

A G E N D A

School Organisation Committee

Date: **Monday, 5th December, 2005**

Time: **3.30 p.m.**

Place: **Committee Room 1, Shirehall,
Hereford.**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of
the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

*Sally Cole, Committee Manager
(Corporate) Tel: 01432 260249*

e-mail scole@herefordshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the School Organisation Committee

To: Councillors	J.P. Thomas (Chairman) Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes
Others	Mr. A. Curless (Learning and Skills Council) and Mr. C. Jones (Roman Catholic)
School Governors	Mr. H. Cullen (Special Education Group), Mrs. J. McColl (Primary Schools), Mrs. K. Rooke (Special Schools), Mr. P. Williams (Secondary Schools) and Mrs. C. Woolley

	Pages
1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN	
To elect a Chairman for the ensuing year.	
2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN	
To elect a Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.	
Note: The Vice-Chairman must be appointed from a different membership group to that of the Chairman.	
3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
4. NAMED SUBSTITUTES	
To receive details of any persons nominated to attend the meeting in place of another member of the Committee.	
5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interest by Committee Members in respect of any items on the Agenda.	
6. MINUTES	5 - 10
To approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting held 29th November 2004.	
7. ADJUSTMENTS TO CATCHMENT AREAS	11 - 22
To inform the Committee of the requests to change the provided Primary School arrangements for Bearwood and Covender.	

8. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES IN HEREFORDSHIRE	23 - 28
To inform the Committee on pupil and student numbers in Hereford in September 2005 and projected numbers in the short and medium term.	
9. DFES GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEES AND THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER	29 - 30
To inform the Committee of various proposals from the DfES and to seek their views if any action should be taken.	

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the School Organisation Committee held at Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Hereford on Monday, 29th November, 2004 at 3.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor John Thomas (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs M.D. Lloyd-Hayes
Mrs K. Rooke (School Governor – Special)
T. Bailey
Ms. S. Gray

In attendance: Councillor D.W. Rule MBE (Cabinet Member - Education)

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J. Stone and Rev. I. Terry.

9. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Mr. T. Bailey was a substitute for Rev. I. Terry and Ms. S. Gray was a substitute for Mr. A. Curless.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs. Lloyd Hayes declared a personal interest in item 5 as a Governor at St. Paul's Primary School.

11. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Committee noted that the term of office for the Chair and Vice-Chair had expired in May 2004 but the convention was that they continued in office until the successors were appointed.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor J.P. Thomas be reappointed as Chairman.

Councillor J.P. Thomas accepted the Chairmanship.

No nominations were received for the position of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

THAT (a) Councillor J.P. Thomas be appointed Chairman of the School Organisation Committee.

and

(b) The position of Vice-Chairman be appointed at the next meeting of the Committee.

12. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of the last meeting held on 26th May 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. **SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN**

The Head of Policy and Resources reported to the Committee on the consultations undertaken on revised pupil statistics, on Hereford City Primary School provision and Leominster Primary School provision.

In the consultations on the revised pupil statistics it was reported that only one reply had been received which was from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC); this was appended to the report. The Head of Policy and Resources informed the Committee that he felt the points made by the LSC were valid and recommended that the School Organisation Plan be amended accordingly.

On the question of primary school provision in Hereford City, Members were informed that all Headteachers in the Hereford 'pyramid' had been invited to a meeting on 22nd September 2004. The Head of Policy and Resources reported that at the meeting it had been decided that no radical changes were needed as numbers entering into reception classes in the last 2/3 years had stabilised. There was also a need to be prepared for variations within Hereford, as known children data indicates areas north of the river Wye are faced with a continued fall in pupil numbers, whereas schools in the areas south of the river are facing a possible rise in pupil numbers. The potential rise in pupil numbers in the south of the city was not regarded as a problem due to the additional capacity available at Hunderton School.

In light of the falling pupil numbers in the north of the city, St. Paul's and Trinity Schools are considering reducing their Planned Admission Number (PAN). The Committee accepted the principal of reducing the PAN at St. Paul's but were concerned at reducing the PAN at Trinity due to the potential for new development at Holmer as outlined in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The Head of Policy and Resources informed the Committee that the future of primary school provision had been debated in pyramid meetings of all Leominster schools, the North Herefordshire Local Area Forum and a combined meeting of the Leominster Junior and Infants schools. At these meetings it was acknowledged that the population of Leominster had increased significantly and that the geography of the town had altered. However there was no support for a new school to serve the western side of the town. The general consensus was that as a vast increase in pupil numbers was not expected then investment should be made at the current primary school site in Leominster to ensure it meets current and future standards.

The Committee felt that due to the results of the consultation that no further action should be taken, however, the Committee did wish to keep the situation under review especially after the settlement of the UDP.

RESOLVED:

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;

(c) the Planned Admission Number reduction proposed at St. Paul's Primary School be approved;

(d) the Planned Admission Number reduction proposed for Trinity Primary School proceed with caution;

and

(e) Primary School provision in Leominster be reviewed after the settlement of the Unitary Development Plan.

14. HOPE UNDER DINMORE, ST MARY'S OF HOPE C E PRIMARY SCHOOL - POSITION STATEMENT

The Committee was informed of the issue of the public notice proposing the closure of St. Mary's of Hope Church of England Primary School.

The School Services Manager reported that the Governors of St. Mary's had recently written to the Director of Education, after the number of pupils on its roll had dropped to 11, saying that after careful consideration they had reluctantly concluded that it was in the interests of the children at the school that the school should be closed and alternative provision sought. The Governors requested the Council to take the formal steps for closure.

It is proposed that the pupils of St. Mary's attend St. Michaels Church of England Primary School in Bodenham, which has sufficient room to accommodate all pupils currently at St. Mary's. Free transport will be provided to all pupils at St. Mary's to St. Michael's that meet the LEA's eligibility criteria.

The Cabinet Member (Education) authorised the issue of the required statutory public notice on 28th October, a copy of which is appended to the report. The notice was issued on the 11th November 2004, beginning the consultation period which runs for two months after publication.

If there are no objections the Council would take steps to close the school at the end of the autumn term. However, if there are objections then the matter would be referred back to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

15. **STRATEGIC AREA REVIEW**

The Committee received a presentation from Sharon Gray, Director of Strategic Planning at the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on its recent Strategic Area Review.

Ms Gray informed the Committee that the Review had taken place due to insufficiency within the 14-19 and post 19 education and learning, which was creating too many skills gaps and shortages and leaving the local work force short of appropriately qualified people.

Ms Gray reported that a consultation had taken place which had resulted in a twofold recommendation from the LSC. These were:

1. The double dissolution of Herefordshire College of Technology and Herefordshire College of Art and Design be pursued with the creation of a new Corporation, which receives the assets and liabilities from both founder organisations.
2. That Herefordshire Sixth Form College and Pershore Group of Colleges (Holme Lacy site) actively investigate how to support the new proposed Corporation through better-shared utilisation of resources and complementary curriculum arrangements, for the benefit of learners, communities and employers.

Ms Gray summarised the principal benefits of the merger as being:

- Better integrated curriculum offer, improved curriculum planning, development and delivery;
- Improved accessibility of provision and learner integration and easier student progression;
- Improved employer engagement and development of responsive provision;
- Improved integration of accommodation usage;
- Reduced running costs;
- Improved long term viability;
- Better access to funding to support capital investment on the Folly Lane site.

Ms Gray informed the Committee that the Strategic Area Review was currently completing a public consultation on its report which was due to end in early January 2005. This would be followed by further consultations with other interested parties before the final approved report is published in March 2005.

The Head of Policy and Resources stated that the Strategic Area Review was a starting point for Herefordshire to grow from a low skills low wages area. He also informed the Committee that those people who were successful in post 16 education often moved away from Herefordshire.

The Committee discussed the problems of basic skills in the County and how this included adults as well. Ms. Gray advised the Committee that a separate document on Adult and Community Learning was being prepared by the LSC.

RESOLVED:

THAT progress on the Strategic Area Review undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council be noted.

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Head of Policy and Resources circulated a brief report on the Extended Schools Initiative and transportation costs. This will be available for report and discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ADJUSTMENTS TO CATCHMENT AREAS

REPORT BY HEAD OF POLICY & RESOURCES

SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

22ND NOVEMBER 2005

PURPOSE

To inform the Committee of the requests to change the provided Primary School arrangements for Bearwood and Covender.

BACKGROUND

Formal requests have been received for the change of catchment area which would:

- (i) Make Pembridge Primary School the provided school for 49 properties in Bearwood. This area is currently served by Dilwyn Primary School.
- (ii) Make Ashperton Primary School the provided Primary School for approx 5 houses in Covender. These are currently served by Withington Primary School.

Although neither proposal involves great strategic issues, the matters are important to the schools and communities in question. No consensus has been achieved in either situation, and the views of the School Organisation Committee are sought to help the Cabinet Member for Children's Services make a final decision.

The details of each case are set out in the annexes 1 and 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee expresses its views on the proposed catchment area changes.

Request to change the provided Primary School for Bearwood.

Bearwood is a hamlet of approximately 49 properties lying between the A4112 and A44 approximately 2.8 miles from Dilwyn Primary School and 2.0 miles from Pembridge Primary School. (see plan)

The Governors of Pembridge Primary School, which is a Church of England Aided School have requested that Bearwood should be part of the catchment area of Pembridge Primary School arguing that Bearwood is closer to Pembridge, part of Pembridge Parish and its community. Dilwyn Primary School Governors are opposed to the change. The residents of Bearwood have been consulted, and all but 1 of the 27 responses received support the idea of the change.

The local Councillors, Cllr R Phillips and Cllr J Goodwin are also supportive, although they have no indicated particular strength of feeling either way.

There are 3 main issues to consider from the Directorate's viewpoint.

1. Provided High School

The provided high school for Bearwood is currently Weobley High School, where as that for Pembridge Primary School is Kington Lady Hawkins High School. Any change at Primary School level should also be made at High School to maintain simplicity in organisational terms.

2. Pupil Numbers

There are 6 children of primary school age and 2 0-4 year olds living in this area. The majority of school aged children attend Pembridge, where numbers on roll and capacity are 89 and 91 respectively.

At Dilwyn Primary School the numbers on roll and capacity are 34 and 56 respectively. Although Dilwyn Primary School may not benefit at present from many children from Bearwood, the opposition from the school Governors is likely to reflect concerns over future pupil numbers at that school.

3. Transport Costs

Catchment areas and distance between home and school determine eligibility for free school transport. The nomination of Pembridge Primary School as the provided school for Bearwood would reduce the numbers of pupils eligible for free transport to Dilwyn. However as few take up their current entitlement this is unlikely to have a significant or real saving.

Annex 2

Covender

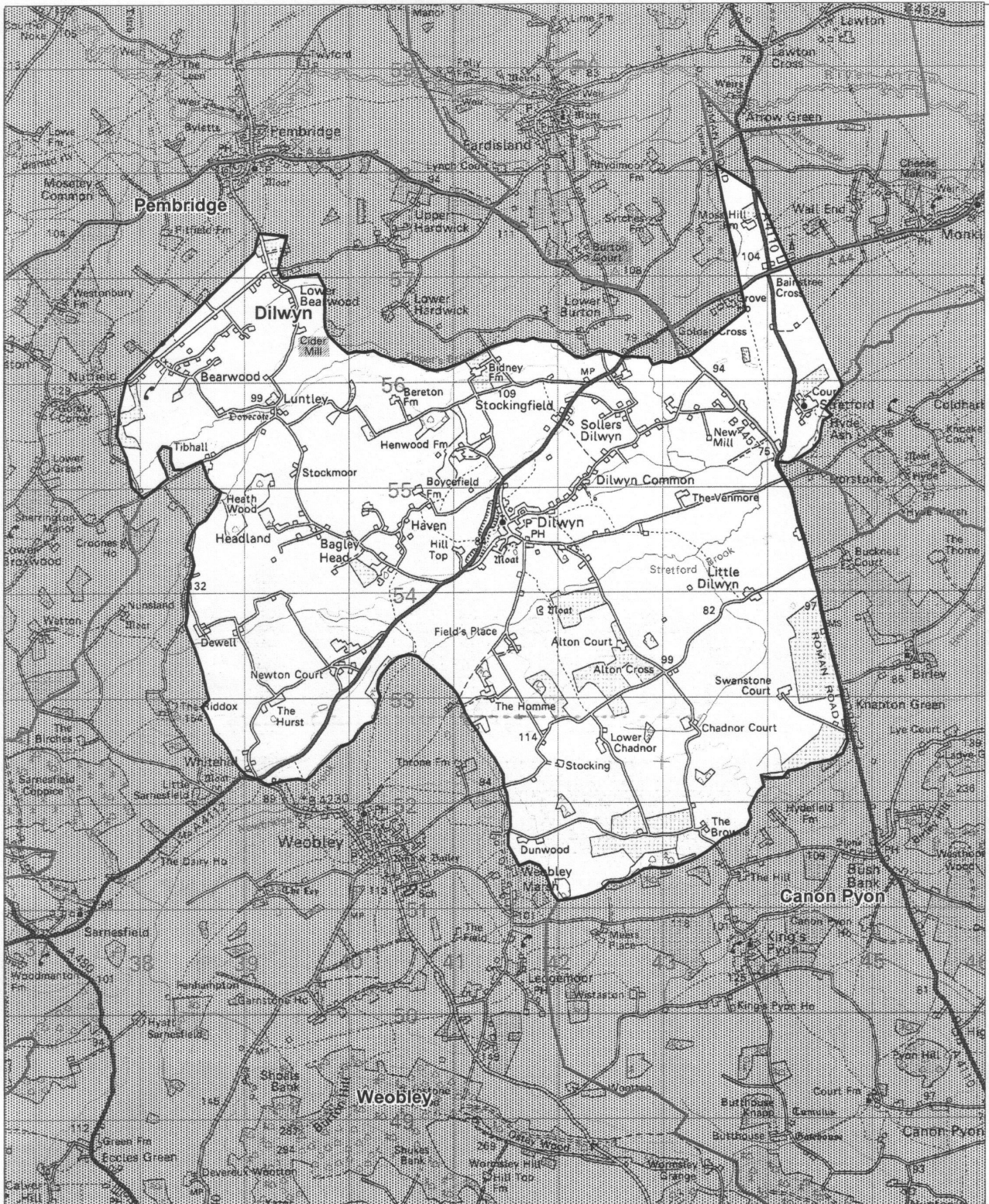
Covender is a small group of houses due south of the Newtown crossroads in countryside between the A4103 and A4172. (see plan)

Following the closure of Yarkhill Primary School in the 1970's, the parents of that time chose Withington Primary School (4.1 miles distant) as the alternative primary school, albeit John Masefield High School remains the provided High School. For some years Yarkhill Parish Council has requested that Ashperton Primary School, which is 2.4 miles away, should become the provided Primary School.

The Governors of Withington Primary School do not support the change unless it is a result of a comprehensive review of catchment areas across the County. There are no plans at present to undertake such a review.

The local member supports the change. The views of the local residents will be reported to the meeting.

From a 'technical' point of view, there would appear to be little impact either way. There is no proposal to change the provided High School, the numbers of future children are negligible and unlikely to have a significant impact on either school, or on transport costs. Ashperton is the nearer school.



DILWYN CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

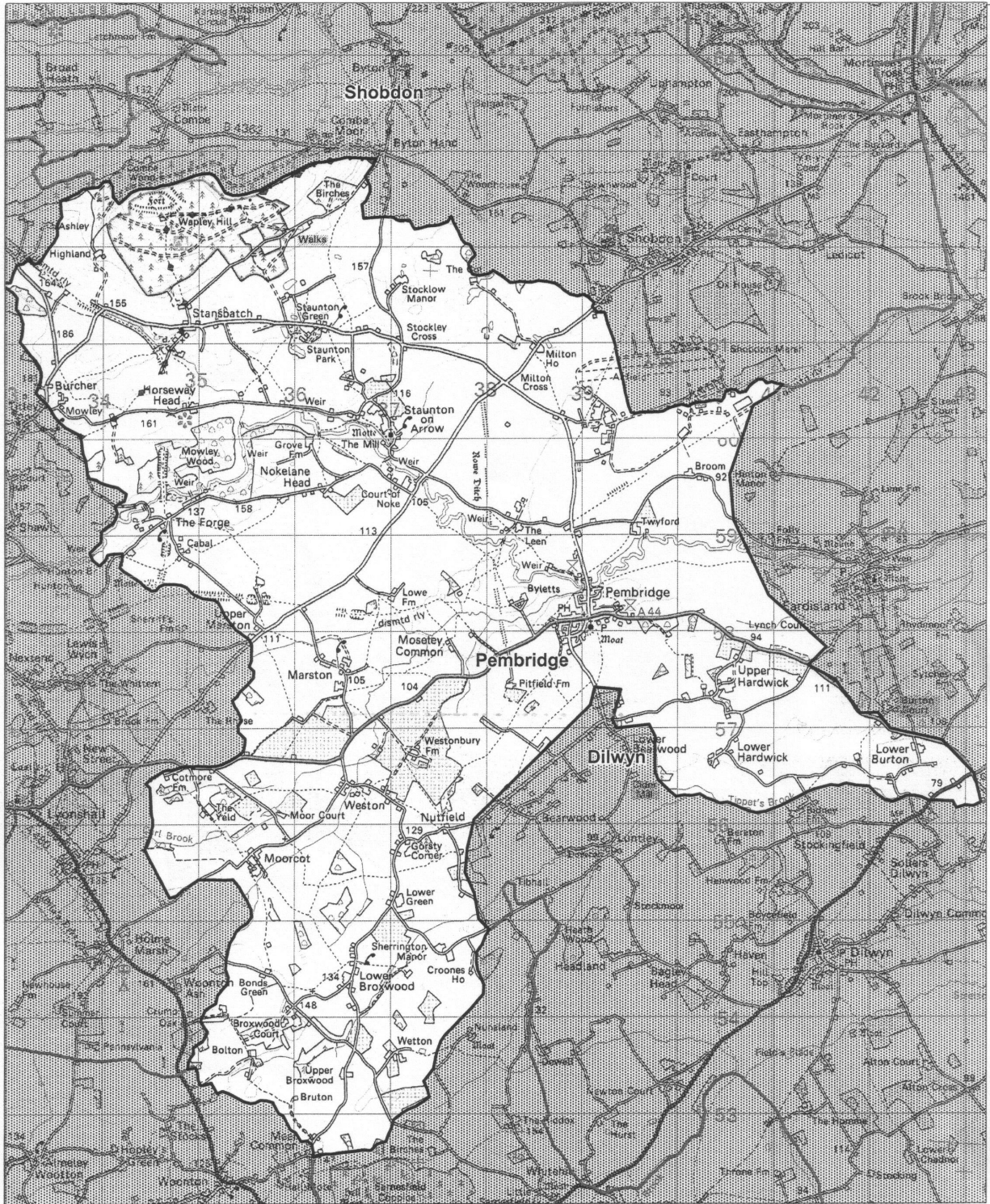


SCALE 1:



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PEMBROKE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

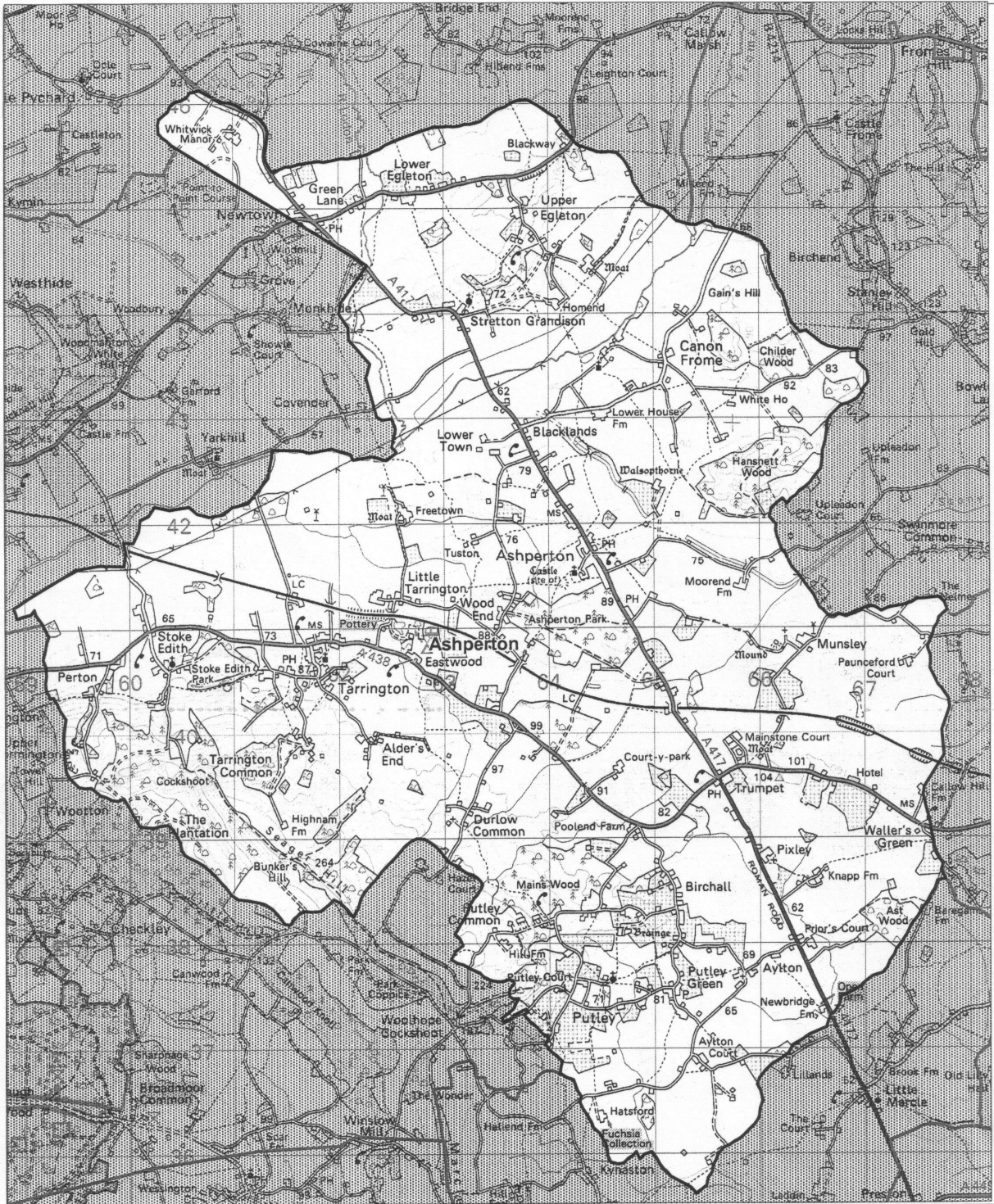


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ASHPERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

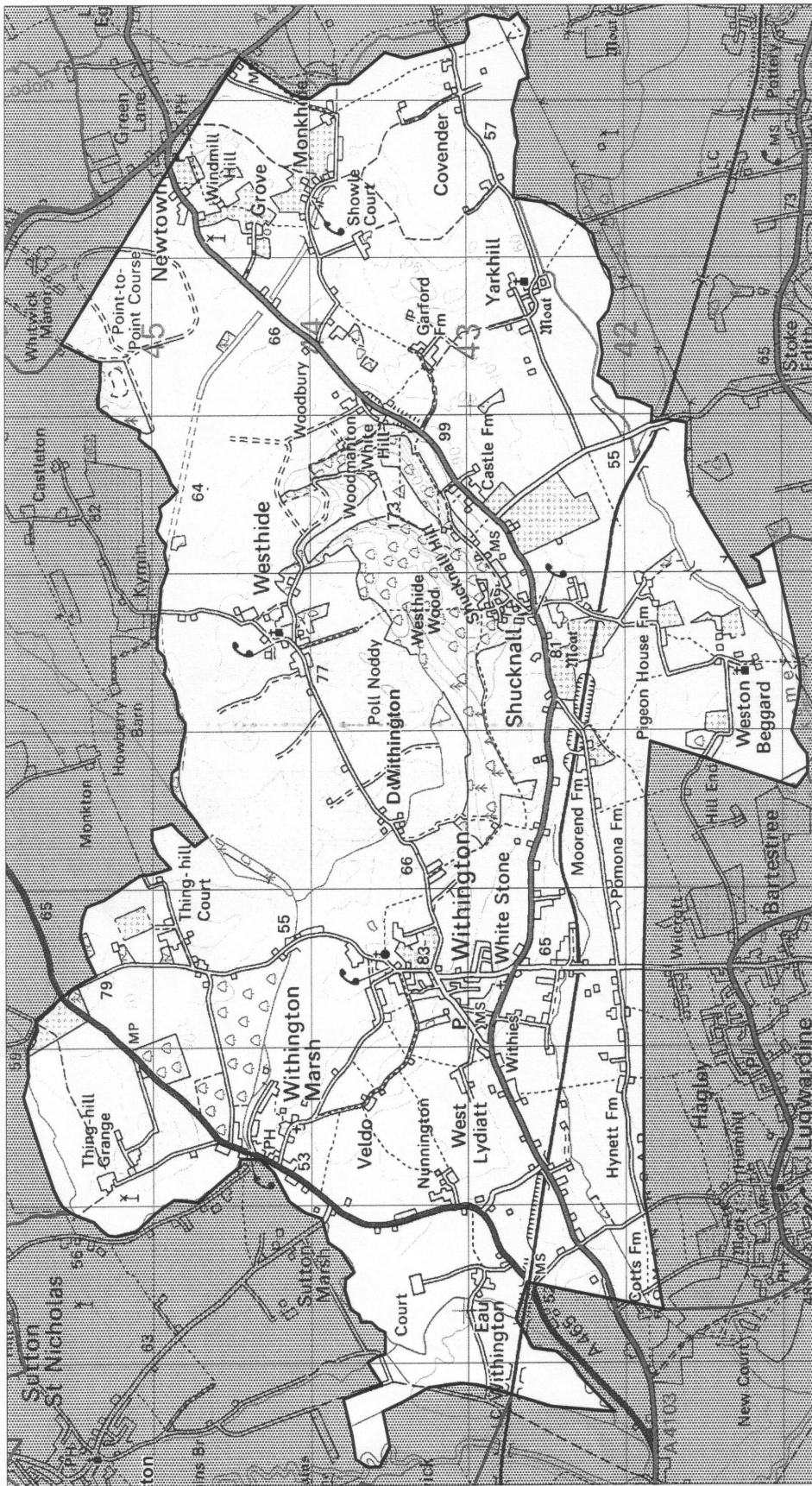


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WITHINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

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UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

REPORT BY HEAD OF POLICY & RESOURCES

SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

22ND NOVEMBER 2005

PURPOSE

To inform the committee on pupil and student numbers in Hereford in September 2005, and projected numbers in the short and medium term.

Falling Rolls

In September 2005 the numbers on roll in Primary Schools fell from 12,803 in 2004 to 12,373. This reflected 1,485 joining the schools in Year R but 1,966 leaving to Year 7 in High Schools.

A similar decline is seen in High Schools with 1,994 leaving Year 11 being replaced by 1,906 in Year 7. Numbers of students in Sixth Forms also fell from 501 to 487 between 2004 and 2005.

In light of the trend in both Primary and High School sectors, all schools have been advised to work together to find solutions to falling rolls. The sharing of staff between schools is being encouraged. In addition some schools have received individual letters identifying a need to reduce staffing levels. The unions representing the teaching unions have been advised of the general situation and will be kept closely informed of particular circumstances where redundancy is required.

Review of Small Schools

There is no formal review of any schools taking place, but a number of situations are being closely monitored, and, if necessary, a verbal report will be made to the committee on this. The ten smallest Primary Schools are as follows:

DfES No	School Name	Known Children 2005					Autumn Return 2005										Total NOR (inc N/C)	Autumn Return 2004
		Age as at 31 August 2005					Age as at 31 August 2005											
		0	1	2	3	4	5	N/C	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
2011	Bredenbury Primary	4	7	3	7	6	7	0	8	5	11	6	8	7	4	0	49	59
2077	Holme Lacy Primary	6	9	10	8	8	5	0	7	6	11	7	15	8	8	0	62	61
2094	King's Cagle Primary	5	3	7	2	7	8	0	6	2	5	7	6	6	5	0	37	35
2101	Longtown Primary	3	10	7	14	7	7	0	0	9	5	9	7	8	4	0	42	47

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

Michaelchurch																		
2116	Escley Primary	1	2	1	4	1	1	0	10	3	10	9	6	2	7	0	47	55
2146	Shobdon Primary	9	11	16	11	8	8	0	6	4	7	7	8	10	9	0	51	58
3007	Brilley Ce Primary	4	4	3	5	4	3	0	5	1	5	6	3	1	11	0	32	29
3030	Dilwyn C.E Primary	4	6	4	6	3	4	0	3	7	3	4	6	7	4	0	34	41
Little Dewchurch																		
3071	C.E. Primary	5	8	5	5	6	4	0	2	9	9	4	10	8	7	0	49	52
Whitbourne																		
3109	C.E. Primary	5	3	6	4	2	8	0	7	10	6	15	9	8	9	0	64	64
Pencombe																		
3367	C.E. Primary	4	3	1	3	0	3	0	3	8	7	7	7	7	10	0	49	57
Staunton-On-Wye																		
3378	Endowed Primary	10	9	6	10	8	9	0	5	11	12	7	6	13	8	0	62	60

Steiner Academy

The Local Authority is represented on the Working Group established by the DfES to assess the feasibility of the Steiner School at Much Dewchurch becoming an Academy. The impact of this one form of entry 3-16 all age maintained school on surrounding schools, admissions, and transport issues are matters, which are of particular interest to the local authority. It is anticipated the feasibility study will be concluded in June 06 with a decision being made then whether the Academy should be created from September 07 onwards. The local authority has been asked if it has a view on whether the Steiner School should serve its locality or serve parents from all areas of the County who seek a 'Steiner' education. At present the majority of the students in the existing school came from the area of Herefordshire to the South and West of the River Wye. (see attached map). The establishment of the school serving a local area would immediately set this school up in competition with local schools such as Much Birch and St Weonards at primary level, and Kingstone High School at secondary level. In terms of the organisation of schools across the County, it would appear far more logical to suggest that Steiner offers a service to the wider county, just as St Mary's R.C. High School offers Roman Catholic provision for those seeking denominational education from all parts of the County, rather than serve just part of the County.

Although this second approach is preferred, it may have greater cost implications if transport has to be provided. If concerns on the latter point could be satisfied, a countywide role for the Academy is recommended.

It is to be noted that the creation of the Academy does not require statutory notice, consultation and reference to the School Organisation Committee as these requirements apply only to local authority maintained schools as apposed to other maintained schools.

Hunderton Junior & Infant School Amalgamation

The Council is implementing the proposal to amalgamate Hunderton Junior and Infant Schools to create a three form entry school in September 06. The failure of a bid under the Targeted Capital Fund will place extreme pressure on the Council to finance this. It is

unlikely that any new works, other than these already approved, can be considered for at least 2 years, to enable the new accommodation to be provided at Hunderton.

Phase II Children's Centres

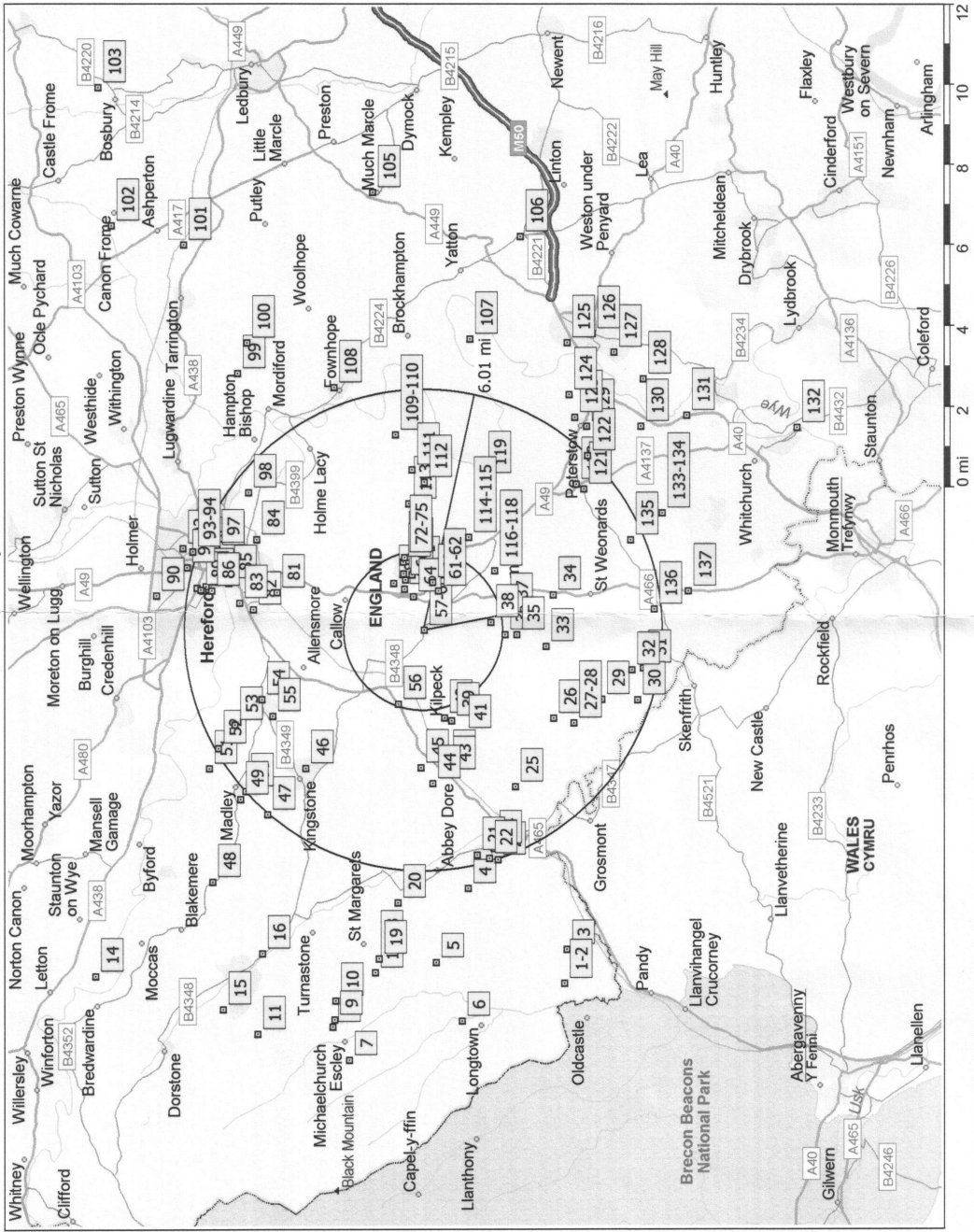
The one exception to this is the programme to create 6 additional Children's Centres. Four of these could be on or adjacent to Primary School sites. The capital is derived from a separate funding stream, and therefore can be considered outside the main funding stream to schools. Children's Centres in Hereford City, Bromyard, Ledbury, Ross, Peterchurch and Kington are proposed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee is invited to comment on the various items in this update.

6x10x100 = 1000

Steiner map



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DfES GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE AND THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

REPORT BY HEAD OF POLICY & RESOURCES

SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

22ND NOVEMBER 2005

PURPOSE

To inform the Committee of various proposals from the DfES, and to seek their views if any action should be taken.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year the DfES issued guidance on the constitution and statutory procedures of the School Organisation Committee. This is summarised below.

- All members of the Committee should be advised of the statutory procedures.
- There should be a nominated officer within Children's Services Directorate for all statutory procedures.
- Consideration should be given to extending SOC membership to a 'sixth group'
- Consideration be given to adopting a code of 'conduct and conflict of interest'.
- The standing orders of the committee should be reviewed to ensure that the points remain valid and are up to date.

At that time the DfES also advised that the annual production and approval of a School Organisation Plan was no longer required. The Schools Organisation Committee does however have to be consulted on the Children's Services and Young Peoples Plan, the first of which has to be completed by 1st April 2006. Although some work has begun on this it is yet to be decided what elements of the School Organisation Plan would be included in the Children's Services and Young Peoples Plan.

The Education White Paper however confuses the 2 issues described above as it suggests the abolition of the School Organisation Committee, with presumably school reorganisations being handled by the Local Authority. An Executive Summary of the White Paper has been sent to Members of the Committee separately and is available to members of the public on request.

It is assumed that some of the confusion will be resolved by the enactment of an Education Bill. Therefore the recommendations to the Committee are as below.

RECOMMENDATION

That: (a) no change to the constitution be made until the Education Bill is enacted, and if the SOC is to continue, consideration be given to amendments at that time;

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

- (b) the School Organisation Committee discuss the Children's Services & Young Peoples Plan at a meeting in March 2006;
- and;
- (c) the School Organisation Committee is involved if any statutory proposals are made prior to its abolition.