

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.