases requires a substantial amount of detail.

The report sets out the policy framework in which strategic planning takes place. School place planning is an essential part of that framework and must take account of birth rates, housing developments, land use and developments in neighbouring authorities.

The financial impact of these demographic changes are also set out in detail with regard to both revenue and capital funding.

The report repeats the detail of the consultation proposals to provide a more complete picture for readers. The detail of responses cannot be covered without producing every submission made with commentary on each one. A summary of the main issues raised is included along with a commentary and statistics on the number of responses made. The full record of evidence including every single submission can be made available by appointment.

The recommendation based on this report will be published on 16 November 2005. Cabinet will consider the recommendations on 17 November 2005. The publication of statutory notices is planned for 21 November 2005 - 2 January 2006. School Organisation Committee will then meet to reach a decision on the proposals, the matter may be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.

Strategic Planning Policy Framework

Any review of school places should be set within the strategic planning policy framework for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) and the surrounding area. It is important to refer briefly to this framework as a context for the Primary Schools Review.

In 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act brought about changes to the way the planning system for local authorities and regions operates. At the regional level, this has meant that Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (June 2004) has become the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands and now forms part of Dudley's statutory development plan. The RSS provides a spatial framework setting out the broad location of development proposals for the region up to 2021 including policies for housing, transport and economic development.

The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently undergoing a partial review. The first phase of that review is being conducted through the Black Country Study, in which Dudley Council has been fully involved in partnership with Walsall, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Councils. A major aim of the Black Country Study is to increase the population within the four Councils that make up the Black Country. This is a major challenge as much of the Black Country is already developed in terms of land use. The balance between residential, industrial, green space and transport corridors has to be managed very carefully to avoid any area becoming purely employment focussed or purely residential.

The strategic planning framework at the local level currently comprises the policies in the Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which covers the period up to 2011. The current UDP was adopted in October 2005 following a formal review process which commenced in 1998.

The Dudley UDP is a land use plan. Its principle aim is to promote sustainable development in the Borough and guide land use development in such a way that tangible improvements are achieved in the social, economic and environmental well being of the Borough. As part of that objective, the use of brownfield sites remains a top priority for the Council, both in the provision of land for new development and the retention of appropriate sites as urban greenspace.

The new planning legislation replaces the old system of UDPs with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). A Local Development Framework is the name for the collection of planning documents which will be used by the Council to guide development in the Borough. Each of these documents covers a different element of planning policy or it may cover a particular area or site.

One of the first new documents Dudley Council has produced under the new planning system is the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This sets out the timetable for the production of development plan documents and makes clear to local communities and stakeholders what the planning policies are in relation to their area. The LDS also details the suggested number of years that each of the policies within the UDP will cover whilst the new development plan documents are being produced.

Dudley MBC is an area with limited opportunities for development as most of the land area is already committed for use as residential, industrial, open space or for transport. A limited amount of land is categorised as derelict due to factors such as contamination or former mining activity. The distribution of schools in Dudley must take account of critical factors such as where people live and the ease of access to schools.

Many schools in the current pattern are located in centres of population. Some of these schools are matched to local population density in that the schools are large enough to meet demand for places from local children. Some schools are too large in that they have more places than children, resulting in surplus places and others are too small resulting in over-subscription. Like many areas of the country, demographic changes have led to a pattern of primary school provision that no longer meets the needs of Dudley people. The main demographic factors that contribute to these changes are set out in the following section. Any proposals to change the distribution of school places must take account of changes in land use that have already happened and be flexible enough to respond to potential changes in the future.

Further information about the strategic planning policy framework is available from the Directorate of the Urban Environment, Dudley MBC.

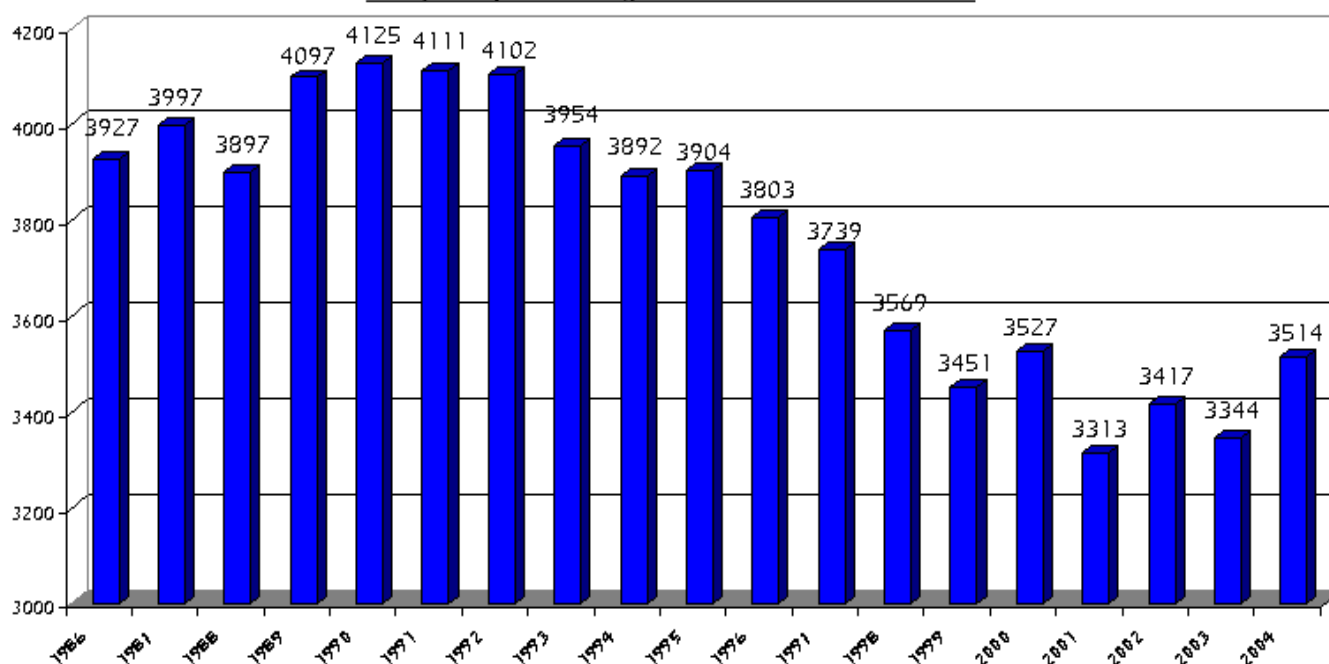
Councils in the West Midlands



Demographic Factors

Live Births and Family Size

Dudley Metropolitan Borough: Calendar Live Births 1986 to 2004



These figures are based on calendar year January - December.

Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
No. of Live Births	3927	3997	3897	4097	4125	4111	4102	3954	3892

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. of Live Births	3904	3803	3739	3569	3451	3527	3313	3417	3344	3514

The live birth figures have shown a continual decline since the peak in 1990. They reached their lowest in 2001 with 3313 births being recorded representing a fall of 812 (19.7%). The following years have seen a stabilisation. The last seven years have averaged 3450 births and whilst there are annual variations, it appears that we have reached a low level stabilisation. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) projections do not give any short or long term indication that the birth rate will increase. Long term projections indicate a stabilisation at around 3,300 live births per annum.

Recent census data and ONS projections (see below) by age group also reinforce this with a drop forecast by 2011 in the 0 -14 year old age range. Nationally the number of children aged under 16 is projected to fall by 4.0% from 11.6 million in 2004 to 11.2 million in 2014 and then to rise slowly until the late 2020s.

The average family size has reduced, falling from a peak of nearly 2.45 children for women born in the mid 1930s, to level off at 1.74 children for women born after 1990. For the first few years, assumed birth rates are a little higher than the 2003-based projections, but the long-term assumption of average family size is unchanged. The latest projected Dudley birth figure for 2028 is 3200. The following table shows the projected population by age group until 2028. The figures show a significant decline in the number of children and young people requiring statutory education. There is also a decrease in the age groups most likely to start families and an increase in the population aged 60+. These are very significant indicators for school place planning. Taken together it is difficult to identify any evidence to support growth in the demand for primary school places over the next 20 - 30 years.

Dudley

AGE GROUP	Census 1991	Census 2001	Projected 2011	Projected 2021	Projected 2028
AGES 0-4	19.6	17.5	16.4	16.7	16.5
AGES 5-9	18.5	19.4	17.3	16.9	17.1
AGES 10-14	17.6	20.0	18.0	17.3	17.6
AGES 15-19	19.7	17.9	19.6	17.8	17.4
AGES 20-24	23.0	15.8	19.1	17.2	17.0
AGES 25-29	23.4	18.6	17.7	19.0	17.2
AGES 30-44	63.9	67.6	57.7	53.9	56.7
AGES 45-59	56.3	60.7	61.4	62.6	54.4
AGES 60-64	16.5	16.9	19.9	18.9	21.5
AGES 65-74	27.3	28.2	31.4	33.8	34.5
AGES 75-84	14.9	17.3	19.5	23.3	25.9
AGES 85+	3.8	5.3	6.6	8.8	10.8
All Ages	304.5	305.2	304.7	306.3	306.5

Figures may not sum due to rounding

Crown Copyright 2004

2003-based Sub-national population projections. Figures in 1000's

The following tables highlight the current level of “other authority” children resident outside Dudley but attending Dudley schools. In the Primary sector, we have over 5% and in the Secondary just over 11%. Current data on the in-flow and out-flow of pupils is not available. The latest figure is from 2003 and this highlighted that Dudley was a net importer at a ratio of 2:1.

Out of Borough Pupils in Dudley Primary Schools (2004 & 2005)

2004

Birmingham	201	0.7%
Bromsgrove	72	0.2%
Dudley	27556	94.4%
Sandwell	893	3.1%
South Staffs	144	0.5%
Wolverhampton	310	1.1%
Wyre Forest	23	0.1%
Walsall	4	0.0%
	29203	

2005

Birmingham	181	0.6%
Bromsgrove	62	0.2%
Dudley	26943	94.4%
Sandwell	904	3.2%
South Staffs	120	0.4%
Wolverhampton	293	1.0%
Wyre Forest	24	0.1%
Walsall	7	0.0%
	28534	

* Includes children attending Nursery classes.

Out of Borough Pupils in Dudley Secondary Schools (2004 & 2005)

2004

Birmingham	506	2.5%
Bromsgrove	45	0.2%
Dudley	18304	88.8%
Sandwell	967	4.7%
South Staffs	123	0.6%
Wolverhampton	594	2.9%
Wyre Forest	54	0.3%
Walsall	12	0.1%
	<u>20605</u>	

2005

Birmingham	461	2.2%
Bromsgrove	50	0.2%
Dudley	18227	88.8%
Sandwell	986	4.8%
South Staffs	120	0.6%
Wolverhampton	605	2.9%
Wyre Forest	71	0.3%
Walsall	11	0.1%
	<u>20531</u>	

Not all pupil post coded has been matched however the overall match is 99.6%

Not all pupil post coded has been matched. The overall match is 99.6%

Nationally, an annual count of pupils attending schools is undertaken and every January pupils attending a Dudley school are recorded and the total is reported to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). This is the key statistic which provides a useful fixed point for analysis of trends over time and the basis on which the DfES calculated the education budget for Dudley. The table below shows how the numbers have fallen since 1996/97. As the projections to 2009/10 are based on children that have already been born, there is confidence in their accuracy for planning purposes.

Primary NOR - January Count									
		Rec	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total
Actual NOR	1996/7	4098	4080	3966	3927	3842	3896	3933	27742
Actual NOR	1997/8	3950	4122	4069	3968	3943	3848	3877	27777
Actual NOR	1998/9	3801	3949	4114	4056	3961	3959	3861	27701
Actual NOR	1999/0	3807	3814	3940	4093	4070	3967	3961	27652
Actual NOR	2000/1	3846	3828	3840	3937	4099	4069	3968	27587
Actual NOR	2001/2	3781	3872	3831	3855	3956	4124	4074	27493
Actual NOR	2002/3	3688	3790	3864	3857	3900	3964	4131	27194
Actual NOR	2003/4	3541	3687	3796	3875	3861	3893	3974	26627
Actual NOR	2004/5	3509	3564	3685	3806	3901	3853	3877	26195
Projected NOR	2005/6	3379	3533	3577	3715	3846	3913	3868	25831
Projected NOR	2006/7	3342	3402	3546	3606	3753	3857	3927	25433
Projected NOR	2007/8	3378	3366	3415	3575	3644	3766	3872	25016
Projected NOR	2008/9	3379	3411	3388	3453	3623	3666	3790	24710
Projected NOR	2009/10	3379	3413	3434	3425	3499	3645	3691	24486

This shows a fall from 1996/7 to 2004/5 of 1547 pupils.

Secondary NOR - January Count

		Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10	Yr11	Yr12	Yr13+	Total
Actual NOR	1996/7	3931	3700	3696	3641	3574	213	147	18912
Actual NOR	1997/8	4055	3904	3755	3746	3639	934	321	20354
Actual NOR	1998/9	3957	4037	3946	3660	3627	191	188	19606
Actual NOR	1999/0	3942	3924	4012	3920	3620	180	179	19777
Actual NOR	2000/1	4096	3952	3953	3996	3879	243	172	20291
Actual NOR	2001/2	4080	4106	3981	3969	3965	240	205	20546
Actual NOR	2002/3	4191	4088	4121	3978	3917	220	193	20708
Actual NOR	2003/4	4205	4154	4093	4088	3919	219	196	20874
Actual NOR	2004/5	4010	4179	4146	4074	4018	240	207	20874
Actual NOR	2005/6	3952	3993	4199	4119	4037	244	239	20783
Projected NOR	2006/7	3921	3935	4001	4171	4068	234	211	20541
Projected NOR	2007/8	3968	3906	3940	3985	4107	239	211	20356
Projected NOR	2008/9	3931	3977	3934	3948	3947	250	225	20212
Projected NOR	2009/10	3845	3916	3981	3918	3887	229	225	20001

This shows an increase from 1996/7 to 2004/5 of 1871 pupils.

There has been a 5.5% fall in children attending Dudley primary schools in the period 1996/7 to 2004/5 (see figures in the tables above). The expected trend is for figures to approach 25000 over the next four years as the full impact of the live birth decline takes effect. The lower element of the fall in births (years 2000 onwards) has not begun to take effect on Dudley primary schools but as these smaller birth figures filter through and larger groups move on, the effect will start to grow. Over the same period the secondary phase has seen figures rise attributed largely to the higher birth figures in the years 1989 – 1993.

Additionally some of our secondary schools are traditionally high importers from neighbouring authorities, Dudley's import ratio overall is approximately 2:1 but this is stronger in the secondary phase. Overall, figures should start to fall as the smaller cohorts move through although the random factor of pupil migration and school popularity makes this more of a volatile situation to predict. The impact of new primary schools and new secondary schools including academies in neighbouring authorities is yet to be determined but could reduce the number of pupils attending Dudley schools in future.

Housing Developments

The UDP referred to in the first section includes land allocated for housing development. The planning period of the UDP includes sites that have been identified for development but are at an early stage and details about the type of housing or other development are not yet confirmed. There are also a number of 'windfall sites' that may be identified in due course and not included in the UDP. All of these UDP sites and unexpected windfall sites must be included as far as possible in any school place planning. The following tables show the housing developments that are included in the UDP or identified as windfall sites. The tables show the minimum number of dwellings expected but in many cases it is not known whether they would be family housing or other types of dwellings. This requires estimates of the maximum number of children that may result from new housing and impact on the nearest primary schools. All of these factors are reflected in the primary school proposals.

Strategic Allocations (Housing)

Site Name

	No. of Dwellings	Phase 1	Phase 2	Possible Primary Yield	Closest Primary Schools
Wordsley Hospital, Wordsley	225	225		57	Bromley Hills, Fairhaven, Dingle, Glynne
Tipton Road Development Area, Dudley	220		220	55	
Russell's Hall, Dudley	200		200	50	Russell's Hall, Milking Bank
Corbett Hospital, Stourbridge	185		185	47	Amblecote
Gibbons Refractories, Coopers Bank	180		180	45	Russell's Hall, St Mary's C.E.
Brierley Hill Crystal Works, Brierley Hill	120	120		30	Brockmoor, Brierley Hill, Withymoor
Northfield Road, Netherton	150	150		38	Northfield Road, Netherton C.E.
Appleyard Site, Wolverhampton Street	30	20		8	Jessons C.E.
Caledonia Road	140			35	Peter's Hill, Thorns, Rufford
Dudley Campus, Castle View	233	233		59	Priory, Jessons C.E.
Town Centre Allocations					
Dudley Town Centre	360	180	180	45	See Breakdown Below
Stourbridge Town Centre	31	31		4	See Breakdown Below
Halesowen Town Centre	100	100		13	See Breakdown Below
Total	2174	1059	965	486	

Town Centre Allocations

	Minimum Capacity	Phase 1	Phase 2	Possible Primary Yield	Closest Primary Schools
<i>Dudley Town Centre</i>					
Castle Street/Tower Street	40		40	5	Jessons C.E., St Joseph's R.C. (Dudley)
Upper High Street/Trident Centre	60		60	8	Jessons C.E., Blowers Green
Upper High Street/Top Church	20		20	3	Jessons C.E., Blowers Green
Stone Street/Priory Square	10	10		1	Jessons C.E., Blowers Green
St. James's Road/Priory Street	10	10		1	Jessons C.E.
St. James's Road/Priory Road	60		60	8	Jessons C.E.
King Street/Flood Street	80	80		10	St Joseph's R.C. (Dudley), C of E Primary School of St Ed & St John
Hall Street/Porter Street	80	80		10	St Joseph's R.C. (Dudley), C of E

Total	360	180	180	45
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Town Centre Allocations

	Minimum Capacity	Phase 1	Phase 2	Possible Primary Yield	Closest Primary Schools
<i>Stourbridge Town Centre</i>					
Coventry Street/ High St/St. John's	11	11		1	Beauty Bank
Envile Street	20	20		3	Beauty Bank
Total	31	31	0	4	

Town Centre Allocations

	Minimum Capacity	Phase 1	Phase 2	Possible Primary Yield	Closest Primary Schools
<i>Halesowen Town Centre</i>					
Birmingham Street	35	35		4	Our Lady & St Kenelm, Halesowen C.E., Hasbury C.E., Tenterfields, Manor Way
Highfields	65	65		8	Our Lady & St Kenelm, Halesowen C.E., Hasbury C.E., Tenterfields, Manor Way
Total	100	100	0	13	
Grand Total	491	311	180	62	

Other Potential Housing Sites

Site Name	Minimum Capacity	Phase 1	Phase 2	Possible Primary Yield	Closest Primary Schools
Turley Street, Woodsetton	20		20	5	Bramford
Stewarts Road, Halesowen	15		15	4	Olive Hill
Valley Road, Lye	17		17	4	Wollescote
Delph Lane, Withymoor Village	34		34	9	Withymoor, Mount Pleasant
Rosehill, Quarry Bank	68		68	17	Quarry Bank, Mount Pleasant
Ruiton Street, Gornal	14		14	4	Roberts
Vale Street, Upper Gornal	18		18	5	St Chad's R.C.
Wood Street, Lower Gornal	18		18	5	Roberts, Red Hall
Holloway Street, Lower Gornal	15		15	4	Roberts
Dudley Wood (Former Speedway)	113	113		28	Dudley Wood
Former Gas Works, Stourbridge	104		60	26	Amblecote, Beauty Bank
Furlong Lane, Cradley	18		18	5	Colley Lane
Stourbridge College, Stourbridge	34		34	9	Oldswinford C.E., St Joseph's R.C., Greenfield
118A Stourbridge Road, Dudley	12		12	3	Highgate
Land of Wrens Nest Road	37		37	9	Wrens Nest, Sycamore Green
St. Peters Road, Netherton	90	90			Sledmere, Northfield Road
Total	627	203	380	135	

The Council will provide land for 5,639 dwellings over the period 2003 to 2011 to meet established housing requirements by permitting appropriate development on allocated sites and suitable land within the urban area.

The Council currently uses a pupil yield calculation of 42 per hundred units of a standard 3-4 bedroom development with 60% of these allocated to the primary phase and 40% to the secondary. Approximately half of this is applicable for town centre developments.

It should be noted that these estimates are the maximum number of additional children from new housing developments. These numbers would only be realised if the pupils moved into Dudley from other authorities. In practice, it is more likely that a significant number of children would relocate from elsewhere in Dudley and have less impact on the total demand for school places.

Special Educational Needs

The Council is committed to an education system which provides all children with the opportunity to meet their full potential. Dudley's recently agreed Special Educational Needs Strategy takes account of this premise by maintaining special schools, with the further development of Additional Resource Centres (ARCs) that will cater for the needs of children who can benefit from some elements of mainstream school provision but are not able to cope with all aspects of mainstream school life. This extension to provision will allow increased parental preference.

Wherever possible, specialist provision will be geographically located to meet children's needs without excessive travel. Most children with special educational needs will attend their local mainstream school, as at present. Some children will require more intensive levels of educational support for all or part of their school career, and this will be provided in their local mainstream school, a special school or other specialist provision.

Special schools will be enhanced and developed according to the 'campus' model similar to that at Campus 21 with Bromley Hills Primary School, Crestwood School (secondary), and The Brier School (special) located on the same site. As a first step, we will redevelop Old Park Special School on a mainstream school campus.

In addition to the Borough-wide special school provision there will be specific local support within the five townships. Each township will have two Additional Resource Centres (ARCs). The ARCs will be hosted by mainstream schools; each township will have one secondary ARC and one primary ARC and will make provision for children with Statements of Special Educational Need.

In addition to the ARCs, each township will eventually be the base for a multi-professional team. This will include elements of the Educational Psychology Service, the Education Welfare Service and other specialist special educational needs support services.

The Mere, Key Stage 1/2 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) will continue to provide for children who are permanently excluded from school prior to reintegration, and for those pupils at high risk of permanent exclusion.

Existing provision for children with hearing impairment is good; however, the current geographical location of the primary and secondary provisions does not secure effective progression from primary to secondary school with non-impaired peer groups. The Hearing Impaired Unit at Ashwood Park Primary School will therefore continue to provide for children with hearing impairment at primary age but we will seek to develop a

new secondary provision within the locality to provide greater social continuity for children at transfer to secondary school. Provision for children with visual impairment is made in local mainstream schools with specialist outreach support and advice from the peripatetic support team.

Provision for most children with physical impairment and complex medical needs has been made by making appropriate adaptations so that they are able to attend a local school. Some children with the most severe and complex needs have had to attend out-of-borough schools.

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) vary greatly in their level of need. At primary age, children who have Asperger's Syndrome are likely to have their needs met effectively in their local mainstream primary school, with outreach support and advice from the Autism Outreach Team. Others, with higher levels of need, may be placed in the Language and Communication provision at one of the special schools.

The existing Language Units for Key Stage 1 children will eventually be relocated to two new sites, one in the north and one the south of the Borough.

Financial Impact of Falling Pupil Numbers

Revenue Budgets

Using pupil number trends and forecasting techniques, the primary pupil numbers in Dudley schools are projected to fall between 2005 and 2010 by 2,358 or 9%. The reduction by 2,358 primary pupils will lead to the annual fall in the Council's revenue grant funding from the DfES of £7.8million by 2010, using current prices. The £7.8million is based on a current per pupil unit funding of £3,329 which is the DfES baseline assessment for a 'Dudley' pupil in 2005 and will be applied for calculation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2006 onwards. This data recently released by the DfES enables the Authority to model future budget scenarios with some certainty, as future revenue grant funding will be pupil number driven. Of the £7.8m, it is estimated that £4.57 million would directly relate to the age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) which is the largest single formula funding element for schools and the balance would relate to other formula factors, such as stated pupil support.

The primary sector delegated budget in the current financial year (2005/06) is £71.3 million or 49% of the total delegated resources to schools. If the current provision of 82 primary schools is maintained with 2,358 less primary pupil places, it is estimated that each primary school budget would be reduced by an average of 10% by 2010. Individual primary school budgets currently range from £0.5 million to £1.9 million. Therefore schools could expect to see an average annual budget reduction ranging from £50,000 to £190,000 by 2010. This is in addition to the budget reductions in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, all driven by falling pupil numbers.

These reductions will apply to all schools regardless of whether they are oversubscribed, full or have surplus places. This is because the total amount of funding available to schools is reduced through falling pupil numbers and schools will receive a share via the locally agreed LMS formula that will be of lower value.

On average Dudley primary schools currently spend their delegated resources in the following proportions:

Staff	83%
Premises	6%
Supplies and Services	11%

As some costs are very difficult to reduce such as premises and services, staffing is likely to be the main focus for balancing budgets. Assuming that the £7.8m reduction was directed at staffing posts in primary schools, this would equate to an indicative

reduction of around 230 posts in schools or more than 10% of the current workforce in primary schools. Reductions of this scale would inevitably impact on the quality of education that 82 primary schools could offer. The proposals will achieve a better financial base whilst retaining staff and enabling schools to continue their drive to raise standards for all children.

The allocation of funding to Dudley schools is made in line with the resource allocation formula. Consequently funding to individual schools will vary in line with a number of formula factors such as category and size of school and specific needs of pupils. There exists currently within the Dudley formula, a factor in respect of small schools. This element allocates a budget protection to schools with pupils fewer than 220 and/or teaching staff of 12 or fewer. In 2005/06 a budget of £567,000 was allocated to 23 primary schools under the small schools factor.

<u>DfES number</u>	<u>Name of school</u>	<u>School-specific: small school protection (teacher average salary and pupil number protection) £</u>
PRIMARY SCHOOLS		
2108	Beauty Bank	26,779
2077	Blanford Mere	41,840
2023	Brierley Hill	7,500
2112	Caslon	16,519
3350	Cradley C.E.	5,000
2072	Crestwood Park	22,742
2152	Dingle	34,023
2063	Fairhaven	52,530
3352	Halesowen C.E.	27,723
3052	Hasbury C.E.	40,165
2069	Highfields	8,992
2105	Holt Farm	32,821
2035	Maidensbridge	13,333
2139	Manor Way	45,022
3357	Our Lady & St Kenelm	32,905
2122	Ridge	30,959
3304	St Chad's R.C.	20,983
3302	St Joseph's (Dudley)	4,070
3355	St Joseph's (Stourbridge)	13,901
3009	St Mary's C.E.	12,219
3303	St Mary's R.C.	20,734
2131	Sycamore Green	49,113
2067	Thorns	7,500
TOTAL PRIMARY		567,373

By 2010, a number of other schools would be eligible for funding via this factor if the current provision of schools remains as pupil numbers decrease. This will have the impact of redirecting existing resources from within the primary sector delegated budget

to fund this growing budget protection; this will have an immediate impact of reducing funds for the remaining primary schools.

Alternatively, if the current provision within primary schools was reduced in line with the proposals outlined in the consultation document, this would release £131,000 of the small schools protected budget identified in paragraph 6 together with a further £532,000 in respect of similar non pupil driven funding for redistribution into the primary schools delegated budget with effect from the 2007/08 financial year. All of this funding is already in the Schools Budget. The proposals will enable more effective use of the available resources.

Dudley is an urban area with a relatively dense population in comparison to rural areas such as Northumberland or Cornwall. Whilst there is a strong case in some situations for smaller teaching groups there is no justification in an urban area for smaller schools. They are significantly more expensive to maintain and divert funds from other schools resulting in even fewer schools able to benefit from economies of scale. It is a perverse situation in which smaller schools are protected with additional funding whilst distorting the impact of available funding across the whole education sector. The current pattern of provision is not sustainable educationally or financially.

The Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for 2005/06 is £146.5m. This budget is delegated to 112 Dudley primary, special and secondary schools in accordance with Dudley's resource allocation formula. Full details can be found within the Dudley Fair Funding budget statement, which is a statutory publication prescribed by the DfES in accordance with Section 52 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. This is available on the Dudley website at www.dudley.gov.uk

The funding of schools is regulated through the Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations (England) 2004 and the LEA budget, Schools Budget and Individual Schools Budget (England) Regulations 2004. From 2006 it will be amended to the School Finance (England) Regulations 2005.

Capital Budgets

The DfES have been exploring ways in which it can facilitate better joined up planning and funding for capital investment to help Councils achieve their vision of 21st century facilities for all schools. Supporting this is a schools' capital allocation of £5.5 billion for this year rising to £6.3 billion by 2007-08. To access this funding, Councils have to have robust Asset Management Plan (AMP) systems and Dudley have continued to build on their good AMP processes that have been developed over recent years. This is essential if the current very high levels of capital funding for schools are to be prioritised in a rigorous, fair and transparent manner by the DfES. Priorities need to be based on full surveys of the needs of all of the schools within the Borough and be responsive to local priorities and government policy.

Dudley has to demonstrate effective capital investment in schools so that they have sufficient, accommodation, are suitable (fit for purpose), and in good repair for the learning and teaching needs of the 21st century. The AMP must address the objective of raising standards of educational achievement for all. Dudley MBC has an extensive property portfolio and schools represent the greatest proportion of operational assets (70%) with a capital value of £147 million. One of the main aims of the AMP is to ensure that educational standards continue to rise through efficient and effective management of all establishments including facility management functions and assessing running costs.

A component of the AMP is the Sufficiency Survey, an assessment of the number of school places that a school can offer based on DfES criteria and formulae, focussing on total areas and on the quantity and organisation of places within and across schools in the Authority in relation to demand. The completion of the Sufficiency Survey in consultation with Headteachers is a statutory duty of Councils and sets the number of pupil places available within a school and is used to measure surplus places in a fair and consistent method. These assessments have informed the Primary Review process of the level of surplus places across the Borough.

The cost of the condition backlog for all schools is approximately £20 million. This is based on latest condition surveys and identified through asset management planning processes. Many of our schools also have suitability issues including the use of mobile classroom accommodation.

£64 million of capital has been spent on schools in Dudley since 2000/01 through the procurement of 210 capital projects and the proportion of capital spend is £27.5 million for Primary, £28.5 million for Secondary and £8 million for Special Schools. Projects carried out include those to address water-tightness and weather-proofing works such as window and roofing replacement, boiler replacement works, refurbishment to

teaching areas, improved access for those with physical disabilities and replacement of mobile accommodation. The allocation of funding is made through a rigorous and transparent scoring system based on sufficiency, suitability and condition. Headteachers and governors are involved in this process.

The Council has been informed of its capital allocations for the next two financial years totalling £5.3 million (excluding schools' devolved capital and pupil place planning) and use of this will be prioritised in consultation with schools through the AMP Scoring Matrix to address the most urgent building issues. Despite this capital allocation, a substantial condition backlog will remain along with a high percentage of teaching being carried out in mobile accommodation across the Borough. The rationalisation and reduction in number of operational assets within the Directorate's property portfolio will mean that resources can be targeted to those priorities identified in the AMP therefore ensuring efficient and effective management of all of our schools.

The primary school review will enable a more strategic approach to capital improvements in schools resulting in significant benefits for children, staff and other users. This will include additional funding for Children's Centres, Extended Schools, Access (Disability) as part of the overall investment in primary school.

Falling Pupil Numbers and Impact on Standards

Dudley primary schools have, over a period of years achieved significant improvement in standards across a range of measures. This improvement is particularly clear in relation to English, Mathematics and Science at Key Stage 2 (KS2).

Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment

KS2 performance in Dudley has improved in, English, Mathematics and Science in line with national performance. The table below shows that the percentage of children attaining Level 4 or above has increased from 1998 by 15% in English, 16% in Mathematics and 19% in Science. Each year represents a different cohort but the rate of improvement in Dudley has been similar to the national rate of improvement for English and Mathematics. The rate of improvement in Science has been higher than the national rate.

% KS2 Test Level 4+ (*2005 data provisional)									
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005*
ENGLISH	Dudley	62	67	72	73	72	72	77	79
	National	64	70	75	75	75	75	78	79
MATHEMATICS	Dudley	56	66	69	66	70	69	72	73
	National	58	68	72	71	73	73	74	75
SCIENCE	Dudley	67	75	82	86	85	85	86	85
	National	69	78	85	87	86	87	86	86

Source: DfES Achievement and attainment tables

The performance of schools can also be assessed by assigning a points value to the levels achieved by pupils in Key Stage Standard Assessments. This is calculated as the average points score.

Dudley's Average Point Score (APS) in 2004 was 27.2 compared to 27.5 nationally
Dudley's provisional APS in 2005 is 27.4 (National APS is not available)

Although, KS1 and KS2 attainment is important, children and young people's performance at school should be considered in a broader context. Schools play an important role in providing a wider range of opportunities through the curriculum, extended school provision, after school clubs and other activities.

Primary schools who make a very strong contribution to the quality of learning and personal development of children and young people. There are several factors that present risks to this contribution.

- uncertainty over the proposal may influence staff in deciding to look for alternative posts elsewhere or leave early e.g. retirement;
- delays in making decisions or a prolonged implementation process is likely to affect staff morale;
- the same uncertainty and delay may effect the environment in which children are expected to learn and develop;
- some parents may decide to transfer children to other schools creating further instability;
- some parents resident in other authorities may decide not to apply for places in Dudley schools and make the surplus places problem worse;
- the lower level of budgets will require governing bodies to make difficult decisions about staffing levels in order to balance budgets;
- headteachers will have additional challenges in ensuring that the quality of education in their schools is adequately resourced;
- the pressures on schools to implement developments such as new inspection programmes, extended provision as well as the national curriculum and primary strategy will result in increased workloads especially in schools with fewer staff.
- there may be insufficient capacity to fully exploit the opportunities for improved terms and conditions from the Workforce Remodelling programme and therefore reduce the impact for children and young people.

All of these factors are likely to effect the quality of education that schools can offer and add to the difficulty of continuing to raise standards. Dudley schools have worked hard

to develop the quality of education provided and continue the drive to raise standards for all. The reduction in funding will hamper this development unless radical action is taken to make more effective use of available resources.

Concerns have been raised about the potential dip in standards caused by school reorganisation. When schools, parents, officers and other partners work together to implement change the likelihood of any negative impact on standards is diminished.

Staffing

The critical element in any organisation is the quality of staff and the range of skills they provide. This is particularly true in schools. Dudley children and young people benefit from the quality of leadership, management, teaching, pastoral care, pupil support, classroom support, administration, technical support, site management, catering and many others. The collective contributions of staff in Dudley schools are regularly acknowledged in individual inspection reports and in the high number of schools rated as good or better.

The Council is committed to retaining all staff. In the context of the financial impact of falling numbers set out in earlier pages, the recruitment, retention and development of staff can be managed through a carefully planned and supported process. Every opportunity should be taken to reduce expenditure on unnecessary areas, such as surplus places to enable continued investment in, staffing. It is essential to ensure that new opportunities are created for staff as the changes take place including as those arising from expansion of some schools, workforce remodelling and the additional demands of managing change programmes.

All governing bodies have been requested to adopt a model policy that will assist them with their own recruitment and enable staff displaced from other schools to secure alternative posts. Although the responsibility of making appointments lies with each Governing Body there is a collective responsibility to ensure that staff are fully supported through this process. It is important to emphasise that the primary school proposals are based on demographic changes and reducing budgets. The performance of staff in affected schools is not a factor and this has been acknowledged strongly through the consultation responses.

The Schools Forum, an advisory body with representation from headteachers, governors, trade unions, the Diocese and others will be asked to support proposals to allocate revenue funding to the primary school review process. The funding will be to enable schools to manage the changes more effectively, provide one-off support for parents for example to acquire a different uniform for children transferring from a closing school, and support staffing changes.

The proposals will be implemented with effect from September 2006 but the changes will occur incrementally over the following few years. This will enable two major factors to operate effectively. Firstly, the implementation of the changes will require schools to manage a number of work streams that will vary from school to school. Some schools will need to plan for capital programmes ranging from replacement schools to small extensions and/or removal of temporary accommodation. Some schools will have a range of other areas to manage. All of this will place additional demands on staffing for

the duration of the transition programme. A carefully co-ordinated programme jointly implemented between schools will ensure a smooth transition, the retention of staff and minimise disruption for all.

Secondly, each year there is a regular turnover of staff in Dudley as people leave for posts in other authorities, retire or decide to do other things each year. The following table includes the numbers and percentages of staff in each age group indicating the potential for retirement over the next few years. This is an important element in achieving staff reductions and creating new opportunities for other staff.

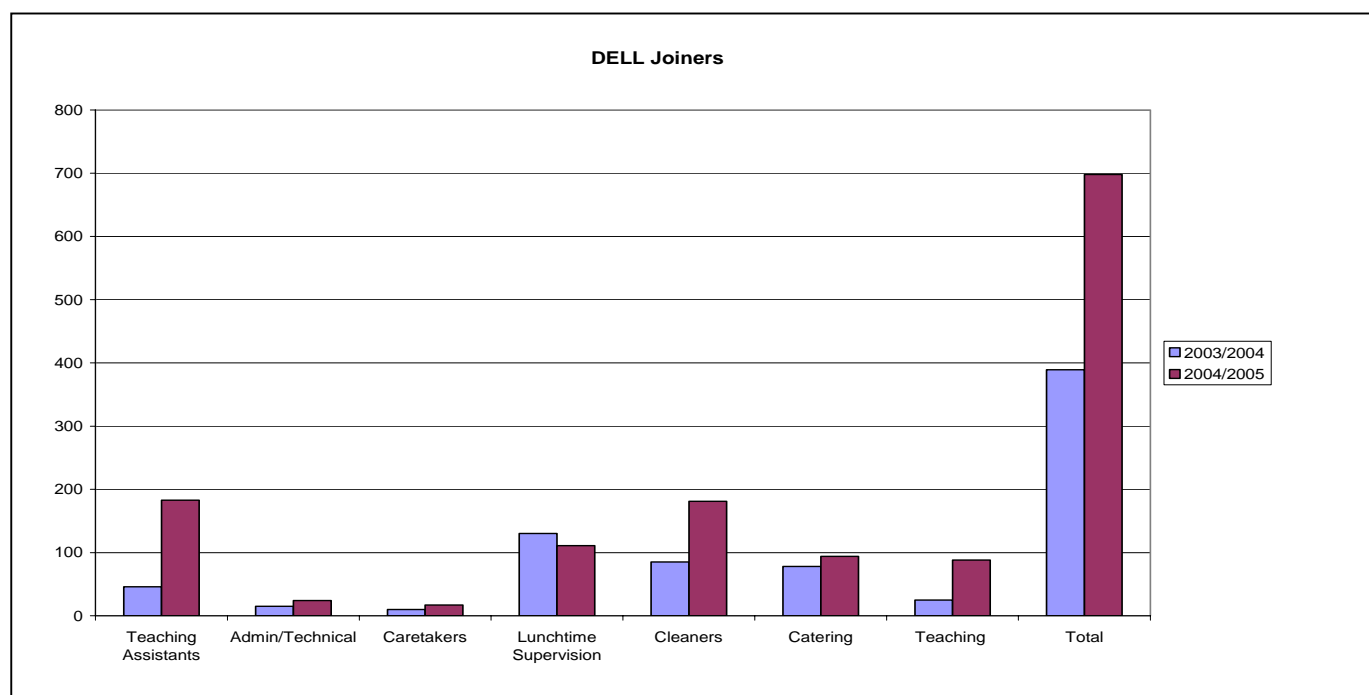
	Total	16-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
*Education Central	1864	125	97	149	290	331	285	271	204	96	16
Education Schools	5671	337	524	565	787	886	882	832	620	202	36
TOTAL	7535	462	621	714	1077	1217	1167	1103	824	298	52
	100%	7.4%	7.7%	9.3%	14.4%	16.0%	14.5%	13.8%	11.3%	4.8%	0.9%

* = including staff working in schools

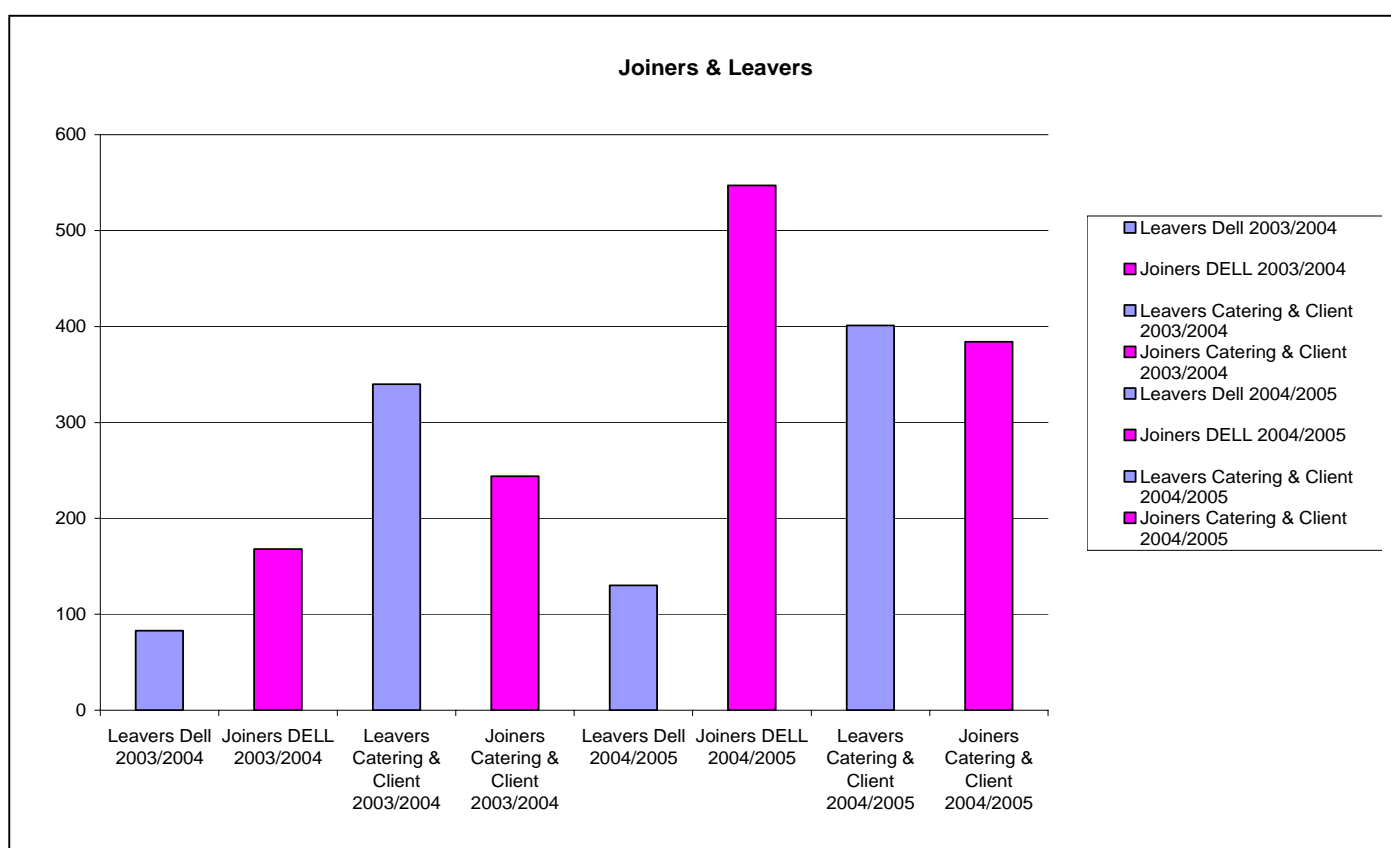
	Total	16-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
PRIMARY SCHOOLS	3736	225	318	356	546	641	557	526	399	131	37
		6.0%	8.5%	9.5%	14.6%	17.2%	14.9%	14.1%	10.7%	3.5%	1.0%

The following tables show the normal turnover of staff in 2003/04 and 2004/05 in terms of the staffing taking up posts (joiners) or leaving posts in Dudley.

Joiners and Leavers		
Joiners		
	2003/04	2004/05
Teaching Assistants	46	183
Admin/Technical	15	24
Caretakers	10	17
Lunchtime Supervision	130	111
Cleaners	85	181
Catering	78	94
Teaching	25	88
Total	389	698
Leavers DELL	83	130
Joiners DELL	168	547
Leavers DCCS	340	401
Joiners DCCS	244	384



Taking together the age profile of staff, the normal turnover rates, the additional staffing demands during the transition stage and growth from Workforce Remodelling, there is no doubt that Dudley can retain all of its valued staff. This can only be achieved by staff and schools working together to achieve the change as smoothly and efficiently as possible.



Approach to the Consultation

Background

The surplus places in the Borough's primary schools were highlighted in an external consultancy report by KPMG in 1999, and in the OFSTED Inspection Reports of 2000 and 2002. The wider outcomes of the OFSTED inspection in 2000 caused a delay in the implementation of a full review and action plan, although the need for such a review featured in the Post OFSTED Action Plan in 2000 and 2002.

Consultation on specific school proposals was carried out in 2002. Responses were received from headteachers, governors, councillors, parents and others. The consultation led to action in several cases including further consultation on the establishment of a new Voluntary Aided (VA) school for Halesowen. These actions partially addressed the situation but much more remained to be done.

By 2004, the need for action was becoming critical. A further process was initiated as part of the planning framework Learning for the Future. This process was supported by detailed preparation and a further consultation on specific school proposals. Learning for the Future: Primary Schools Review Consultation Document sets out proposals to change the provision of primary school places. The proposals have developed from:

- Consultation on specific school proposals in 2002;
- Further consultation on Halesowen CE and Hasbury CE Primary school proposals;
- Primary Review Refresh 2004 consultation on principles and statements of intent;
- Briefing meetings with headteachers, governors and councillors during February and March 2005;
- Further consultation in June and July 2005 with headteachers, chairs of governors and councillors on the approach to further consultation on school specific proposals.

(Additional information to inform the process was posted on the Dudley Website)

Initial Consultation 12 September – 21 October

Following a decision to start consultation on primary school review proposals a series of meetings were held with individual headteachers to support the process of informing staff, parents and children. Letters were sent to all parents informing them of the start of the consultation and details of consultation meetings. Copies of the Consultation Document were available in schools from 12 September 2005 and posted on the Dudley

Council website. Copies of the consultation documents are included on pages 59 to 73 of this report. Briefings were also arranged for Union representatives, Members of Parliament and the media.

A copy of the consultation document was sent to the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning's consultees, which includes all schools in Dudley, their headteachers and chairs of Governing Bodies, Dudley MBC Councillors and key partnering agencies. In addition a letter of invitation was extended to all parents to make a response through the questionnaire a copy of which was available at each school on request. Copies of the documents were also published on the Dudley Council website.

Within the consultation document was a questionnaire which asked five questions. Four questions required a 'yes or no' answer and question 5 was open ended. There was also space for comments in questions 1 – 4 and respondents were invited to attach additional information. Additional information provided by respondents included:

- DVD presentations;
- letters;
- emails;
- petitions;
- photographs;
- telephone discussions.

All responses have been entered onto a database to assist with analysis and all original submissions have been retained.

The consultation document was published on 12 September 2005. This stage of the consultation ended at 5pm on Friday 21 October 2005.

Legislation and guidance sets out requirements for making changes to school organisation including consultation. There is no prescribed duration of consultation other than the statutory notices. The context, style and duration of consultation is a matter for the Council to determine.

Consultation meetings were arranged for staff, governors and parents in separate meetings at each of the following schools:

- Beauty Bank;
- Highfields;
- Holt Farm;
- Sycamore Green;
- Mount Pleasant;
- Maidensbridge;

- Thorns.

Each meeting began with a presentation covering the background, main issues and specific details for the school. Questions were taken and answered where possible. Attendees were also able to record questions in writing for response after the meetings. Notes of all meetings were taken to assist with the consultation and the public record.

Information was posted on the Dudley Council website. As new questions were raised, the website was updated. This was essential to enable access to the very high volume of information available from Dudley, the DfES, ONS and other sources. Paper copies would also be provided for anyone that could not access information electronically.

The consultation document also made clear that information could be available in large print or other languages on request. No requests were received during the consultation period.

For those individuals without personnel internet access facilities in schools and libraries were available.

Consultation Response

The Council thanks those people who took time to respond to the consultation paper and for the comments and suggestions contained in those responses which have served to inform the discussion. Dudley is justifiably proud of all its schools and the strength of support expressed during the consultation confirms that children, parents, staff and others are also proud of their schools.

Respondents to the consultation took the opportunity to comment at meetings or write in to express an opinion, raise a point of view or pose a question. These have been synthesised into 'Issues Raised', to reflect the body of opinion for that issue. The 'Commentary' seeks to address the questions, comments and observations made by respondents to the consultation process in terms of intended changes and their impact on education provision.

The full version of all consultation responses received can be inspected on request.

The proposals are driven by the decline in demand for school places and the impact on funding but are underpinned by the responsibility and aspiration of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to provide the best educational opportunities and experiences for all children and young people in the Borough.

The effect of a reduction in numbers is a reduction in available finance. The proposals contained in the consultation document stem from the responsibility the Council has to provide the best education for all within the available resources. Any consultation paper of this nature cannot hope to satisfy all those stakeholders involved nor will it resolve all the issues raised as a result. The following sections of this appendix focus on the key issues raised by respondents.

Responses from schools where closure is proposed were higher than from those where the proposal would have less impact. There was however a high degree of congruity and similarity in terms of the issues raised.

Responses have been summarised to capture the feelings expressed by a significant proportion of respondents. The commentary on each issue seeks to clarify to the issue where possible and provide further information and as a result an improved understanding of the issues involved.

The issue are not presented in any order of importance.

Issue Raised

Leave the situation as it is retaining the status quo.

Commentary

Whilst the issue as previously stated is falling numbers, the initial impact is directly on finance and the efficient use of resources to provide high quality education. Should the status quo remain then all pupils in all schools will suffer from a reduction in funding whilst retaining many of the fixed costs. This will necessitate reducing provision in key areas such as teaching staff and consequently impact on the quality of education provided for the children of Dudley. This is the very situation that the Council wants to avoid and is the premise on which the consultation paper proposals are predicated. Retaining the status quo is not an option for the following reasons

To understand the need for change, it is important to put the situation into context and to understand the impact on provision if no changes were to occur.

The key factor underpinning the proposals as outlined in the “Primary Review Refresh 2004” consultation document is that there has been a continuous fall in pupil numbers from 1997 to date (1,506 pupils in total). A projection based on pupils already born is that by 2010 this number will have increased by a further 1,732 giving a total reduction in pupil numbers of 3,238. Currently the 82 primary schools in Dudley have combined space for 29,513 pupils. By 2010 it is forecast that there will only be 24,472 pupils of primary school age (3 - 11 years) in Dudley, thus leaving 5,041 surplus places. These surplus places will not be evenly distributed and will impact heavily in certain areas and certain schools’ as is the case now. The reason for this uneven distribution in numbers is demographic and not related to the quality of education provided in individual schools.

A fall in the primary school population would suggest that class sizes would fall, the pupil – teacher ratio would be enhanced, additional space and use of that space would become available and other attendant benefits would come into play. This is not the case because the amount of money available would decrease in proportion to the decline in pupil numbers. Teacher salaries are the biggest cost against a school budget. As the funding decreases so would the ability to employ the same number of teachers.

Government funds education in Councils according to a range of factors but primarily in relation to pupil numbers. As numbers rise so the funding increases and as numbers fall so the funding decreases. Therefore all authorities have a finite budget that is primarily determined by the number of pupils of school age. Dudley has a decreasing school population, therefore a reduction in finance follows – projected to be approximately £7.8 million by 2010.

Dudley spends £71.3 million pounds per year on education for primary age children. This money is delegated to schools according to a funding formula which is over 80% pupil led. Every child brings with them an income which is given to the school. An

increase in children equals an increase in the total money available to the school, conversely a decrease in pupil numbers results in a reduction in funding for the school.

To avoid the impact of reducing pupil numbers having a significant effect on the income of a specific school or schools there are safeguards built into the delegated schools' budget formula which allows for additional funding to be made available above that given on pupil numbers – an example of this would be the “small school protection funding”. Whilst this and other safeguarding factors ensure stability in the short term when there is a reduction in a pupil roll, it is not additional funding. The money used for safeguarding one school is provided from within the total education budget at the expense of a proportion of other school's budgets. The more schools experiencing falling rolls the bigger the expenditure on safeguards and consequently the impact on all schools.

Funding is delegated to each school according to an age weighted pupil unit. The school then uses this money to pay for most of the expenditure relating to the school including energy, premises and staffing costs. The latter is the largest cost commonly between 80% to 88% of the total school budget. Some of the costs incurred by schools such as energy and services are fixed costs and therefore there is little flexibility. If funding reduces through a falling pupil roll because these fixed costs will remain constant. To manage the budget effectively the only way to reduce expenditure is to cut staffing. If this occurs the impact is usually reflected in an increase in class size or a reduction in support provision.

Issue Raised

If you change the numbers in schools they will become too large or will not have the capacity to accept the projected numbers.

Pupils can and do benefit from schools irrespective of their size. The common factor in good schools where children develop well both educationally and emotionally is the quality of teaching, the leadership and management and the resultant impact on learning. The proposals are based on the expectation that where schools will increase pupil numbers there would also be an increase in staffing. Where the extra accommodation is not currently available the Council will provide additional capacity where and when required.

The numbers of pupils per school are projected to rise in 45 schools by September 2010. In some cases the increase is only small but in others there is a forecasted rise of over one hundred pupils by this date. Any such rise will take place over several years and will not be a sudden increase. Where the proposed new capacity is higher than the 2005 net capacity then the time scale allows for a planned programme of development to meet identified accommodation needs that are particular to each school.

There are considerable advantages for any school with a projected increase in pupil numbers as financial security is assured and developmental planning can reflect this. Schools in this situation of can:

- accurately forecast their budget initially for two years and subsequently in cycles of three years in accordance with new Government funding arrangements;
- make new appointments where necessary that are geared to compliment the skills of existing staff and add new curriculum opportunities for pupils;
- adapt curriculum provision to further meet the identified learning needs of new entrants to the school;
- plan and organise staffing structures with confidence;
- organise, over time, the school to meet the increase in pupil numbers to ensure development is seamless;
- control rather than react to any unexpected volatility in numbers;
- benefit from economy of scale.

From a teaching perspective, the morale of the school is often high where growth is projected and lower in school facing reductions and closure. Both situations are closely connected and every effort should be made to sustain morale and provide job.

The question of schools being too large is often based on the idea that they become anonymous institutions that lose the caring and pastoral benefits that can and do accrue in smaller schools. There is no evidence to suggest that standards vary as a result of the size of a school but the range of opportunities for learning and personal development available for children certainly do.

There is no reason why large schools should have any less emphasis on pastoral care and understanding of individual pupils needs and their personal development. The quality of this provision is dependant primarily on the leadership and management and reflected in the resultant culture of the school. In good schools appropriate teaching and pastoral structures are put in place to ensure that children's learning, emotional and social experiences are met and embedded in a caring community where all are valued. This should occur irrespective of the size of the institution.

Because of their size large schools have the opportunity to:

- vary organisational structures to meet identified learning needs;
- provide a wider range of staff expertise and skills;
- be more flexible in how pupils are grouped to provide different working groups e.g., mixed ability, mixed age, ability sets;
- use a wider range of specialisms that teachers can bring to pupil learning;

- provide pupils with a variety of learning styles, experiences (emotional and social) and extra curricular activities.

Issue Raised

The increase/decrease in pupil numbers will mean that my child/children will be taught in a mixed age class and not with their peers.

Commentary

The re-designation of capacity levels for the majority of schools is focused on multiples of 30 which would enable such schools to operate single age classes at 30 pupils or less. Such a situation means that the organisational structure in these schools is easy to manage.

Schools where the capacity level does not conform to this pattern may have to operate classes of mixed age. The definition of mixed age is, “teaching a mixture of ages, year groups and abilities in one class”. This is not an uncommon feature in many schools and all Councils in England have schools operating mixed age classes. According to the DfES the numbers of schools adopting this approach is rising.

There is little doubt that the classroom management skills of teachers with mixed ages classes are the key to success, but in reality single age classes often have a very wide range of abilities and maturation levels that demand similar teaching and support skills.

Neither the DfES nor OFSTED are able to provide any data that suggests pupils perform any better or worse in single or mixed age classes. Should there be a body of evidence to suggest one organisational structure is more effective in relation to pupil attainment than another then there is no doubt that it would be advocated as a preference. The absence of data and the increase in mixed age classes would indicate that the main driver in increasing pupil achievement is the quality of teaching and not the organisational structure.

Currently there are 38 out of the 82 Dudley primary schools which operate with mixed age classes. In some cases they co-exist alongside single age classes. There is no evidence that one system produces higher standards than another, the organisation may differ but the outcome is similar. The common factor for good learning is good teaching irrespective of the organisational context.

Any change in the current operating systems can bring uncertainty for parents, pupils and teachers. It is therefore important to recognise some of the benefits and possible drawbacks inherent in a mixed age system to enable appropriate skills and expertise to be developed to maximise the educational potential of the organisation structure.

Studies indicate that children develop cognitively and socially through interaction with older and younger children. The opportunity afforded by the position of the child as both teacher and learner in a class of different ages and abilities nurtures thinking skills, problems solving skills, vocabulary and other social competences.

Friendship groups cross traditional age boundaries and younger children often view older children as part of the hierarchy of authority in their school when they share the same classroom.

Mixed age teaching resembles the family setting that children with siblings experience at home and reflects more closely life in general. The ability to communicate with and understand the needs of others is key to development.

There are some potential drawbacks of mixed – age teaching. These include the possible risk to low attaining pupils who could feel intimidated by the oldest and most able in the room. This can also affect older children with lower attainment working with younger pupils. There can also be difficulties when significant gaps between maturity levels in a class arise. It is therefore important that where possible composition of such groups are considered carefully prior to their inception. Evidence shows that in a well managed classroom these fears can become strengths with tangible benefits for all.

From a practical perspective there is no doubt that planning lessons can become more complex in a mixed age class than for a single age. Planning, policies and schemes of work need to take this into account to ensure breadth, balance and coverage in the curriculum. Operating a two year curriculum cycle for example ensures that this can occur. The additional planning, preparation and assessment time now in place for all teachers should assist with any additional work that a change to a system may create in the short term.

Current educational thinking is more focused on meeting individual educational needs through personalisation and choice rather than delivering a curriculum that is age related. Personalised learning is a key aspect of the government's educational policy. Schools now have the opportunity to be more innovative and this sits equally well with mixed age classes as those of single age. This is not a problem for most teachers, it requires adapting and developing additional approaches and strategies to meet the requirements of the pupils.

There is an opportunity for the Council and schools to work together in developing an information and training programme for teachers and parents to look at effective organisation structures and teaching skills that would be advantageous to those schools moving to a different operational system. It would be sensible to base this on best practice already evident in schools operating this system successfully in Dudley. This

could include meetings with parents to allay misconceptions, answer questions, increase understanding and further develop the partnership in their child's education.

For further information and advice about mixed-age classes use the teachernet site on:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/researcharchive/teaching-ieas/mixingit/

Issue Raised

If my child moves to another school/if children move to our school then class sizes will go up.

Commentary

Schools are responsible for determining how pupils are organised and their approach to class size. These decisions have to be made within the funding available. The current funding levels operating in Dudley schools are sufficient to ensure there are no classes containing more than 30 pupils. Additional funding released in future, if the consultation proposals are accepted could be used by headteachers to further reduce class sizes as school budgets rise. The continuing increase in pupil attainment is a result of a variety of factors, by far the most influential of these is the quality of teaching.

Class sizes will vary from school to school and depend on the numbers of children in the school and in various age groups. There is no statutory maximum class size though guidelines advise schools not to operate with more than 30 pupils in a class. Schools use a variety of approaches to organising pupils depending on the type of activity including assemblies, class teaching, small groups or individual teaching.

Very small classes are expensive to operate and cannot be sustained financially. In previous years, additional funding was available as a grant to Councils for ensuring no child was taught in classes over 30. This grant is no longer available. There is no funding other than within the Schools Budget which would involve using a proportion from every other school's budget. The way the school operates is an internal management decision not one made by the Council.

Issue Raised

If you want to save money you should close failing schools, not the good ones.

Commentary

Schools that are failing are judged to require 'Special Measures' to help them to improve. This is a judgement made by inspection teams operating under the auspices of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

There are no primary schools in Dudley in special measures and therefore judged to be failing. Since 2002 three schools put in to special measures have since demonstrated sufficient, significant, sustained improvement to be removed from this category. It is a reflection of the quality of education provided to children in Dudley that this is the case.

If there was a 'failing school' in Dudley it is unlikely that this would lead to it closing. Schools close or amalgamate when numbers fall and are projected to continue to fall thus making them unviable as education institutions because of cost and the impact on available provision. The issue of school under performance is addressed in a variety of ways to ensure improvement, and closure would not be the first option. The imperative for closure arises from other factors.

Issue Raised

This is an excellent school with good SATs results; why close it? My children are happy here.

Commentary

This argument was put forward by many people in the response to the consultation paper.

Standards Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 2 (eleven year old pupils) are a good indicator of pupil attainment measured against national norms. They are however not the only indicator of a high performing school but this will be addressed later in this report.

In the previous section of this report consideration was given to why failing schools were not closed because of poor attainment and this was because attainment was not the driving force for closure. This argument holds good for all schools. The key issue becomes 'will the school be educationally and financially viable as numbers continue to fall?' The answer is no unless additional funding is found, but each redundancy would have to be at the expense of other schools and therefore other children in Dudley. It would not be possible to sustain an argument for this level of inequity if it should occur.

For schools to avoid amalgamation or closure both in the short and long term they have to demonstrate that numbers are sufficiently strong to generate funding to make the school a viable proposition. Where there is convincing evidence that this is not the case then the school becomes a candidate for closure irrespective of previous and current standards. The Council is committed to retaining all staff and the expertise that has developed over time will transfer successfully to other schools and continue to grow.

Issues Raised

The school that my child/children will go to does not have as good SATs results as their current school and standards are not as high.

Commentary

SATs are only one indicator of how a school is performing but one that is useful in that it enables judgements to be measured against national norms. A child attaining a Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 would be judged to have met the national expectation for children at this age.

In recent years the government and OFSTED have agreed with schools and moved the focus of judgement away from attainment towards achievement. Whilst attainment is measured against national norms achievement is child focussed and measures progress against a personal benchmark in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding and the value added accrued in this.

Therefore a child who attains a Level 4 but was capable of a Level 5 demonstrates sound attainment but poor achievement. The converse is true where a child may attain a level 3 but has made significant progress for their ability and therefore demonstrated high achievement. Achievement is the key factor which identifies a high performing school. High achievement and attainment are not mutually exclusive but they are what all schools strive for.

Schools should also be considered in relation to the way they develop the whole child and try to meet the social, emotional, developmental and learning needs of all children. 'Every Child Matters' through its five outcomes, requires a much more rounded approach to child development. This is being embraced by all schools.

Issue Raised

If my child/children have to move schools this will be emotionally upsetting and have a detrimental effect on their education. Will there be transitional arrangements.

Commentary

If the current proposals are accepted then this knowledge and the timescale it affords would enable a planned and comprehensive induction procedure to be implemented to minimise any adverse effects of moving schools.

Any such induction procedure should start as soon as decisions are known, not on arrival at a new school. In this way parents and children would have the opportunity to become assimilated and acclimatised to their new school, new friends and new teachers. The Council may wish to consider developing with schools a comprehensive induction and integration plan and providing support to enable it to be delivered.

The more focussed this transition is on pupils and parents needs the less traumatic the move would be. Some children may well look forward to moving school for a whole variety of reasons.

Issue Raised

My child/children has learning difficulties and the current school is equipped to meet them. The new school may not be able to meet those needs.

Commentary

All schools have children with learning difficulties or Special Educational Needs (SEN). Where the proportion of special needs is high in a school the staff develop a wide range of strategies to ensure that these needs are met. Where these issues are not as wide spread need for that additional experience is less but the individual needs of children should still be supported.

If it was evident that on closing a school there would be a significant change to the profile of learning needs of children in the receiving school appropriate support e.g. additional staffing and training, would be put in place. In some cases this may mean the appointment of a teacher with prior knowledge of the children or whole school training with a specific focus. All teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the majority of needs that they are presented with, it is only where specific issues are raised that additional support would be necessary. All schools have a dedicated teacher to coordinate and manage the additional or special learning needs of children. This includes those children considered gifted and talented as well as those with learning difficulties or other SEN.

If any child is receiving additional support as identified in a Statement of Special Educational Needs the requirements of the Statement would continue to be met. If appropriate every effort will be made to maintain the same personnel who have been involved in the support process to retain continuity for each child. Documentation and specific resources would automatically follow the child.

The ability of schools to meet the learning needs of all children has greatly improved in recent years.

Issue Raised

What will happen to teachers who may lose their jobs?

Commentary

It is not envisaged that there will any teachers who will be unable to find alternative employment as there is always a movement of staff within the Borough for reasons such

as retirement, promotion and movement out of the area which creates vacancies. This is addressed in the staffing section earlier in this report.

Part of the consultation process has focussed directly on those people who may be at risk. Discussion has taken place with staff and their respective professional associations in accordance with agreed personnel procedures. This has served not only to raise awareness but also to provide information about possible outcomes.

If a teacher were to be made redundant every effort would be made to find alternative employment in Dudley for them through the process of redeployment. Whilst other schools are under no obligation to appoint redeployed teachers to vacancies there is a local agreement which requires serious consideration to be given to their application in these circumstances.

Issue Raised

How will we know that potential savings resulting from this re-organisation will be retained in education and what will the amount be?

Commentary

This issue arises from question 2 in the consultation paper and whilst receiving a positive response from the majority also raised the question of transparency and doubts that this would happen.

If the current provision within primary schools is reduced in line with the proposals outlined in the consultation document, this will release money for redistribution into the primary schools delegated budget with effect from the 2007/08 financial year. The changes must make sure that the budget gap of £7.8 million across primary schools by 2010 is addressed. 'Savings' are only part of the approach of making better use of available resources.

Individual schools budgets are detailed in Section 52 information, both of which is published on the Dudley website.

Issue Raised

Concern has been raised that with possible school closures and admission numbers that this may result in siblings not being able to attend the same school.

Commentary

On no account will brothers and sisters be sent to different schools unless it is at the request of parents. It is not possible to give the same categorical assurance for friends but every effort will be made to accommodate such requests.

Parents of children who attend a school, that following the consultation process is recommended for closure will be written to by the School Admissions Service and given the opportunity to express up to three preferences for the schools that they wish their children to attend. These preferences will be considered alongside the Council's Admissions Policy and the process will be planned in full consultation with parents.

Places for all children will be allocated during the Spring Term 2006. If any parent is unhappy with the school allocated for their child/children then they are able to appeal against the decision. Any such appeal will be heard during the Spring Term 2006.

Where the admission number is reduced for Reception Class admissions from 2006/07 onwards, the School Admissions Service will apply the Councils' published Admissions Policy as they do now. This policy stipulates the priority order that will be applied when considering preferences from various categories of applicant. Admissions of a child with a sibling connection is the third criteria the first two being, 'Looked After Children' and those children with 'Medical Needs'.

The admissions policy for Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools is determined by the Governing Body of those schools. For further details, contact the school direct.

For further information on admission policy please go to:

www.dudley.gov.uk/education-and-learning then select from the menu 'Primary School Review'.

Issue Raised

Reducing the number of schools will reduce my freedom of choice.

Commentary

This was an issue raised by a small number of people. The impact of proposed closure will be on the number of choices available not freedom of choice.

If nothing was done to address the current situation certain schools would become unviable educationally and financially at the current funding levels therefore reducing choice.

The real issue is about creating a pattern of schools that are all good and sustainable educationally as well as financially. The proposals are centred on this aim.

Issue Raised

Will the land be sold to build houses which in turn will bring families and children with no school to go to?

Commentary

No consideration has been given to the future use of sites or buildings. The Council must first make a decision whether to continue to maintain the school or not.

Should the closure of schools go ahead as proposed in the consultation paper then the future use of each site will be considered on its merits. Some sites may initially be used as an annexe to a school as transitional arrangements work through. Others may be further developed for community use. The use of buildings will be considered within the framework 'Learning for the Future' which has been designed to join a series of initiatives into a coherent development programme.

Issue Raised

Concerns were raised about the accuracy of birth rate figures and their use to project school places. This was also coupled with the impact of new building.

Commentary

The live birth rate figures have declined since a peak in 1991. Over the past five years these figures have reached a plateau with only limited fluctuations. The proposals for consultation are based on actual people born and living in Dudley at this time. Children born in 2005 will not reach their final year of primary education until the year 2015. The authority has built in to its calculations a buffer of around 1,600 surplus places. This provides a margin for the Council to manage any growth in demand for places.

Proposals to change the distribution of schools have taken into account the potential for land use in the area, this includes proposed housing developments, type of housing and the anticipated child population they will generate. Further information is included at the beginning of this report.

Issue Raised

The school is the heart of the community and is used for many other activities, besides school, which provide a service to the community.

Commentary

The use of school buildings by communities has increased in recent years. Schools themselves now encourage wider use through breakfast clubs and often child care after school. The Government require all schools to extend their opening times to enable use of the site and buildings by the wider community. This scheme is in operation now, albeit at the embryonic stage and has to be fully implemented 2010.

The Primary Schools Review is a part of the Dudley approach renamed 'Investing for the Future'. Extended Schools and community use initiatives are part of this strategy which intends to join them into a coherent programme for Dudley community.

Issue Raised

If the school closed my child will not have the opportunity to attend a Nursery.

Commentary

If following the consultation process a school is designated for closure, discussion will take place with the school community on how current provision can be maintained or enhanced over a transition period. Every effort will be made to ensure that the quality of Nursery provision is secured in the short term and future developments take local needs into account.

Issue Raised

Why have you spent money refurbishing and modernising this school over the last five years and then propose to close it – isn't this a waste of public money?

Commentary

Improvements occur to schools for a variety of reasons. Including new legislation such as DDA compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and, health and safety but primarily for children and young people to have a better environment to work in. Children, staff and the community will have enjoyed the benefits of improvements since they occurred. It would have been unfair to those concerned not to improve the school just because closure may be a possibility at some future date. For example, discussions about a Primary Schools Review have been on-going since 2000 yet schools have required capital investment to maintain and improve the buildings.

If a school does close as a result of this consultation it will still remain in the control of the Council and future users will continue to benefit from improvements that have occurred.

Issue Raised

There were various comments made about the consultation process itself with specific reference to the consultation paper. Primarily there were:

- 1) *Insufficient information to make judgements.*
- 2) *Questions were leading and therefore gave no room for other opinion.*
- 3) *The speed of the process.*

Commentary

- 1) The Directorate of Education and Learning produced a consultation document entitled Primary School Review which was circulated on September 12th 2005. Responses were to be received by Friday 21 October 2005. The consultation document provided a summary or rationale in paragraphs 1 to 4 and the imperative or reasons for the need to change were embodied in paragraph 5 to

The general proposals and timetable were then explained including financial implications plus specific proposals for amalgamation or closure. Discussion about removing surplus places has taken place since 2000 including consultation at various stages both about specific schools and principles. Therefore whilst the document was concise (8 pages) it was comprehensive and made reference to other key documents which were available.

Officers of the Council were available to talk individually to members of the public. Written requests for further information were responded to and where appropriate directed to the Dudley Council website where a section entitled 'Primary Review Frequently Asked Questions' provided a wide range of information.

There are practical difficulties in providing information, in terms of depth. Had the consultation paper been a long involved document it may well have had the effect of confusing rather than clarifying the position. The fact that the response form gave the opportunity for comments rather than relying on a 'tick' system added to transparency and integrity of the consultation.

- 2) The questions sought a clear yes or no answer with space for comments. Had the consultation relied solidly on the 'ticks' this would undoubtedly been the case. The format of the questionnaire allowed for text, letters, petitions, alternative questionnaires, pictures and verbal communication which enriched and informed the response process and are taken into account in this analysis. It is likely that the style of questionnaire prompted a wide response rather than directing it. One anomaly that did arise from the 'tick box' was the variation in response between the answers to question 1 and then to 3 and 4. Some respondents believed that responding 'yes' to question 1 would require a similar response to questions 3 and 4. Other respondents did differentiate their answers. The suggestion that the questions were leading and prevented detailed responses is not supported by this evidence.
- 3) Following on from the period of uncertainty since 2000 could have had an adverse impact on staffing, admissions and the overall stability of individual schools. The appropriate time-scale for a consultation process is a matter of judgement. If it is too short, people do not have time to respond in depth and it appears to suggest a forgone conclusion. A long protracted consultation leaves the Council open to comments about delay, but most importantly increasing the uncertainty for children and the wider community.

The high level response, in all formats, would suggest the consultation period was appropriate. It must also be noted that the 'Consultation Questions' are only one part of the overall process.

Schools which have been identified for either possible closure or amalgamation have often raised issues which are particular to their own school. There is however, synergy with other comments. All these views and the constructive suggestions/alternative proposals will be considered on their own merits before any recommendations are made prior to further discussion and consultation.

Issue Raised

There were a number of issues raised surrounding additional travel to school, safety and parking.

Commentary

The majority of responses raising these issues were from parents where closure was proposed for their school. When analysing the demographic distribution of pupils currently attending these schools, for a proportion of youngsters the journey will become slightly longer if the schools they express a preference for is the nearest one to them.

Because of the close proximity to each other of Dudley schools no child will have to travel above the two mile distance which would trigger financial support. The large majority of children as now, will continue to live within 0.5 miles of their nearest primary school. For some pupils the distance will be reduced, dependent on their expressed preference.

Road safety is a concern both for parents and the Council. Some children may now have to cross roads which prior to closure they would not have had are crossed all ready by a proportion of the population to attend school.

Accident figures for the areas surrounding schools proposed for closure indicate that over the last three years there have been 9 accidents during school hours (8.00am - 9.30am, 11.45am - 1.45pm, and 2.45pm to 4.30pm), which have involved child pedestrians between the ages of 4 to 11 years. There have been no fatalities and most of these accidents have been slight. Most casualties have involved drivers and passengers. Although any accident is a cause for concern the statistics do not support the view that the proposed changes would lead to an increase. This is particularly true in the context of additional work to address Safe Routes to School and traffic management.

If issues do arise for children which compromise their safety then the 'Safer Routes to Schools Programme' would operate. This would involve an analysis of any problem and action to remedy it.

Parking around school is a constant issue that all schools have to contend with. It is possible that more parents/carers will decide to drive their children to school but the distances involved do not prohibit walking. This would therefore be a matter of choice.

Respondents

11,000 questionnaires were made available to schools and the normal Dudley Consultees. The questionnaire was also posted on the Dudley Council website. In total there were 778 individual questionnaire responses received. In addition to this the following form of response was made:

Letters	318
Petitions	9
Email	425
Questions Asked during Consultation	99

Number of Questionnaires Issued	11,000
Number of Responses Received	778
Response Rate	7.07%
Pupil / Student	6
Parent / Carer	540
Headteacher	28
Governor	69
Other School Body Rep	56
Councillors	2
Trades Union Rep	4
Other	39
Not Stated	34

Commentary on Responses

Every response has been entered on a database and the originals have been retained. The record of evidence, that is all submissions is available to view on request by appointment. The following is a commentary on the responses with statistics summarising the breakdown of the respondents.

There were a total of 778 responses. Of these 126 respondents made general comments or no comments. Responses were received with reference to 73 of the 82 primary schools. The 126 respondents in the 'none' category gave a higher 'yes' response to all questions.

The highest number of responses (386 almost 50% of total question responses) came from schools where either closure or amalgamation was proposed. The 'no' percentage responses from this group tended to be higher than the 'yes' responses for questions 1, 3, and 4.

Similarly the remaining 169 respondents from representatives of schools where there were no changes proposed or an adjustment in admission numbers, gave a higher 'yes' response.

Question 1

Do you agree with the case for changing the current pattern of primary schools as described in paragraphs 5 - 10.

Question 1 by description of respondent

Description of Respondent	Total	Yes	No	Unanswered	% Yes Total	% No Total	% Unanswered
Pupil/Student	6	3	2	1	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%
Parent/Carer	540	151	367	22	28.0%	68.0%	4.1%
Headteacher	28	21	6	1	75.0%	21.4%	3.6%
Governor	69	37	26	6	53.6%	37.7%	8.7%
Other school body rep	56	24	29	3	42.9%	51.8%	5.4%
Councillors	2	1	1		50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Trade Union Rep	4		4		0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Other	39	16	20	3	41.0%	51.3%	7.7%
Not Stated	34	5	21	8	14.7%	61.8%	23.5%
	778	258	476	44	33.2%	61.2%	5.65%

Question 2

Do you agree with re-investing resources released back into education?

Question 2 by description of respondent

Description of Respondent	Total	Yes	No	Unanswered	% Yes	% No	% Unanswered
Pupil/Student	6	4	1	1	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Parent/Carer	540	341	150	49	63.1%	27.8%	9.1%
Headteacher	28	25	1	2	89.3%	3.6%	7.1%
Governor	69	54	8	7	78.3%	11.6%	10.1%
Other school body rep	56	36	13	7	64.3%	23.2%	12.5%
Councillors	2	2			100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Trade Union Rep	4	2	1	1	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Other	39	24	12	3	61.5%	30.8%	7.7%
Not Stated	34	8	15	11	23.5%	44.1%	32.4%
	778	496	201	81	63.8%	25.8%	10.4%

Question 3

Do you agree with the overall approach based on reducing the number of primary schools?

Question 3 by description of respondent

Description of Respondent	Total	Yes	No	Unanswered	% Yes	% No	% Unanswered
Pupil/Student	6	2	2	2	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Parent/Carer	540	79	441	20	14.6%	81.7%	3.7%
Headteacher	28	18	8	2	64.3%	28.6%	7.1%
Governor	69	32	35	2	46.4%	50.7%	2.9%
Other school body rep	56	16	36	4	28.6%	64.3%	7.1%
Councillors	2	1	1		50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Trade Union Rep	4	1	3		25.0%	75.0%	0.0%
Other	39	13	23	3	33.3%	59.0%	7.7%
Not Stated	34	2	31	1	5.9%	91.2%	2.9%
	778	164	580	34	21.1%	74.6%	4.4%

Question 4

Do you agree with the approach to achieve sufficient local places for local children by reducing the number of places in schools with surplus places and small increases in others to reflect local demand?

Question 4 by description of respondent

Description of Respondent	Total	Yes	No	Unanswered	% Yes	% No	% Unanswered
Pupil/Student	6	3	2	1	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%
Parent/Carer	540	141	369	30	26.1%	68.3%	5.6%
Headteacher	28	17	6	5	60.7%	21.4%	17.9%
Governor	69	34	29	6	49.3%	42.0%	8.7%
Other school body rep	56	19	33	4	33.9%	58.9%	7.1%
Councillors	1	1	1		50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Trade Union Rep	4	1	3		25.0%	75.0%	0.0%
Other	39	12	23	4	30.8%	59.0%	10.3%
Not Stated	34	4	28	2	11.8%	82.4%	5.9%
	778	232	494	52	29.8%	63.5%	6.7%

Commentary

Response to Question 2 was positive in every category of respondent. Conversely responses were negative overall for the other 3 questions. There is also a distinct difference of view between the responses of parents and carers particularly those directly affected by the proposals and those of headteachers generally. The responses should be interpreted with considerable care.

By far the largest number of respondents were parents or carers totalling 540 out of 778 responses. This is not unsurprising as they form the largest body of those involved in the consultation process. The highest number of parent/carers responses came from schools where closure or amalgamation was proposed and their responses were primarily 'no'. This situation was mirrored in the 'Other School Body Representatives' which was mainly made up of teaching staff.

Where parent/carers children do not attend schools identified for closure or amalgamation the response is very small with the vast majority of deciding not to respond. Again this was mirrored in the 'Other School Body Rep'.

Twenty eight of the headteachers responded and whilst this is a proportionally small number a high percentage supported by the educational arguments and indicated 'yes' in response to all 4 questions. A total of 69 governors made up of 41 individual governors and 28 governing body representatives responded and their views were generally closely divided between those who ticked 'yes' and those who ticked 'no' in three out of four questions.

Non - Questionnaire Responses to the Consultation

Petitions

School	Petition Title	No. of Signatures
Blowers Green	As a parent of a child/children who attend Blowers Green Primary School, I wish to support the Governors in their opposition to the proposals set out in the Primary School Review to reduce the School's Standards Number from 45 to 30.	117
Mount Pleasant	Leave Mount Pleasant Primary School Alone	156
Netherton CE	We the undersigned would like to oppose the proposal for Netherton CE Primary School to reduce the admission number from 60 to 30.	210
Maidensbridge	We, the undersigned, oppose the closure of Maidensbridge Primary School.	15,978
Highfields	As you may know there are proposals to close the school and expand Christchurch and Wallbrook schools. If you object to the closure of Highfields in August 2006 please add your name to the petition.	66
Mount Pleasant	The names listed below support the attached letter regarding the proposed closure of Mount Pleasant Primary School (Home & School Association)	47
Holt Farm	Save Holt Farm School Now. Our Children are the future so lets save their school from closure. They are more important than a statistic on a balance sheet. Sign the petition now.	5,332
Beauty Bank	We the undersigned give our support to Beauty Bank Primary School. It is a good school, educating our children to a high standard. It has friendly, approachable staff and it is wrong to close it, disrupting the children's education.	10,319
Highfields	As you may know there are proposals to close the school and expand Christchurch and Wallbrook schools. If you object to the closure of Highfields in August 2006 please add your name to the petition.	5,749
Sycamore Green	Save our School	4,000

Letters

Three hundred and seventeen letters have been received and entered on the database. Where requested a detailed response has been given. On some occasions the response has referred the writer to Dudley Council website where answers to questions are available.

Questions

The 99 questions raised at or as a result of the consultation process have been addressed in the same way as the letters.

Emails

There has been a substantial number of emails sent to the school organisation address. A substantial number of emails have also been sent to councillors or officers. All of these have been added to the record of evidence.

The Consultation Proposals

The proposals covered a range of changes to the current pattern of 82 primary schools. There are several imperatives to address arising from the Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation and from views expressed during the months following consultation.

These imperatives are:

- the need to address the surplus places and impact on school budgets;
- the need to create a pattern of primary provision in which all schools are sustainable educationally and financially;
- the need to provide sufficient places in each local area to meet demand;
- manage the change with minimum disruption.

In addition, a range of other criteria arising from the Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation were adopted as framework for developing proposals to meet the needs of Dudley overall and as far as possible each area of Dudley. In summary, as reported to Select Committee on Lifelong Learning in March 2005.

“In developing proposals for the removal of surplus capacity from primary schools the Council will be guided by the following principles and intentions.

- all schools must be financially and educationally viable;
- a sufficient number of local places will be available for local children;
- consideration will be given to integrated services and the extended roles of schools within their community;
- consideration will be given to develop and maintain community cohesion;
- the balance between Church and Community school places will be maintained;
- the aims and actions of the Inclusion (renamed as SEN) Strategy will be supported;
- consideration will be given to physical access;
- consideration will be given to the quality of school buildings.

The proposals for specific schools emerged from a series of appraisals from different perspectives. For example each school should have a minimum area for teaching, play areas and other purposes for the number of pupils on the school roll. Each school has been assessed against DfES minimum area guidelines to identify potential for expansion or a need for reduction. When option appraisals against each of these criteria were conducted proposals for specific schools emerged. These proposals were further considered against implications for neighbouring schools before arriving at the final set of proposals. The performance of schools or staff was not a consideration and repeat that the driving factor is falling pupil numbers and the impact on budgets.

The proposal included 21 primary schools where no change to capacity or planned admission numbers was required. These schools were considered to meet the main requirements. Some of these schools also have potential to take children from planned housing developments if required in the future.

Capacity reductions were proposed for 37 schools. The DfES require Councils to measure the area of all schools to calculate the number of places available in each school. The reductions in capacity vary between schools from a few places to almost 200 places. In all cases the reductions would be achieved by reducing the planned admission number to reception classes from September 2006. This would achieve a gradual reduction over a number of years without disrupting children. As any surplus accommodation becomes available it can be used for other purposes or in the case of temporary accommodation, removed. This gradual reduction would also enable any staffing changes to be accommodated relatively easily. In the large majority of cases there will be little or no reduction in the numbers of children attending the school. In these cases there should be little or no impact on staffing.

Representations were made from several schools regarding the impact of reducing capacity. These schools included Kates Hill Primary, Netherton CE Primary, Blowers Green Primary, Priory Primary, and Mount Pleasant. Further work has been undertaken regarding the forecast for these schools.

There were 17 schools proposed to increase capacity. Some of these schools have been regularly oversubscribed in terms of more applicants than places. A number of parents have made successful appeals resulting in children being admitted and the school exceeding its capacity number. In these cases, the increase will match the local demand more appropriately but without adverse impact on neighbouring schools. Other schools will receive an increase if there is a need to take additional children from areas where schools are proposed to close and there is insufficient accommodation available now. The Directorate of Children's Services Buildings and Estates Team are working with these schools on the options for creating additional accommodation. Construction work will not start until decisions have been made on the proposals and parents have expressed preferences for alternative schools. This is an essential stage in ensuring that additional places are created in the right places at the right time.

Representations were made by Ham Dingle Primary. The school is oversubscribed and it is proposed to increase capacity to 420. Concerns are based on the difficulty of providing additional capacity on this site. Discussions are on-going in relation to possible options for increasing capacity.

Five schools were proposed for closure. The proposals are described in the following paragraphs along with alternative proposals presented and a commentary.

Beauty Bank Primary School has capacity for 208 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 197 in January 1997 to 134 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Greenfields, Amblecote, St James CE and Gig Mill Primary Schools.

Summary of views expressed:

- children would move to a school with higher class size;
- reduce class size in all schools;
- school at heart of the community;
- transfer to another school could impact adversely educationally on pupils;
- questioning the validity of devising a strategy on projected numbers i.e. future birth rates roll, housing developments;
- school has been improved, will this not be a waste of money.

Alternative proposals submitted

Keep Beauty Bank open. Reduce admissions numbers in other local schools and direct children to Beauty Bank.

It is within the Council's powers to change the planned admission numbers for schools. Parents have a right to express a preference for places in schools and have a statutory right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the place offered. It is not in the Council's power to direct parents to send their children to Beauty Bank.

Federate three schools in Stourbridge Town (not named but could be Beauty Bank, Greenfields and Amblecote) with one headteacher and the capacity of each set at 210.

This proposal would enable local provision to be maintained for Beauty Bank on its current site and there would be some revenue reductions through the loss of two headteacher posts. Experience shows however that federation arrangements can actually increase the revenue costs. There would be no reduction in the fixed costs as there would still be three sets of premises to maintain. There may be limited gains from economies of scale across three schools unless there was 'real determination to share combined resources.

Amalgamate Beauty Bank with Greenfields Primary and build a new school on a single site.

There is only one site that is large enough to build a new school. The remote playing fields used by Greenfields Primary is a possible location and is situated between both schools. This would be a significant change in the proposal and would be dependent on securing the relevant resources.

Retain Beauty Bank as it is because there will be additional demand from housing on the Corbett Hospital site and the nearby canal industrial site.

It is not clear at this stage what type of developments may take place on these two sites. They may be housing developments but they may also be developments of a type that does not generate many children e.g. canal side executive apartments. The timescale is also unclear but it is certain that there will be no increase in demand for primary school places from any development for at least five and more likely ten years. Beauty Bank with its current numbers of children is already unsustainable. A future option could be to ensure that if there is sufficient demand for primary school places from two large housing developments that consideration is given to a new school situated between the current Beauty Bank site and Amblecote Primary School

Highfields Primary School has capacity for 210 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 210 in January 1997 to 171 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Christchurch CE, Hurst Hill, and Wallbrook Primary Schools.

Summary of views expressed:

- school is fit for purpose, highly accessible, safe parking, secure for children;
- high financial investment in recent years;
- use surplus place space by offering community provision;
- closure limits parental choice;
- safety and increased distance.

Alternative proposals submitted

Keep Highfields open. Reduce admissions numbers in other local schools and direct children to Highfields.

It is within the Council's powers to change the planned admission numbers for schools. Parents have a right to express a preference for places in schools and have a statutory right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the place offered. It is not in the Council's power to direct parents to send their children to Highfields.

Close other schools in the area and leave Highfields open.

All the local schools have more children than Highfields. Closing any of the other schools would increase the potential for disruption and there is no guarantee that parents would send their children to Highfields. It is not possible to increase the

capacity of other schools closer to the centre of Dudley to accommodate demand. This alternative is not achievable

Holt Farm Primary School has capacity for 280 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 283 in January 1997 to 187 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Hurst Green and Olive Hill Primary Schools.

Summary of views expressed:

- very much a community based school well used by parents;
- schools celebrates diversity and has the expertise to meet the needs of children irrespective of ability;
- strategy is finance driven not education led.

Alternative proposals submitted

Leave Hurst Green at capacity of 420, reduce Olive Hill to 210, and reduce Holt Farm to 210

It is within the Council's powers to change the planned admission numbers for schools. Parents have a right to express a preference for places in schools and have a statutory right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the place offered. It is not in the Council's power to direct parents with places at Olive Hill to send their children to Holt Farm. The proposal would also create surplus accommodation at Olive Hill whilst needing to secure additional capacity at those schools where parents expressed a preference to attend other than Holt Farm. Holt farm would still have surplus accommodation with no guarantee of increased funding to meet the costs.

Close Olive Hill Primary, Leave Hurst Green at 420, increase Holt Farm to 315

The challenges of transferring children to Holt Farm are greater in this alternative than in previous suggestions. The potential for disruption to a greater number of children and their families is also increased. There may be a need for building work at Holt Farm.

Close all 3 primary schools and Halesbury Special School. Replace with one new 840 capacity school with integrated SEN unit

Although Dudley has one very large primary school there are concerns about the potential risk to a greater number for children if for any reason, overall school performance declines. A range of concerns have also been expressed about the

importance of smaller schools, fear of larger schools and the problems of mixing communities.

Retain Hurst Green at 420. Close Holt Farm, Olive Hill and Halesbury Special School. Build a new second primary of 420 linked to Hurst Green by a new special unit

This alternative is a variation of the previous option and offers the advantage of two schools of 420 rather than one of 840.

Maidensbridge Primary School has capacity for 210 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 210 in January 1997 to 178 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Dawley Brook, Church of the Ascension and Blanford Mere Primary Schools.

Summary of views expressed:

- high standards of attainment (top 3 SATs);
- class sizes are low, would rise in new school;
- quality of education in suggested schools not as high;
- alternative agenda to sell the land;
- accuracy of projected birth rate, specific to this area;
- good building, good environment, Dudley's best kept secret;
- adverse impact on learning if pupils transfer plus emotional and psychological damage;
- capacity of new receiving schools to house additional numbers.

Alternative proposals submitted

Keep Maidensbridge open. Reduce admissions numbers in other local schools and direct children to Maidensbridge.

It is within the Council's powers to change the planned admission numbers for schools. Parents have a right to express a preference for places in schools and have a statutory right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the place offered. It is not in the Council's power to direct parents to send their children to Maidensbridge. It is unlikely that this alternative proposal could be achieved.

Close other schools in the area and leave Maidensbridge open.

All the local schools have more children than Maidensbridge. Closing any of the other schools would increase the potential for disruption and there is no guarantee that parents would send their children to Maidensbridge.

Amalgamate Church of the Ascension CE Primary with Maidensbridge on the Maidensbridge site

This proposal would address the long term sustainability of a school on the Maidensbridge site. Denominational schools tend to draw children from a wider catchment area. Should there be support from the Diocese there is potential for further work on this option.

Sycamore Green Primary School has capacity for 321 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 313 in January 1997 to 184 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Bramford Primary and the new Wren's Nest Primary School and Children's Centre.

Summary of views expressed:

- significant feature of the school is its capacity to meet the needs of all pupils irrespective of ethnicity or learning need;
- concern that other schools would not be able to meet the needs as they are met at present;
- issue over 'hostilities' between communities which would increase as a result of closure.

Alternative proposals submitted

Keep Sycamore Green open. Reduce admissions numbers in other local schools and direct children to Sycamore Green.

It is within the Council's powers to change the planned admission numbers for schools. Parents have a right to express a preference for places in schools and have a statutory right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the place offered. It is not in the Council's power to direct parents to send their children to Maidensbridge. It is unlikely that this alternative proposal could be achieved.

Reduce Sycamore Green capacity to 210 and allow the grant for nursery education to go ahead

Sycamore Green does not have sufficient children to fill to a capacity of 210. In the context of falling birth rates there is no evidence to support the view that Sycamore Green would be any more sustainable if it had nursery provision. The costs of nursery provision per full time equivalent child are significantly higher than for children within the statutory age range. Increasing nursery provision without a substantial gain in the number of children aged 5 - 11 would be a further demand on the schools declining resources.

Use Sycamore Green as an annexe whilst building a new school in the area possibly Parkes Hall Study Centre site. Ownership by both Sycamore Green and Wrens Nest by renaming as a joint school on neither site.

The Parkes Hall site is currently used by the Council as a study centre. It is also located to the north of Sycamore Green and further away from Wren's Nest Primary. There are no other sites available between the two schools.

If no funding is available for a new build on the Wren's Nest site, extend Sycamore Green.

The Secretary of State announced that there would be funding available to rebuild Wren's Nest Primary from April 2006 with the funding spread across a 3 year period. This allows sufficient time to fully engage the community in planning the new school. It also enables the Sycamore Green site to be used for a period of time until the new construction work is completed.

Mount Pleasant Primary and Thorns Primary Schools were offered two options.

Option 1

- Thorns Primary would remain unchanged with a capacity of 210
- Mount Pleasant would have a reduction in its planned admission number from 50 to 45

Option 2

Construction of a new fit for purpose school with capacity for 420 children aged 5 – 11 plus early years provision. This would be subject to funding from the governments recently announced Primary Capital Programme.

Summary of views expressed:

- school would become too large;
- amalgamation would impact adversely on quality of education;
- uncertainty could lead to staff movement;

- increase in numbers could cause safety problem;
- they are good schools with tradition;
- reduces freedom of choice.

Alternative proposals submitted

Leave Mount Pleasant with its admission number at 50

Mount Pleasant Primary has a total area which is well below the minimum area guidelines for schools with the number on roll. The school operates a teaching and learning approach based on class groups of 25. The impact of falling pupil numbers on school budgets across Dudley will make this type of arrangement difficult to sustain. The Council also has to take into account the potential impact on other schools. Keeping Mount Pleasant at 50 could adversely affect the viability of other local schools.

Amalgamate other local schools with Thorns Primary.

These options were considered as part of the development of the consultation proposals. There are no obvious combinations that would be better than the proposal in Option 2.

Rebuild Quarry Bank Primary School on the existing Quarry Bank site

Dudley will be considering its priorities for replacing primary school buildings within the national Primary Capital Programme announced by the Chancellor. Quarry Bank Primary has expressed a keen interest in a replacement should Mount Pleasant Primary wish to remain outside this programme.

Halesowen CE and Hasbury CE Primary Schools

Consultation on proposals to close both schools and open a new voluntary aided school on the Hasbury site was completed in 2004. Statutory notices were published in October. Both schools will close with effect from 31 August 2006 and a new VA primary school will open from 1 September 2006 initially operating from two sites until consolidation on the Hasbury site when all construction work is completed.



Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Learning for the Future

Primary School Review

Consultation Document

‘Putting Learning First for Dudley’

12 September 2005

John Freeman

Director of Children’s Services

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Westox House

1 Trinity Road

Dudley

West Midlands DY1 1JQ

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Consultation Document

Consultation on:	Learning for the Future Primary Review Dudley School Reorganisation Proposals
Summary:	This paper sets out for public consultation a number of proposals to change the provision of primary school places. The proposals have developed from the Primary Review Refresh Consultation process to date.
Deadline:	All responses must be received by 5.00 p.m. on Friday 21 October 2005
Consultees:	Chairs of Governing Bodies Headteachers Councillors Members of the Lifelong Learning Select Committee Members of Parliament The Black Country Learning and Skills Council Dudley Lifelong Learning Partnership Further Education Colleges Directorate staff Unions and Professional Associations Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Dudley MBC Chief Officers Group Primary Care Trusts West Midlands Police Worcester Diocesan Education Committee Roman Catholic Diocesan Schools Commission Dudley Association of Governing Bodies Neighbouring LEA Directors Dudley Racial Equality Council Community Forums Community Learning Networks Churches together in the Borough of Dudley Dudley Free Church Liaison Council Dudley Parent Partnership

Dudley Muslim Association
The Kashmiri Pakistani Professionals Forum
Dudley Community Partnership
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Dudley Education Business Group
Community Representatives Panel
Churches together in the Borough of Dudley
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Dudley Education Business Group
Community Representatives Panel
Sure Start local programmes
Children's Fund
Children and Young People's Partnership

Public Access Dudley MBC Public Libraries
Dudley Website www.dudley.gov.uk
Reception desk of the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning
Westox House
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Responses to: Carol Williams carol.williams@dudley.gov.uk
Executive Support Team
Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning
Westox House
Trinity Road
Dudley
DY1 1JQ

All responses may be published. A large print version, and versions in other languages are available on request to the above address.



John Freeman
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
12 September 2005
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning



Learning for the Future

Primary School Review - Consultation Document

Consultation Summary

1. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) is consulting on proposals to change the provision of primary school places. The proposals have been developed from discussions that have taken place since 2000 and the Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation which ended in January 2005.
2. The Primary School Review and the specific proposals in this consultation document are part of a Dudley approach called Learning for the Future. This approach has been developed as a wide ranging planning framework designed to join a series of initiatives into a coherent and manageable development programme. The initiatives include:
 - Pre-school settings such as playgroups and nurseries;
 - Children's Centres;
 - Primary School Review;
 - Secondary Review (including 14 -19 strategy);
 - SEN strategy;
 - Full Service Extended Schools;
 - Integrated Services/Children's Services;
 - Community use including leisure, libraries and lifelong learning.

This will help Dudley schools to become more effective, more efficient and will allow schools to take every opportunity to improve the quality and range of facilities available.

3. The Primary School Review is about raising standards. Over the years, hard work by staff, children and young people and others has resulted in many improvements in our schools and in other settings such as supplementary schools, youth parliament and in securing places for children and young people out of school. Schools face additional challenges to continue improving whilst expanding the range of facilities offered through new initiatives such as Children's Centres, extended opening hours, Children's Services and community use. Building on existing strengths and introducing new developments across such a broad range of areas is seriously threatened by the financial pressure from the growing number of surplus places in Dudley primary schools. In short, as pupil numbers fall schools receive less income. School budgets will not be able to sustain current levels of provision or plan for further developments unless we become more effective and efficient in using the available resources.

4. Removal of surplus capacity from primary schools maintained by the Council is not about making cuts in the education budget or school budgets. The Primary School Review provides a real opportunity to make improvements by:
 - removing surplus capacity and using funding effectively;
 - investing finances released back into education e.g. staffing, equipment, resources;
 - ensuring all schools are sustainable educationally and financially, for the foreseeable future;
 - enabling all primary schools to manage successfully the initiatives listed in paragraph 2.

Why do we need to change?

5. In 1997 there were 27,710 children aged 5 - 11 attending Dudley primary schools. By January 2005, the number had fallen to 26,204, a drop of 1,506. Birth data shows this will continue to fall to 24,472 by 2010. This represents a total fall since 1997 of 3,238 children.
6. The number of actual places in the 82 Dudley primary schools is 29,513, with only 24,472 children expected to attend by 2010 there will be just over 5,041 surplus places.
7. The total education budget for Dudley schools is determined by government. It is calculated largely on the number of pupils attending Dudley schools. All 82 primary schools receive a share of this money, again largely based on the number of children in each school. Schools with more children receive a bigger share. As the total number of children in Dudley schools falls, the size of the total budget falls. Consequently, the size of each of the 82 shares (schools budget) will also fall.
8. This year 51 of the 82 primary schools had fewer children than last year. The evidence since 1997 and projections to 2010 confirm that this trend will continue. It will become very difficult for schools to find the money to sustain the quality of education currently provided. The costs of accommodation, utilities, wages and resources for teaching and learning will continue to rise in line with normal cost pressures such as inflation and pay awards. As school numbers drop and budgets reduce, there is an inevitability in many schools that reductions in staffing or other areas will result in unacceptable increases in staff workload, or a reduced quality of education or both. This is not acceptable and we have to take decisive action now to avoid schools facing more difficult action later.
9. Surplus places are monitored by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Audit Commission. Unnecessary surplus capacity is expensive to maintain and represents a waste of money. It takes money directly away from educating children. With surplus capacity removed there will be less spent on

building and support costs. In turn, more money can be spent to support teaching and learning,

and improving school buildings. Dudley risks severe criticism from external assessments and inspections if no action is taken to address these issues.

10. On the basis of comments made during the Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation process and on many occasions since, there is widespread acknowledgement amongst headteachers, chairs of governors and others, of the need to take action regarding the removal of surplus capacity. Comments have reinforced the need to act swiftly wherever possible. Clear messages were also received about the importance of:
- working together with schools in shaping specific proposals for change; *and*
 - managing the change processes effectively and professionally taking into account the potential impact on children and young people, parents, staff and others.

What are we proposing?

11. In summary, we are proposing to change the current pattern of 82 primary schools as follows:
- no change to 21 schools;
 - reduce capacity in 37 schools;
 - increase capacity in 17 schools;
 - close 5 schools;
 - option to close 2 further primary schools and replace with one new school;
 - close 2 Church of England primary schools and replace with one new C of E school (already approved).

All schools are listed in a table at the end of this document.

When will the changes happen?

12. There are a series of stages in the process. These are:

12 September - 21 October 2005	Consultation on Proposals
2 November 2005	Councillors consider Consultation Responses
November 2005	Publication of Statutory Notices (6 weeks)
December/January 2006	School Organisation Committee
1 September 2006	Implementation of first stages

13. There is agreement on the need to take action swiftly (see paragraph 10). In this context it is also vital to ensure that proposals address the needs of Dudley as a whole as well as local areas. Changes to individual schools will affect

neighbouring schools – in some cases with additional accommodation, extra staff and improvements to local areas such as safe routes to schools and management of any traffic changes. The project plan for these proposals will be complex with many different aspects and we have to ensure that each change is made in the proper sequence and completed on time. At the close of the consultation, following consideration of responses to this stage, the Council will publish a primary review action plan covering the period 2005 to 2008 setting out clear proposals and associated timescales for the implementation of agreed actions. The necessary funding applications and formal decision making processes will then be initiated in accordance with this action plan. The first changes will be evident from 1 September 2006.

How will the changes be paid for?

14. The very high number of surplus places locks in substantial resources. These proposals will unlock these resources and enable schools to make better use of money already available. This will allow a switch of money from surplus places to other areas such as staffing, accommodation or learning resources.
15. The costs of larger accommodation changes will be met from Dudley's Capital Programme and successful applications for government funding for new schools. Dudley has already succeeded in securing millions of pounds for building and modernising schools. The government has recently announced a massive increase in the level of funding available for new primary schools and Dudley will be well placed to take advantage of this new opportunity.

What is proposed for individual schools?

16. The table shows (page 6-8):
 - each school by name;
 - the net capacity - this is the total number of places available according to the area of the school in square meters;
 - the current number of children on roll (NOR) aged 5 - 11;
 - current admissions number - number of places available in reception annually;
 - proposed admissions number (from 1 September 2006);
 - proposed net capacity (by 2010 or earlier if possible).

The table does not include the range of provision that already exists in primary schools such as nursery places and community use. It is expected that such provision would continue.

Where schools are proposed to close?

17. Parents, staff and governors will be invited to specific consultation meetings to consider the proposals in more detail. The context for proposing to close these schools is summarised as follows:
18. **Beauty Bank Primary School** has capacity for 208 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 197 in 1997 to 134 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Greenfields, Amblecote, St James's CE and Gig Mill Primary Schools.
19. **Highfields Primary School** has capacity for 210 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 210 in 1997 to 171 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Christ Church CE, Hurst Hill and Wallbrook Primary Schools.
20. **Holt Farm Primary School** has capacity for 280 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 283 in 1997 to 187 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Hurst Green and Olive Hill Primary Schools.
21. **Maidensbridge Primary School** has capacity for 210 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 210 in 1997 to 178 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Dawley Brook, Church of the Ascension and Blanford Mere Primary Schools.
22. **Sycamore Green Primary School** has capacity for 321 children. Numbers attending have fallen from 313 in 1997 to 184 in January 2005. There are too few children in the local area for the school to fill and become financially viable. Alternative places will be available at Bramford Primary and the new Wren's Nest Primary School and Children's Centre.
23. **Halesowen CE Primary and Hasbury CE Primary Schools**
Proposals to close Halesowen and Hasbury Schools and open a new Voluntary Aided school on the Hasbury site have already been approved. Statutory Notices will be published for implementation in September 2006.
24. **Mount Pleasant Primary & Thorns Primary Schools**
There are 2 options for Mount Pleasant and Thorns Primary Schools. In the main table:
 - Thorns Primary would remain unchanged with a capacity of 210;
 - Mount Pleasant would have a reduction from 324 to 315.

This should be considered as Mount Pleasant and Thorns Primary Option 1.

There is a second option, Mount Pleasant and Thorns Option 2. In this option there is an opportunity to bid for government funding to replace both schools with a single new school on Thorns Primary site which is larger than the Mount Pleasant site. This would provide a high quality building fit for 21st century education but building would not start before 2009, possibly later. There is no guarantee of securing the necessary funding.

Responses to: Carol Williams carol.williams@dudley.gov.uk Executive Support Team,
Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning Westox House, Trinity Road, Dudley, DY1 1JQ

School Name	Net Capacity 2005	Current NOR	Current Admissions Number	Proposed Admissions Number	Proposed New Capacity 2010
ALDER COPPICE	428	404	60	60	420
AMBLECOTE PRIMARY	378	308	60	45	315
ASHWOOD PARK PRIMARY & HI UNIT	414	377	60	60	420
BEAUTY BANK PRIMARY	208	134	30	0	0
BELLE VUE PRIMARY	420	401	60	60	420
BLANFORD MERE PRIMARY	301	253	45	45	315
BLOWERS GREEN PRIMARY	232	238	45	30	210
BRAMFORD PRIMARY	420	422	60	60	420
BRIERLEY HILL PRIMARY	210	177	30	30	210
BROCKMOOR PRIMARY	397	326	60	45	315
BROMLEY HILLS PRIMARY	390	320	60	45	315
BROOK PRIMARY	298	244	45	30	210
CASLON PRIMARY	262	168	35	30	210
CHRIST CHURCH PRIMARY	315	335	45	60	420
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION PRIMARY	315	302	45	45	315
COLLEY LANE PRIMARY	630	498	90	75	525
COTWALL END PRIMARY	455	422	65	60	420
CRADLEY C. E. PRIMARY	210	202	30	30	210
CRESTWOOD PARK PRIMARY	235	209	30	30	210
DAWLEY BROOK PRIMARY	252	251	36	45	315
DINGLE PRIMARY	210	198	30	30	210
DUDLEY WOOD PRIMARY	356	378	60	60	420
FAIRHAVEN PRIMARY	245	245	35	45	315
FOXYARDS PRIMARY	315	304	45	45	315
GIG MILL PRIMARY	565	497	80	75	525
GLYNNE PRIMARY	388	429	60	60	420
GREENFIELD PRIMARY	280	280	40	45	315

School Name	Net Capacity 2005	Current NOR	Current Admissions Number	Proposed Admissions Number	Proposed New Capacity 2010
HALESOWEN C. E. PRIMARY	210	121	30	0	0
HAM DINGLE PRIMARY	350	372	54	60	420
HASBURY C. E. PRIMARY	330	260	45	60	420
HAWBUSH PRIMARY	306	253	54	30	210
HIGHFIELDS PRIMARY	210	171	30	0	0
HIGHGATE PRIMARY	420	322	60	60	420
HOB GREEN PRIMARY	383	280	55	45	315
HOLT FARM PRIMARY	280	187	40	0	0
HOWLEY GRANGE PRIMARY	427	413	60	60	420
HUNTINGTREE PRIMARY	420	346	60	45	315
HURST GREEN PRIMARY	385	383	55	60	420
HURST HILL PRIMARY	434	404	60	60	420
JESSON'S C. E. PRIMARY	532	512	75	75	525
KATE'S HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY	350	335	50	45	315
LAPAL PRIMARY	312	307	45	45	315
LUTLEY PRIMARY	590	589	85	75	525
MAIDENSBRIDGE PRIMARY	210	178	30	0	0
MANOR WAY PRIMARY	210	206	30	30	210
MILKING BANK PRIMARY	411	421	60	60	420
MOUNT PLEASANT PRIMARY	324	356	50	45	315
NETHERBROOK PRIMARY	420	397	60	60	420
NETHERTON C.E PRIMARY	389	283	60	30	210
NEWFIELD PARK PRIMARY	420	363	60	45	315
NORTHFIELD ROAD PRIMARY	420	401	60	60	420
OLDSWINFORD C. E. PRIMARY	420	413	60	60	420
OLIVE HILL PRIMARY	366	304	52	60	420
OUR LADY & ST. KENELM R. C. PRIMARY	210	207	30	30	210
PEDMORE C. E. PRIMARY	209	222	30	30	210

School Name	Net Capacity 2005	Current NOR	Current Admissions Number	Proposed Admissions Number	Proposed New Capacity 2010
PETER'S HILL PRIMARY	827	824	120	105	735
PRIORY PRIMARY	625	541	90	75	525
QUARRY BANK PRIMARY	406	306	60	45	315
QUEEN VICTORIA PRIMARY	630	582	90	75	525
RED HALL PRIMARY	486	407	60	60	420
ROBERTS PRIMARY	630	551	90	75	525
RUFFORD PRIMARY	352	243	45	30	210
RUSSELLS HALL PRIMARY	367	296	52	45	315
SLEDMERE PRIMARY	429	388	60	60	420
ST JAMES'S C. E. PRIMARY	420	369	60	60	420
ST JOSEPH'S R. C. PRIMARY - Stourbridge	210	231	45	30	210
ST. CHAD'S R. C. PRIMARY	210	203	30	30	210
ST. JOSEPH'S R. C. PRIMARY - Dudley	205	201	30	30	210
ST. MARK'S C. E. PRIMARY	315	277	45	45	315
ST. MARY'S C. E. PRIMARY	315	246	45	30	210
ST. MARY'S R. C. PRIMARY	210	169	30	30	210
STRAITS PRIMARY	350	320	50	45	315
SYCAMORE GREEN PRIMARY	321	184	45	0	0
TENTERFIELDS PRIMARY	308	268	45	30	210
THE BROMLEY-PENSNETT PRIMARY	360	289	60	45	315
THE C.E. PRIMARY OF ST. EDMUND & ST JOHN	315	224	45	30	210
THE RIDGE PRIMARY	210	197	30	30	210
THORNS PRIMARY	210	182	30	30	210
WALLBROOK PRIMARY	280	275	40	45	315
WITHYMOOR PRIMARY	405	350	60	60	420
WOLLESCOTE PRIMARY	610	439	87	60	420
WREN'S NEST PRIMARY	430	305	60	60	420

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Learning for the Future – Primary School Review

Response Form - Consultation Questions

The closing date for this consultation is 21 October 2005 by 5.00 pm.

The information you provide on this form is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. It will be used for the purpose of analyzing the responses to the proposals in the Primary Review. We may share a summary of the responses with elected members, other Directorates of the Council, the Press and the general public. Personal details will not be shared in this way but will assist this Directorate with categorizing responses.

1. Do you agree with the case for changing the current pattern of primary schools as described in paragraphs 5 – 10?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comment

2. Do you agree with reinvesting resources released back into education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comment

3. Do you agree with the overall approach based on reducing the number of primary schools?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comment

4. Do you agree with the approach to achieve sufficient local places for local children by reducing the number of places in schools with surplus places and small increases in others to reflect local demand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comment

5. The proposals apply to every primary school. Do you wish to comment in respect of one particular school?

Name of School:

Comment

To help our analysis of the responses please provide the following details:

Name

Position/Role

School/Organisation (if applicable)

Address:

Please tick in one of the following boxes which best describes you as a respondent

Pupil/Student

☐

Parent/Carer

☐

Headteacher

☐

Governor

☐

Other school body representative

☐

Councillor

☐

Trades Union representative

☐

Other (please specify)

Further Information

West Midlands RSS: http://www.wmra.gov.uk/regional_planning.htm

Black Country Study: <http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/T>

For further details on the Dudley MBC Unitary Development Plan (October 2005), Local Development Framework or Local Development Scheme, please contact the planning policy section on 01384 814172.

Draft