

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