

PRINCIPLES ON FUTURE PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES

**Report By: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING & IMPROVEMENT –
SCHOOLS & SERVICES**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the draft principles on future school provision and to provide comments to shape the final document.

Financial Implications

2. None

Background

- 3.1 In England generally there are falling rolls in schools. This reflects the demographic pattern following the 'baby boom' in the late 1940's and the subsequent fluctuation in numbers of children in the country (660,800 births in 1991, and 563,700 births in 2001) and the changing social pattern of fewer women having children, and having fewer children later in life (2.95 children per female in 1964, 1.71 in 2003).
- 3.2 In Herefordshire this national trend is exacerbated by fewer 20-34 year olds in the population, with over 400 more 15-24 year olds leaving the County each year between 2000 and 2003 than moved into the County.
- 3.3 As a result as at summer term 2007 there were 2,291 13-14 year olds in the County but only 1,702 0-1 year olds. By 2011 it is projected that the number of 0-1 year olds will fall to 1,500. This cohort will enter secondary school in 2021, and plans should therefore be made for falling numbers for at least the next 15 if not 20 years.

AGE GROUP	CHILDREN IN COUNTY	CHILDREN ON ROLL
0-1	1702	0
1-2	1727	0
2-3	1797	0
3-4	1748	420
4-5	1732	1611
5-6	1769	1610
6-7	1944	1769
7-8	2085	1842
8-9	2047	1849
9-10	2067	1844
10-11	2179	1913
11-12	2138	1854
12-13	2287	1936
13-14	2291	1911
14-15	2472	2052
15-16	2419	2057

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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3.4 Falling rolls create 'surplus space' in schools and this suggests that resources are not being used to best effect. As it is, the figures in the table below show the position in January 2007 which identify that there are considerable empty spaces. As the numbers of children decreases, this situation will become worse.

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS		HIGH SCHOOLS	
	TOTAL PUPIL NUMBERS	TOTAL SCHOOL CAPACITY	TOTAL PUPIL NUMBERS	TOTAL SCHOOL CAPACITY
WEOBLEY, KINGTON, WIGMORE	1557	1876	1337	1460
LEOMINSTER, BROMYARD	1669	2086	1037	1300
KINGSTONE, PETERCHURCH	1102	1316	1041	995
HEREFORD CITY	5310	6293	4672	4900
LEDBURY & ROSS	2740	3255	2083	2100
TOTAL	12,378	14,826	10,457	10,755

3.5 There is additional housing proposed in the Unitary Development Plan up to 2011. The Regional Spatial Strategy also suggests that the rate of house building may increase between 2001 and 2026. However, it is to be noted that 4,372 houses were completed in the County between 1999 and 2005. During this time the number of primary school pupils dropped by 1,253 and the number of students in high schools dropped by 986. Additional housing does not necessarily lead to an increased number of children in maintained schools.

3.6 Falling rolls has become a critical strategic issue for the Authority, Herefordshire will receive less money in the Dedicated Schools Grant from Central Government as pupil numbers drop, and schools will consequently receive lower allocations.

Smaller schools budgets will lead to a necessary subsequent reduction in staffing levels in schools. Fewer staff threaten the quality of teaching and learning and the breadth of the curriculum on offer. It is anticipated that the numbers of staff in Primary Schools and Secondary Schools over the next 3 years will have to reduce by 80 fulltime equivalent posts in each sector.

As budgets reduce a greater percentage will be spent on fixed costs e.g. rates, heating, lighting and buildings maintenance, as the overhead costs in each school (rates, heating and lighting, cleaning, caretaking, Headteachers and secretaries) tend to be fixed.

3.7 At the same time the expectations on schools are increasing; higher standards; personalised learning; broader curriculum; extended school services, and an increased responsibility for the wider children's agenda.

Falling rolls will not have a uniform impact. The various areas of the County will be affected to different degrees, although the majority of schools are likely to suffer from greater fluctuation from year to year, making planning more difficult.

In this context Cabinet on 16th March 2006 (see Appendix 1) approved the review of the provision of schools in a series of area reviews. In 2006 Area Reviews were commenced in Kington, Weobley and Wigmore, Kingstone and Peterchurch, and Bromyard and Leominster. Consultation documents were issued.

It is now urgent to complete the review process, and to do this it has been decided to issue a principles paper for consultation with schools. Once these have been agreed and in light of demographic projections, the Local Authority will put forward proposals in January 2008. The principles paper attempts to set out the basis on which school provision should be shaped in

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the first half of the 21st Century. It covers the role of the school in both the narrower education field, its wider role in the community and in supporting the ECM agenda.

The timetable for this is:

August 1 st –	
September 30 th -	Consultation with Schools
October 6 th –	Children's Services Scrutiny
October 9 th –	HASH – Discussion with Secondary Headteachers
October 17 th –	Primary Headteachers
November 22 nd /29 th –	Cabinet – consideration for Final Principles Paper
January 2008 –	Draft Proposals for changing provision
January – February -	Consultation on the draft proposals
March 2008 -	Cabinet to consider final change
April 2008 onwards -	Implementation of statutory notices etc

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee consider principles set out in the document, and comment on them accordingly

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet 16th March 2006