

# A G E N D A

## **School Organisation Committee**

Date: **Monday, 29th November, 2004**

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Time: **3.00 p.m.**

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Place: **Committee Room 1, Town Hall,  
Hereford**

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Notes: **For any further information please contact:**

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# AGENDA

## for the Meeting of the School Organisation Committee

<b>To: Councillors</b>	J.P. Thomas (Chairman) Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes and J. Stone
<b>Others</b>	Mr. A. Curless (Learning and Skills Council) and Mr. C. Jones (Roman Catholic) and Rev. I. Terry (Church of England)
<b>School Governors</b>	Mr. H. Cullen (Special Education Group), Mrs. J. McColl (Primary Schools), Mrs. K. Rooke (Special Schools) and Mr. P. Williams (Secondary Schools)

	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
To receive apologies for absence.	
<b>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</b>	
To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
<b>4. MINUTES</b>	1 - 4
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2004.	
<b>5. SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN</b>	5 - 10
To report on the consultations undertaken on the revised pupil statistics, on Hereford City Primary School provision and on Leominster Primary School provision.	
<b>6. HOPE UNDER DINMORE, ST MARY'S OF HOPE C E PRIMARY SCHOOL - POSITION STATEMENT</b>	11 - 14
To inform the Committee of the issue of the public notice proposing the closure of St Mary's of Hope C E Primary School.	
<b>7. STRATEGIC AREA REVIEW</b>	
To receive a presentation from Sharon Gray of the Learning and Skills Council.	



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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the meeting of School Organisation Committee held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Wednesday, 26th May, 2004 at 3.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Councillor J.P. Thomas (Chairman)  
 Councillor J. Stone (Vice Chairman)  
 Councillor Mrs M.D. Lloyd-Hayes

**Mr. A. Curless (Learning and Skills Council), Mr. C. Jones (Roman Catholic Church Representative) , Mrs. J. McColl (School Governor - Primary), Mrs. K. Rooke (School Governor - Special) and Mr. P. Williams (School Governor – Primary)**

**In attendance:** Councillor D.W. Rule (Cabinet Member - Education) and Councillor B.F. Ashton.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor J. Stone, Mr H. Cullen – Special Education Group and Rev. I. Terry.

**2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Rev. P. Towner was a substitute for Rev. I. Terry.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**4. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**5. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN**

The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) updated Members on the School Organisation Plan and reminded the Committee that the report was an annual update and not a full plan. Members were also presented with revised statistical data for pupil rolls in primary schools and housing allocations for Hereford City, the market towns and main villages as set out in the draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

Members were addressed on the continued fall in primary numbers. The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) stated that the fall in the pupil roll was under regular review. He also drew the Committee’s attention to the number of primary schools in rural areas with less than 100 pupils.

Despite the falling primary roll the Head of Policy and Resources (Education) reaffirmed his support for the proposal to provide a new school at Staunton-on-Wye

even though there were currently only 70 pupils on roll. He emphasised that the school was greatly needed and should not be seen as a threat to neighbouring schools. He added that if the school at Staunton were lost there would be difficulties dividing its catchment area amongst the surrounding schools.

The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) then drew Members' attention to the problems of falling roll numbers in Hereford generally. He informed the Committee that the majority of schools in Hereford were suffering from falling rolls, which was creating organisational problems particularly with regard to class sizes, causing one city school to ask for a reduction in its Planned Admission Number. It was noted however that pupil numbers in the city could increase due to proposed housing developments within City school catchment areas.

The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) reported to Members that whilst the primary school roll was reducing the roll for secondary schools was currently peaking but would then decline. However, it was expected that roll numbers in Further Education would continue to rise due to larger year groups being fed through and an increasing staying on rate.

Members were informed that the percentage of pupils from an ethnic background other than British remained small at 2.3%. This represented a small increase on figures from 2003.

Concerning proposed housing development, the Committee noted the need to monitor the impact of development at Putson (Hereford) on schools as the new development was being increased by 100 houses to 500.

Members then discussed the need for a new primary school in Leominster with regard to the new proposed housing development at Barons Cross in the west of the town. After much discussion Members decided that a more detailed debate should be initiated regarding the future pattern of primary school provision in Leominster.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That:**

- (a) the statistical update contained in Appendices 1 - 5 of the report be issued to consultees for information and comment;**
  - (b) the Committee confirm their support for a primary school at Staunton-on-Wye;**
  - (c) the Committee request a review of primary school provision in Hereford City be undertaken and the results of the review be reported at the next meeting;**
- and**
- (d) a debate be initiated on the future pattern of primary school provision in Leominster.**

#### **6. SUSTAINING THE VIABILITY OF SMALL SCHOOLS**

Phillip Morris, Acting Senior Inspector informed the Committee of the local and national activities related to sustaining the viability of small schools.

The Acting Senior Inspector told Members that small schools rolls were stable and

often growing because they were attracting children from town schools because they are highly valued by parents. However, in the long term the falling roll across the County would impact upon school and LEA budgets therefore reduced funding could inevitably have a bearing on the sustainability of the County's smaller schools.

Members were told how the Education Directorate was engaged in a number of research and action based projects to inform the development of a local strategy for sustaining the viability and quality of small schools during a time of falling rolls.

The Acting Senior Inspector reported to the Committee the initiatives that were being undertaken in other authorities with regard to small rural schools. He described the idea of 'Federation' schools, whereby 2-3 schools would share a Head Teacher and reported that schools within Herefordshire were not looking favourably at this approach although he stated that there was a chance of this idea working if there were suitably close links between villages/communities and appropriate schools. He spoke of 'cluster' arrangements between schools whereby schools would link together to share strengths and buy resources together and referred Members to existing 'cluster' arrangements already being used in the Golden Valley. He also raised the issue of Beacon Schools and the importance of 'cluster' schools working with them for training opportunities.

The Acting Senior Inspector concluded that the Education Directorate would support any initiatives they thought would work. He saw problems with the 'federation' model on grounds of practicality, logistics and incurred expenses. It was thought that 'federation' would not bring great financial savings merely help to ensure that the education budget was spent in the most effective way. Information Communication Technology was already being utilised to create linkages. He emphasised the need to support small schools although if numbers were to drop sufficiently then there would be a need to make appropriate investigations.

Members indicated that they were keen to support small schools so long as they were providing children with an appropriate education and the access to all necessary facilities with particular reference towards ICT. Members were also keen to know how school facilities were being utilised by the wider community and in particular by the voluntary sector. The Acting Senior Inspector advised the group that school facilities were being used on an increased basis by the schools themselves for pre and post school activities. However, they were not being utilised by other groups to a great extent, which was something that could be addressed where appropriate facilities were available.

Members then discussed the Extended Schools Initiative (ESI). The Acting Senior Inspector reported to the Committee that this initiative was still in its early stages and that it would not be until the autumn term before impact was made. The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) further informed Members that in terms of ESI Herefordshire was ahead of other authorities and bids were being made by Bodenham, Clehonger, Fairfield, Golden Valley and Ledbury schools with limited availability to other schools. These schools had been encouraged to work together and had this had been emphasised to them. The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) commented to Members that some schools saw partnership working as a threat although this was an attitude which was being discouraged.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That (a) the report be noted;**

**(b) a report on the Extended Schools Initiative be presented at the next meeting;**

and

(c) a financial analysis of school transport costs for the County be provided for the next meeting.

**7. ASSOCIATION OF SMALL SCHOOLS**

This item was put on the Agenda for information and members were advised that at a national level there were several definitions for a small school.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the letter received from National Association for Small Schools.**

The meeting ended at 4.40 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN

**Report By: Head of Policy and Resources**

### Wards Affected

Countywide.

### Purpose

1. To report on the consultations undertaken on the revised pupil statistics, on Hereford City Primary School provision and on Leominster Primary School provision.

### Financial Implications

2. None.

### Report

3. At the meeting on 26th May, 2004 the committee resolved that:
  - (a) the statistical update be issued to consultees for information and content;
  - (b) the Committee confirm their support for a primary school at Staunton on Wye;
  - (c) the Committee request a review of primary school provision be undertaken in Hereford City and the results of the review be reported to the next meeting;
  - (d) a debate be initiated on the future pattern of primary school provision in Leominster.
4. In the consultations on the general statistical update, only one reply was received. The letter from the Learning and Skills Council is appended to this report (Appendix 1). The comments relate to the policy section of the plan. The Committee are asked to consider if they wish the School Organisation Plan to be amended to take account of these comments.
5. On the question of primary school provision in Hereford City, all headteachers of those schools in the Hereford 'pyramid' were invited to a meeting on 22nd September. Appendix 2 was issued to attendees of the meeting showing estimated numbers of children in the areas. These figures do not include potential housing developments south of the river. Discussion centred on the following issues:
  - (i) the continued fall of pupil numbers over the next 5 years, as the larger year groups leave to go to high school, but the belief that over the last three years the number of pupils entering reception classes has stabilised;
  - (ii) the variation in trends within the city, with the areas north of the city facing a continued fall, and the areas south of the river facing a possible rise in pupil numbers as indicated by known children data.

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For further information on the subject of this report is available from  
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources on (01432) 260802

6. Given the stability in admission numbers, into reception in the last 2/3 years it was felt that no radical change was needed. Two schools are considering a reduction in admission numbers. St Paul's C of E Primary School propose to reduce their admission number from 68 to 60 from September, 2006 onwards (admissions in 2003/2004 have been 45 and 46 respectively). Discussions are continuing with Trinity Primary School where the current admission number is 84. The Hereford City issue was raised in Education Scrutiny Committee. The need to monitor the potential growth of numbers south of the river was highlighted.
8. The future provision in Leominster has been debated in pyramid meetings of all the Leominster schools on 23rd June, 2004, at the North Herefordshire Local Area Forum, (7th September), and a combined meeting of the Leominster Junior and Infants schools (15th September). It was acknowledged that Leominster Town population had increased significantly (see table below).

Census Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
POPULATION	6,290	6,405	7,079	9,079	10,037	11,104

9. The geography of the town had also altered. However, there was no support expressed in any of the meetings for the idea of a separate primary school to serve the western side of the town. There was general consensus that provision on the existing site should be improved.

## RECOMMENDATION

### THAT:

- (a) **the School Organisation Plan be amended to reflect the Learning and Skills Council's comments and the amended document be approved;**
- (b) **the approach on Hereford City Primary Schools be approved;**
- and**
- (c) **to consider if any further action is needed in Leominster.**

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

7 September 2004

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**Learning+Skills Council**  
Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Dear Karen

**School Organisation Plan 2004-2009**

Thank you for the copy of this document. I have passed it to a number of colleagues in case they wish to make any comments in their particular areas of expertise e.g. Adult and Community Learning, Special Needs, Equality and Diversity etc.

I have a few small comments to make:

1. The second bullet point under 3.4 correctly mentions the development of a 14-19 Strategy. This was distributed to all schools, colleges and training providers earlier this month (copy enclosed for your information). As a point of detail, I assume that in the third row of the chart under 2.18, and the final sentence of 2.57 should also read "14-19" rather than "16-19".
2. In section 2.32 you make reference to the Herefordshire Association of Colleges and Schools. This forum no longer exists having been subsumed within the recently established 14-19 Strategy Group, itself part of the over-arching Learning Partnership for Herefordshire.
3. I am not sure when this draft plan is to be finalised. Although I do not envisage any major recommendation emerging from our current Strategic Area Review of post-16 education, it may be helpful to delay final publication of the plan until our preferred strategic options are announced for publication on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. It is also probably politic to mention the StAR process somewhere in the document. I will also ensure that you receive an invitation to the StAR Stakeholder event on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> of October at the Three Counties Hotel.
4. I wonder if it is worth making reference somewhere to the fact that the changing demands of the emerging 14-19 curriculum – principally brought about by an increase in vocational education – will create pressures that the current school building stock is not entirely suitable to cope with. I am sure that Vicky Ward or Michelle Balcombe can advise you better on this.

Yours sincerely

**ALAN CURLESS**  
Executive Director





**APPENDIX 2**

**NUMBERS ON ROLL IN YEAR R SUMMER TERM**

**NUMBERS OF KNOWN CHILDREN IN YEAR R**

Hereford city primary schools	Actual 2002 Year R	Actual 2003 Year R	Actual 2004 Year R	Estimate 2005 Year R	Estimate 2006 Year R	Estimate 2007 Year R	Estimate 2008 Year R	Actual 2002 KC	Actual 2003 KC	Actual 2004 KC	Estimate 2005 KC	Estimate 2006 KC	Estimate 2007 KC	Estimate 2008 KC
PAN														
Hunderton Junior/Infants*	90	66	65	48	42	60	70							
Marlbrook	50	51	55	59	52	58	60							
Our Lady's RC	30	31	34	30	26	29	30							
St. Martins	70	60	74	58	43	63	68							
Little Dewchurch	9	11	4	9	8	7	8							
Holme Lacy	10	6	11	10	10	10	10							
*combined for presentation	259	232	218	214	181	227	246	310	295	352	324	257	325	353
Percentage of known children		75%	74%	66%	70%	70%	70%							
Holmer CE	60	46	39	44	41	34	48							
Trinity Primary	84	67	72	76	65	56	68							
Lord Scudamore	88	76	63	80	78	70	85							
Wellington	28	21	26	18	16	16	14							
Burghill	15	10	14	12	12	11	12							
Stretton Sugwas	15	15	15	15	15	13	15							
Percentage of known children	290	235	230	245	227	200	242	211	240	237	221	212	189	230
		111%	96%	111%	107%	106%	105%							
Broadlands	60	43	46	30	40	40	45							
Hampton Dene	30	26	29	29	25	20	18							
St. Paul's CE	68	55	48	50	48	45	50							
St. Francis Xavours RC	30	22	27	23	22	20	26							
St. James' CE Primary	30	30	21	30	28	21	20							
St. Thomas Cantilupe CE	30	20	42	30	28	28	30							
Lugwardine	30	24	20	23	18	20	20							
Sutton	12	10	8	7	13	8	8							
Withington	15	11	6	10	10	8	8							
Mordiford	15	13	18	9	7	8	10							
St Mary's, Fownhope	15	12	12	18	12	10	10							
Marden	17	12	11	14	8	8	12							
Percentage of known children	352	278	288	273	259	236	257	264	242	284	259	249	226	242
		105%	119%	105%	104%	104%	106%							
Totals	901	745	736	732	667	663	745	785	777	873	804	718	740	825
Take up percentage		95%	95%	91%	93%	90%	90%							



## HOPE UNDER DINMORE, ST MARY'S OF HOPE C E PRIMARY SCHOOL – POSITION STATEMENT

**Report By: Head of Policy and Resources**

### Wards Affected

Hampton Court.

### Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the issue of the public notice proposing the closure of St Mary's of Hope C E Primary School.

### Financial Implications

2. There would be no change in the current financial year, though the change would enable further allocations to be made to schools in subsequent years because of the disproportionately high costs of very small schools.

### Report

3. At the Autumn Term count for 2004/2005 academic year, there were 15 pupils on roll at St. Mary's. The current number on roll is 11.
4. The Governors of the school wrote to the Director of Education to say that they had considered the situation with care, and had reluctantly concluded that in the interests of the children the school should close and alternative provision sought. The Governors requested the Council to take the formal steps for closure.
5. The Cabinet Member (Education) authorised the issue of the required statutory notice on 28th October. A copy of the notice that was issued is attached. The consultation period runs for two months after the publication of the public notice.
6. There have been further meetings at the school with Governors and parents. The Diocesan Director of Education also attended. The discussion with governors and parents centred on the alternative provision and the associated transport. There is a further meeting with Governors and parents on Friday 18th November. A oral report will be made to the Committee at the meeting to advise them of the position.
7. If there are no objections, the Council would take steps to close the school at the end of the autumn term. If there are objections the matter would be referred to the School Organisation Committee at a special meeting on a date in January yet to be arranged.

### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the report be noted.**

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For further information on the subject of this report is available from  
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources on (01432) 260802

**Background Papers**

- None identified

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For further information on the subject of this report is available from  
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources on (01432) 260802

**STATUTORY NOTICE OF A PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL**

**NOTICE is hereby given**, in accordance with section 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, that the County of Herefordshire District Council as Local Education Authority intend to discontinue St Mary's of Hope CE Primary School, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 OPJ, during the current school year. **[Explanatory Note 1 below]**.

It is proposed to provide for pupils, attending or living within the catchment area of St Mary's of Hope CE Primary School, at Bodenham, St. Michael's CE Primary School, Bodenham, Hereford HR1 3JU. Bodenham, St. Michael's has sufficient room to accommodate all pupils currently at St. Mary's of Hope CE Primary School or living within the area of Hope under Dinmore. The Council, therefore, has no proposals to increase the number of places at Bodenham St. Michael's. Parents may alternatively seek admission to any other school, that may have places available. **[Explanatory Note 2 below]**.

The proposed transport arrangements are for children living within the catchment area of St. Mary's of Hope CE Primary School to be offered appropriate free transport assistance for their journey to and from Bodenham, St Michael's CE Primary School each day, provided they live more than 2 miles (children under 8) or 3 miles (children 8 and over) from Bodenham, St. Michael's CE Primary School or have other relevant circumstances covered by the Authority's home to school transport policy. **[Explanatory Note 3 below]**.

Within two months after the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to the proposals by sending their objection in writing to the Director of Education, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford, HR4 9ZR. Within a month after the end of the objection period, the Herefordshire Council will send to the School Organisation Committee for the area copies of all objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with the Authority's observations on them.

**Explanatory Notes.****Note 1**

St Mary's of Hope CE Primary School is a very small school with currently only 12 children on roll. The future of the school has been under consideration for a number of years. Recently, the Governing Body have concluded that, despite the school's very good work over several years, it would now be in the interests of the children for the school to close permanently as soon as possible. The Council have supported the governors' conclusion and have now authorised the issue of a public notice to discontinue the school within the current school year.

**Note 2**

If the proposal to discontinue the school is approved, particular attention will be given to the needs of the pupils who will transfer to other schools, and to the resourcing of the receiving schools for the additional pupils involved. The extra transport costs and the additional costs for the receiving school(s) will be the first call on the annual revenue resources released. All remaining resources released (estimated at £60,000 annually) will be added to the budgets of all other primary schools in the County.

**Note 3**

It is anticipated that transport will be in the form of a contracted vehicle or a public bus service, operating at suitable times on every day the school is in session. The provided transport will make stops before and after school to pick up/set down children at reasonable locations along its route. The stops will include Cherrybrook housing estate in Hope under Dinmore Village.

**Mark Chamberlain**

**School Services Manager on behalf of Herefordshire Local Education Authority**

**Date: 4th November, 2004**

