

**Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

**School Organisation Committee**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**School Organisation Proposals for Halesowen C of E, Hasbury C of E and new VA CE Primary Schools**

Purpose

1. It is the government's view set out in guidance that, generally decisions on local school organisation matters should be taken locally by key stakeholders. Within each Local Education Authority a School Organisation Committee has been established for this purpose.
2. Following informal consultation over the last few years and a period of formal consultation, statutory notices were published on 26 October 2005 to discontinue Halesowen C of E and Hasbury C of E Primary Schools with effect from 31 August 2006 and open a new VA C of E Primary School on the Hasbury site from 1 September 2006. No representations or objections against the proposals have been received.
3. School Organisation Committee is required to make a decision on the proposals. School Organisation Committee is requested to approve the proposals set out in paragraph 2.

Background

4. In 2001/2 the Council undertook a major review of all of its primary schools culminating in the publication of a consultation document in 2002. Included in that initial consultation was a proposal to address surplus places in central Halesowen by means of a project involving the reorganisation of Hasbury C of E and Halesowen C of E primary schools into a single entity.
5. In March 2003, the Lead Member for Education and Lifelong Learning informed all councillors of the position. *"The initial consultation on the Primary School Review has ended and we have been considering the next steps. We received many responses from parents of these two*

*schools opposing any change. Unfortunately this is just not an option as the continuing fall in birth rate, particularly in central Halesowen, may well make both schools, and particularly Halesowen VA CE Primary School, unviable.*" The letter also stated that both Headteachers and Chairs, Reverend Rob Hall, Reverend David Morphy, Diocesan Director of Education had agreed a way forward. This was to find a way of investing in a new school to replace both Halesowen C of E and Hasbury C of E Primary Schools.

6. Dudley Metropolitan Council, in partnership with the Diocese of Worcester, decided to carry out a public consultation on proposals for changes to primary school organisation in Halesowen. The consultation period began in November and lasted until 31 January 2004.
7. The proposals are necessary because of a decline in the annual birth rate over a period of years and the subsequent fall in demand for primary school places. The impact on Halesowen C of E Primary which is the smallest school in the Borough is severe. Pupil numbers have fallen from 154 in January 1997 to 121 in January 2005. The school has become financially unviable and cannot maintain the quality of education to which pupils are entitled.
8. Hasbury C of E Primary has also seen a reduction in the number of pupils from 308 in 1997 to 260 in January 2005. The school budgets reduce as a consequence of the falling pupil numbers. As with Halesowen C of E it is becoming more difficult for the Governing Body of Hasbury C of E to meet the costs of the quality of education to which pupils are entitled.
9. The consultation offered 4 options and invited views from interested parties. The consultation document was widely published and meetings were held at each school. The outcomes of the consultation concluded that the new school should be on the Hasbury site and that government finance would be sought through the DfES Targeted Capital Fund.
10. With the support of both schools and the Diocese of Worcester, approval was given by the Director of Children's Services to submit a bid to the DfES for funding. Unfortunately the bid was not successful and it was not possible to publish statutory notices without confirmation of funding.

11. Work has continued with both schools taking part in a joint steering group on the basis that a further bid would be submitted to the DfES for Targeted Capital Funding and a contingency plan to fund the development through joint investment from the Diocese and the Council.
12. The DfES approved bids to replace Wrens Nest Primary School and Old Park Special School with a grant of over £8 million from April 2006. Unfortunately the VA bid for Halesowen was rejected. After further discussions between the Diocese and the Council agreement was reached on the method of funding and statutory notices were published on 26 October 2005 in accordance with section 29 (1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. A copy of the statutory notice agreed with the DfES is attached as Appendix 4.

### **What are the Objectives of the proposal?**

13. The Council recognises that school reorganisation should only be undertaken where there is very strong evidence that the educational opportunities for children are likely to be adversely affected if no action is taken, and that any reorganisation proposal will maintain and improve educational standards over the longer term. In planning and delivering this school reorganisation the

Council aims to:-

- take steps to minimise the potential disruption to the children presently attending the schools;
- secure the long-term future of Church of England supported primary education in Halesowen so that future generations of school children can benefit from the high quality of education that the existing schools provide;
- secure long-term stability for the staff, on whom ultimately, high quality education depends, as a single larger school will benefit from greater financial resources;
- address the vulnerability of small primary schools; a single larger school will have more staffing capacity to deal with managerial, curriculum and pastoral responsibilities;

- provide the opportunity for investment in improving school buildings and infrastructure, removing surplus places, provide the opportunity to release funding to reinvest in a single site, and significantly enhance school buildings making them fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century education;
- provide opportunities to significantly improve community facilities, based on the views of the local community, new school buildings will enable the incorporation of new community facilities.

### **The Consultation and views and responses from the persons consulted**

14. Before the Statutory Notices were published a consultation on the proposal for the establishment of a New Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School for Halesowen was undertaken. The Consultation took place from 1 November 2003 to 31 January 2004.
15. Attached as appendices to this report are the Consultation Document (Appendix 1) and the Analysis of the Consultation Responses (Appendix 2).

### **Schools within a 1 mile radius of the new proposed school**

16. The following schools are within a 1 mile radius of the New Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School:
  - Lutley Primary School;
  - Huntingtree Primary School;
  - Newfield Park Primary School;
  - Tenterfields Primary School;
  - Our Lady & St Kenlem Primary School;
  - Manor Way Primary School.
17. Attached as Appendix 3 to this report is a map showing the location of the proposed new school along with all other schools within a 1 mile radius.
18. The following information is required to be presented to the School Organisation Committee to support its consideration of the proposal presented.

**Lutley Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
04/05	85	7	590	588
05/06	85	7	590	589
06/07	85	7	590	541
07/08	75* UR	7	590*UR	541
08/09	75* UR	7	590*UR	541
09/10	75* UR	7	590*UR	541
10/11	75* UR	7	590*UR	541

**Huntingtree Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
04/05	60	7	420	354
05/06	45	7	315	346
06/07	45*UR	7	315	315
07/08	45*UR	7	315	315
08/09	45*UR	7	315	315
09/10	45*UR	7	315	315
10/11	45*UR	7	315	315

**Newfield Park Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
04/05	60	7	420	379
05/06	45	7	315	363
06/07	45*UR	7	315	328
07/08	45*UR	7	315	315
08/09	45*UR	7	315	315
09/10	45*UR	7	315	315
10/11	45*UR	7	315	315

**Tenterfields Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
<b>04/05</b>	45	7	308	287
<b>05/06</b>	30	7	210	268
<b>06/07</b>	30*UR	7	210	235
<b>07/08</b>	30*UR	7	210	210
<b>08/09</b>	30*UR	7	210	210
<b>09/10</b>	30*UR	7	210	210
<b>10/11</b>	30*UR	7	210	210

**Our Lady and St Kenelm Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
<b>04/05</b>	30	7	210	205
<b>05/06</b>	30	7	210	207
<b>06/07</b>	30*UR	7	210	200
<b>07/08</b>	30*UR	7	210	200
<b>08/09</b>	30*UR	7	210	200
<b>09/10</b>	30*UR	7	210	200
<b>10/11</b>	30*UR	7	210	200

**Manor Way Primary School - \*UR = To be reviewed annually**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Admission Number for each relevant year group</b>	<b>Number of Year Groups</b>	<b>School Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR</b>
<b>04/05</b>	30	7	210	207
<b>05/06</b>	30	7	210	206
<b>06/07</b>	30*UR	7	210	191
<b>07/08</b>	30*UR	7	210	191
<b>08/09</b>	30*UR	7	210	191
<b>09/10</b>	30*UR	7	210	191
<b>10/11</b>	30*UR	7	210	191

**The proposed New School**

*The following information relates to the proposed new school:*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Year Groups</b>	7	7	7	7	7
<b>School Net Capacity</b>	450	450	450	450	450
<b>Nursery Places</b>	30	30	30	30	30
<b>Nursery Capacity</b>	NK	NK	NK	NK	NK

19. The proposed new school will be a Voluntary Aided Primary School with 420 places for boys and girls from age 5 - 11 (Reception to Y6). There will be a further 60 places for boys and girls aged 3 - 4. There will be provision for 12 children with significant receptive communication disorders based on 2 groups of 6 pupils on a part-time basis (2 days per pupil).
20. The new school will operate initially from two sites currently occupied by Halesowen C of E Primary and Hasbury C of E Primary, until consolidation on the Hasbury site situated at Hagley Road, Hasbury, Halesowen B63 4QD.
21. The number of pupils admitted to the school at age 5 from 1 September 2005 will be 60. The Governing Body will be the admissions authority. It is expected that most of the places will be

taken by children that would have applied for admission to reception at Halesowen C of E or Hasbury C of E Primary.

The current numbers on roll at the two schools (1 December 2005) are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Halesowen	*8	19	19	24	20	21	14	125
Hasbury	*17	36	32	37	31	37	39	229
Total	25	55	51	61	51	58	53	354

\* excludes January 2006 admissions

22. The Targeted Capital Bid attached as Appendix 5 provides further details including the estimated cost of a replacement school (£5m gross). We were informed by a letter dated 12 October 2005 that the bid was not successful (see Appendix 6). Further work has been carried out to secure the necessary commitments from the Diocese of Worcester and the Council to ensure that the cost of accommodation changes can be met. Feasibility work included options of replacement and refurbishment is underway. It is likely, given the failure to secure DfES Targeted Capital Fund that a reduced scheme will be necessary and met from existing resources.
23. The Diocese of Worcester intend to contribute from the capital receipts from the Halesowen C of E site, the Robin Wood site and additional church property in Stourbridge. The local authority contribution from the Asset Management Programme will be in the order of £750k. The availability of accommodation on two sites means that there will be sufficient time to engage children, parents, staff, governors and the community in shaping the design of the new accommodation. This will also ensure that the capital programme includes the necessary provision.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Freeman  
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

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Background Papers

The under mentioned papers were used in the compilation of this report