

Press Release

**The proposed merger of Halesowen CE VA Primary School and Hasbury CE VC Primary School**

At a meeting in March the Halesowen / Hasbury Planning Group decided that the best way to respond to falling rolls in primary schools in Halesowen, to improve school buildings, and to continue to provide excellent education in a Church of England school, would be for the two schools to merge.

The Planning Group includes senior officers of the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, including the Director, John Freeman, and the Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, Richard Stiff. The Group also includes the headteachers of the two schools, Jan Willis (Hasbury) and Jim Preston (Halesowen) and the chairs of the two governing bodies, Fran Hunter (Hasbury) and Ingrid Darney (Halesowen), as well as Rev David Morphy, the Diocesan Director of Education, and other governors.

The rôle of the Planning Group is to advise the Council and the Diocese on the best way forward, leading to full public consultation on any proposal. This public consultation is expected to start in September 2003, and it is hoped that the Planning Group will be able to recommend an option.

At its meeting in March, the Planning Group discussed various possible options for the site of the new school, including the existing Hasbury site and a site on or adjacent to the Walton campus of Halesowen College.

The Planning Group met again on 30 April and heard reports from officers on the various options. The Planning Group restated its view that the best solution would be close both schools and to re-open a single new school in a new building.

Officers have identified no other suitable sites. However, the Planning Group decided that it did not yet have sufficient information to decide on the best site, and has asked officers for a full analysis of the various options. This will be prepared by officers for the meeting of the Planning Group.

A further press release will be issued following the next meeting of the Planning Group in early June.

John Freeman  
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
2 May 2003