

School Organisation Sub-Committee

Agenda

Date: **Wednesday, 3rd June, 2009**
Time: **9.00 am**
Venue: **Macclesfield Library -Macclesfield**

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Appointment of Chairman**

To appoint a Chairman for the meeting.

2. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for the absence.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda.

4. **Proposed Closure of Church Lawton Primary School** (Pages 1 - 104)

To consider proposals to close Church Lawton Primary School.

5. **Exclusion Resolution**

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

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The Sub Committee will meet in private to consider the decision as a result in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public will be excluded from this meeting on the grounds further consideration of the matter will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Paragraph 4-Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

Paragraph 5-Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 3 June 2009
Report of: Peter Davies, Interim School Organisation Manager
Title: **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This Decision Paper and its attachments set out the proposals published by the Cheshire County Council to close Church Lawton Primary School on 31 August 2009. The attachments also report on the level of objections received to the proposal and provide brief comments on those objections.
- 1.2 The reasons for publishing the proposal that Church Lawton Primary School should close were:
- To remove surplus places through the closure of Church Lawton Primary School, which is a small school with a high level of surplus places and a low take-up of places by the local community. The Local Authority has previously reduced the school from 210 to 105 places. Nevertheless, the school currently has significant surplus capacity which is set to increase;
 - To ensure that pupils currently attending Church Lawton Primary School continue to receive education of a sustainable high quality. Children at the school are currently taught in three classes, due to low numbers, with one class spanning four year groups. Numbers of pupils at the school are set to continue to fall if it remains open, to the point where its sustainability would be put in question;
 - To make more effective use of resources within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) by reducing the additional allowances paid to schools to support the curriculum outside the allocation produced by Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPUs).

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 The Cabinet School Organisation Sub-Committee, as the relevant Decision Maker under the Education and Inspection Act 2006, is required to decide whether to approve the proposed closure of Church Lawton Primary School on 31 August 2009.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

3.1 None

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

4.1 The proposals to close Church Lawton Primary School on 31 August 2009 would result in a DSG saving of approximately £58,000 in 2009-10 and an annual DSG saving of approximately £100,000 thereafter.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 All statutory requirements set out in legislation and guidance have been complied with in relation to the proposal.

6.0 Risk Assessment

6.1 There are risks associated with a failure on the part of the Local Authority to have in place mechanisms to manage the supply of school places. Where individual schools have 25% or more surplus places, the Local Authority, in its monitoring return to DCSF, is required to set out what it intends to do to address the issue. Based on the current capacity of 105 pupils – which is half the capacity for which the school was originally designed and built, the projection is for 44% surplus places in 2013. There are also implications regarding the effective deployment of resources and Best Value if school place provision and pupil demand are not well matched.

7.0 Background and Options

7.1 See Paragraph 1.2 above.

Details of the proposals are attached, as follows:

A Procedure for considering school re-organisation proposals;

B Statutory Guidance on the factors to be considered in deciding school closures;

C The full proposal, including annexes, as follows, to be considered by the Sub-Committee:

C1 Public Notice, proposing the closure of Church Lawton Primary School;

C2 Report to Cheshire County Council's School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009;

C3 Report to Council on 12 February 2009;

C4 Report to the County Council's Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009;

C5 Letter dated 22 January 2009, from the Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary School, to the Children's Services Executive;

C6 Revised Two-year Recovery Plan of the Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary School;

C7 Consultation Document on the proposal;

C8 Summary of consultations with the Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary School;

C9 Summary of the formal consultation event;

C10 Summary of consultations with the staff of Church Lawton Primary School;

C11 Summary of responses received to the consultations;

C12 Questions to the County Council's Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009, together with responses;

C13 Decision of the County Council's Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009;

C14 Schedule of stakeholders consulted;

C15 Schedule of pupil numbers in schools within two miles of Church Lawton Primary School;

C16 Schedule of spare places at schools local to Church Lawton Primary School;

D Matrix: the proposed closure in relation to the Decision-maker's guidance;

E Copies of objections received to the proposal (included separately as the Local Authority regards individual objections as confidential and not in the public domain unless the objector has indicated otherwise); and

F Brief comments on the objections.

8.0 Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues

8.1 None

9.0 Reasons for Recommendation

9.1 The recommendation will give effect to the requirements for the Local Authority to have in place mechanisms to manage the supply of school places, and to deploy resources effectively and Best Value, in order to match better school place provision and pupil demand.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Appendix A

CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING STATUTORY SCHOOL REORGANISATION PROPOSALS AND OTHER NON STATUTORY EDUCATION REORGANISATION PROPOSALS

1. DECISIONS TO CONSULT AND PUBLISH STATUTORY NOTICES

**Decisions to be taken by the Individual Portfolio holder for
Children and Families**

2. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING STATUTORY SCHOOL REORGANISATION PROPOSALS AND DECISIONS ON NON STATUTORY EDUCATION REORGANISATION PROPOSALS WHICH ATTRACT OBJECTIONS

**Decisions to be taken by a Cabinet Sub Committee under the
procedures set out below**

CHESHIRE EAST CABINET SCHOOL ORGANISATION SUB COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

The Cabinet has adopted the following procedure when exercising its function as the relevant decision maker under Schedule 2 Education and Inspections Act 2006 to consider school reorganisation proposals which attract statutory objections. The Cabinet has also adopted this procedure for the determination of other non statutory education organisation proposals which have attracted objections.

Decisions will be taken by a Committee comprising of 3 or 5 Cabinet members sitting as a Cabinet Sub Committee who will elect one member as Chair.

Representatives from the Chester(CE) Diocesan Board of Education , the Diocese of Shrewsbury Catholic Education and nominated primary, secondary, special school, nursery and foundation school governors (where appropriate) will be invited to attend and offer advice to the Sub Committee where the proposals impact on their sector of educational provision.

Part 1 of meetings of the Sub Committee will be held in public.

Introduction

- (1) There will be a brief introduction by the Principal Adviser to the Sub Committee to explain the business which is being brought before the Sub Committee, and how it will be considered.

Presentation of the Proposal

- (2) The Chair of the Sub Committee will ask the Proposers' representative(s) to present the proposal.

(No more than three presentations and a maximum 15 minutes in total.)

Local Reaction to the Proposal

- (3) The Principal Adviser will report briefly to the Sub Committee on the level and nature of responses received, together with any other responses, eg: expressions of support for the proposals.
- (4) The Chair will invite a spokesman or spokesmen representing the objectors to make an oral presentation of their objections.

(No more than three presentations and a maximum 15 minutes in total.

Objectors are, therefore, invited to work together to co-ordinate their representations and to nominate no more than three spokesmen.

Objectors are asked to notify the Democratic Services Officer to the Sub Committee of the name(s) of their spokesman or spokesmen in advance of the meeting.)

- (5) Representatives for the Diocesan and Governing Bodies where appropriate may each ask questions of the Proposers and Objectors

Information Seeking

- (6) Sub Committee Members may ask the Proposers' representative(s) any questions about:
 - The case for the proposals.
 - Proposers' comments on the objections received.
- (8) Sub Committee Members may ask the objectors' spokesman or spokesmen any questions about the objections received.

Advice to the Sub Committee

- (9) Governor representatives and representatives from the Chester (CE) Diocesan Board of Education and Diocese of Shrewsbury Education Service where appropriate will be invited to make comments to the Sub Committee.
- (10) Elected Members will be invited to make comments to the Sub Committee.

Part 2 of the meeting will be held in private.

The Sub Committee will then meet in private and everyone else will be asked to leave the meeting at this point, save that elected members of the Borough Council may remain present, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders relating to Council proceedings.

Review

- (11) The Sub Committee, advised by the Principal Adviser, will consider whether the Sub Committee has sufficient information to come to a decision, or whether more information, not available at the meeting, is needed.

In exceptional circumstances where significant additional information is required which cannot immediately be provided, it may be necessary for the Sub Committee to adjourn whilst the necessary information is obtained.

- (12) When (either at the first meeting to consider the proposal or at a subsequent meeting if need be) the Sub Committee considers that it has sufficient information to reach a decision, the Sub Committee will consider the issues having regard to each element of the relevant statutory Decision Makers guidance which it is required to consider, before reaching its decision.

Part 3 Announcement of the Decision in public session

- (13) The Sub Committee's decision will be made in public following the private review session. It will then be published on the Borough Council's Political Information Network within two working days and the Principal Adviser to the Sub Committee will then prepare and make public a written statement setting out the reasons for the Sub Committee's decision in relation to the relevant Statutory Decision Makers guidance.

Footnotes:

1. Where the Proposer is the Local Authority this will be officers representing the Director of Children & Families. Other Proposers may include the Church of England and Catholic Dioceses and school governing bodies.
2. Nominated school governor representatives shall be sought from the Cheshire Association of Governing Bodies (CAGB) from serving primary, secondary, special, nursery and foundation school governors of Cheshire East schools, save that no person who is a governor, parent of a pupil attending or member of the staff of any school which is the subject of any proposal being considered by the Sub Committee shall participate, but may nominate a substitute in his or her place.
3. Decisions by the Sub Committee remain subject to the Council's call- in procedures under the relevant Standing Order. In the event of such "call-in", the council's Standing Orders shall apply in relation to all subsequent decision-making and the foregoing procedure shall cease to apply.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Statutory Guidance – Factors to be considered by Decision Makers

4.15 Paragraphs 8(6) and 17 of Schedule 2 to the EIA 2006 provides that both the LA and schools adjudicator are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when they take a decision on proposals. Paragraphs 4.16 to 4.62 below contain the statutory guidance on considering proposals for school closure.

4.16 The following factors should not be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of the proposals. All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

EFFECT ON STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A System Shaped by Parents

4.17 The Government's aim, as set out in the Five Year Strategy for Education and Learners and the Schools White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools For All*, is to create a school system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity. In particular, the Government wishes to see a dynamic system in which:

- weak schools that need to be closed are closed quickly and replaced by new ones where necessary;
- the best schools are able to expand and spread their ethos and success; and
- new providers have the opportunity to share their energy and talents by establishing new schools - whether as voluntary schools, Trust schools or Academies - and forming Trusts for existing schools.

4.18 The EIA 2006 amends the Education Act 1996 to place new duties on LAs to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools in their areas. In addition, LAs are under a specific **duty** to respond to representations from parents about the provision of schools, including requests to establish new schools or make changes to existing schools. The Government's aim is to secure a more diverse and dynamic schools system which is shaped by parents. The Decision Maker should take into account the extent to which the proposals are consistent with the new duties on LAs.

Standards

4.19 The Government wishes to encourage changes to local school provision which will boost standards and opportunities for young people, while matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents'

needs and wishes.

4.20 Decision Makers should be satisfied that proposals for a school closure will contribute to raising local standards of provision, and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people. They should pay particular attention to the effects on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic groups, children from deprived backgrounds and children in care, with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps.

4.21 Decision Makers should be satisfied that when proposals lead to children being displaced, any alternative provision will meet the statutory SEN improvement test (see paragraphs 4.55 to 4.61).

4.22 Where a school is to be closed so that it may be amalgamated with a more successful and/or popular school, the Decision Maker should again normally approve these proposals, subject to evidence being provided by the LA and other interests that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

Fresh Start and Collaborative Restarts

4.23 Fresh Start and Collaborative Restart provide for poorly performing schools which are struggling to improve, to close and be replaced with new school provision, usually on the same site. When considering the closure of any school causing concern and, where relevant, the expansion of other schools, the Decision Maker should take into account the popularity with parents of alternative schools.

4.24 For all closure and Fresh Start proposals involving schools causing concern, copies of the Ofsted monitoring letters for the relevant schools should be made available. The Decision Maker should have regard to the length of time the school has been in special measures, needing significant improvement or otherwise causing concern, the progress it has made, the prognosis for improvement, and the availability of places at other existing or proposed schools within a reasonable travelling distance. There should be a presumption that these proposals should be approved, subject only to checking that there will be sufficient accessible places of an acceptable standard available in the area to meet foreseeable demand and to accommodate the displaced pupils.

Academies

4.25 Academies are publicly-funded independent schools established in partnership with business and voluntary sector sponsors. They will normally replace one or more poorly-performing schools or will meet demand for new school places in diverse communities where there is only limited access to free high quality school places. Academies may be established in rural as well as urban areas. All Academies should contribute to a strategic approach to diversity in their area. The involvement of business and other non-Government partners will enable Academies to develop and implement new approaches to governance, teaching and learning in order to raise standards.

All Academies will be required to share their facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.

4.26 Where an Academy is to replace an existing school or schools, the proposals for the closure of those schools should indicate whether pupils currently attending the schools will transfer to the Academy and, if appropriate, what arrangements will be made for pupils who are not expected to transfer.

4.27 If provision for pupils at a school proposed for closure is dependent on the establishment of an Academy, any approval of the closure proposals should be conditional on the Secretary of State making an agreement for an Academy (see paragraph 4.64), but there should be a general presumption in favour of approval.

Diversity

4.28 The Government's aim is to transform our school system so that every child receives an excellent education – whatever their background and wherever they live. A vital part of the Government's vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school develops its own ethos, sense of mission and a centre of excellence or specialist provision.

4.29 Decision Makers should consider how proposals will impact on local diversity. They should consider the range of schools in the relevant area of the LA and how they will ultimately impact on the aspirations of parents and help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

Balance of Denominational Provision

4.30 In deciding proposals to close a school with a religious character, the Decision Maker should consider the effect that this will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area.

4.31 The Decision Maker should not normally approve the closure of a school with a religious character where the proposal would result in a reduction in the proportion of denominational places in the area. This guidance does not however apply in cases where the school concerned is severely under-subscribed, standards have been consistently low or where an infant and junior school (at least one of which has a religious character) are to be replaced by a new all-through primary school with the same religious character on the site of one or more of the predecessor schools.

Every Child Matters

4.32 The Decision Maker should consider how the proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with Every Child Matters' principles which are: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution to the community and society and achieve economic well-being. This should include considering how displaced pupils

will continue to have access to extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and vocational training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

NEED FOR PLACES

Provision for Displaced Pupils

4.33 The Decision Maker should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area, taking into account the overall supply and likely future demand for places. The Decision Maker should consider the quality and popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and any evidence of parents' aspirations for those schools.

Surplus Places

4.34 It is important that education is provided as cost-effectively as possible. Empty places can represent a poor use of resources - resources that can often be used more effectively to support schools in raising standards. The Secretary of State wishes to encourage LAs to organise provision in order to ensure that places are located where parents want them. LAs should take action to remove empty places at schools that are unpopular with parents and which do little to raise standards or improve choice. The removal of surplus places should always support the core agenda of raising standards and respect parents' wishes by seeking to match school places with parental choices.

4.35 The Decision Maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places, and where standards are low compared to standards across the LA. The Decision Maker should consider all other proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places carefully. Where the rationale for the closure of a school is based on the removal of surplus places, standards at the school(s) in question should be taken into account, as well as geographical and social factors, such as population sparsity in rural areas, and the effect on any community use of the premises.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL

Impact on Community

4.36 Some schools may already be a focal point for family and community activity, providing extended services for a range of users, and its closure may have wider social ramifications. In considering proposals for the closure of such schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. Where the school was providing access to extended services, some provision should be made for the pupils and their families to access similar services through their new schools or other means.

4.37 The information presented by those bringing forward proposals to close such schools, particularly when they are in receipt of funding as part of regeneration activity, should therefore include evidence that options for maintaining access to extended services in the area have been addressed. The views of other relevant agencies and partnerships with responsibility for community and family services should be taken into account, alongside those of the local police, Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies having responsibility for the New Deal for Communities.

Community Cohesion and Race Equality

4.38 When considering proposals to close a school the Decision Maker should consider the impact of the proposals on community cohesion. This will need to be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of the community served by the school and the views of different sections within the community. In considering the impact of the proposals on community cohesion the Decision Maker will need to take account of the nature of the alternative provision to be made for pupils displaced by the closure and the effects of any other changes to the provision of schools in the area.

Travel and Accessibility for All

4.39 In considering proposals for the reorganisation of schools, Decision Makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account. Facilities are to be accessible by those concerned, by being located close to those who will use them, and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.

4.40 In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker should bear in mind that proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. The EIA 2006 provides extended free transport rights for low income groups – see Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance ref 00373 – 2007BKT-EN at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications. Proposals should also be considered on the basis of how they will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

Equal Opportunity Issues

4.41 The Decision Maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example, that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. Similarly there needs to be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflects the ethnic and cultural mix of the area, while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

Rural Schools and Sites

4.42 In considering statutory proposals to close a rural school, the Decision Maker should have regard to the need to preserve access to a local school for rural communities. There is therefore a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school should never close, but the case for closure should be strong and the proposals clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. The presumption will not apply in cases where a rural infant and junior school on the same site are being closed to establish a new primary school. In order to assist the Decision Maker, those proposing closure should provide evidence to the Decision Maker to show that they have carefully considered:

- a. Alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another local school to increase the school's viability; the scope for an extended school or children's centre to provide local community services and facilities e.g. child care facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc;
- b. The transport implications as mentioned in paragraphs 4.39 to 4.40; and
- c. The overall and long term impact on local people and the community of closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility.

4.43 When deciding proposals for the closure of a rural primary school, the Decision Maker should refer to the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) 2007 to confirm that the school is a rural school. The list of rural primary schools can be viewed on line at:
www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml

4.44 In the case of secondary schools, it is the responsibility of the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is to be regarded as rural for the purpose of considering proposals for closure under this guidance and in particular the presumption against closure. The Department's register of schools - Edubase - includes a rural/urban indicator for each school in England based on an assessment by the Office for National Statistics. The Decision Maker should have regard to this indicator. Where a school is not recorded as rural on Edubase, the Decision Maker may nonetheless wish to consider evidence provided by interested parties that a particular school should be regarded as rural.

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

Boarding School Provision

4.45 In making a decision on proposals to close a school that includes boarding provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether there is a state maintained boarding school within one hour's travelling distance from the school. The Decision Maker should consider whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future,

including the children of service families.

SPECIFIC AGE PROVISION ISSUES

Early Years Provision

4.46 In considering proposals to close a school which currently includes early years provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether the alternative provision will integrate pre-school education with childcare services and/or with other services for young children and their families; and should have particular regard to the views of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

4.47 The Decision Maker should also consider whether the alternative early years provision will maintain or enhance the standard of educational provision and flexibility of access for parents. Alternative provision could be with providers in the private, voluntary or independent sector.

Nursery School Closures

4.48 In deciding whether to approve any proposals to close a nursery school, the Decision Maker should be aware that nursery schools generally offer high quality provision, and have considerable potential as the basis for developing integrated services for young children and families. There should be a presumption against the closure of a nursery school unless the case for closure can demonstrate that:

- a. the LA is consistently funding numbers of empty places;
- b. full consideration has been given to developing the school into a Sure Start Children's Centre, and there are clear, justifiable grounds for not doing so, for example: unsuitable accommodation, poor quality provision and low demand for places;
- c. plans to develop alternative provision clearly demonstrate that it will be at least as equal in terms of the quantity and quality of early years provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; and that
- d. replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents.

14-19 Curriculum and Collaboration

4.49 The Government has ambitious plans to increase post-16 participation rates and improve the skills of learners. The foundation for making progress is a transformed, coherent 14-19 phase offering a rich mix of learning opportunities from which young people can choose tailored programmes and gain qualifications appropriate to their aptitudes, needs and aspirations. This will be achieved by better collaboration between local providers, including schools, colleges, training providers and employers. Decision Makers should

therefore consider what measures are being proposed to ensure that opportunities available to students in this age group are not reduced by the school closure, although the absence of such measures should not prevent the closure of a poorly-performing school.

16-19 Provision – General

4.50 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 provides an entitlement to further education and training for young people aged 16 -19. Schools and colleges should offer high quality provision that meets the diverse needs of all young people, their communities and employers. 16-19 provision should be organised to ensure that, in every area, young people have access, within reasonable travelling distance, to high-quality learning opportunities across schools, colleges and work-based training routes.

4.51 In September 2003 Ministers set out their **five key principles** for the reorganisation of 16-19 provision, following requests from partners (including the LSC and LAs) for more clarity on Government expectations. Decision Makers should therefore consider all proposals for changes to 16-19 provision in the context of these principles.

4.52 Details of the five key principles can be found in [‘Principles underpinning the organisation of 16-19 provision’](#) booklet. Briefly, they are:

- a. quality - all provision for all learners should be high quality, whatever their chosen pathway;
- b. distinct 16-19 provision - all young people should be attached to a 16-19 base which will meet the particular pastoral, management and learning needs of this age group;
- c. diversity to ensure curriculum breadth – well-managed collaboration between popular and successful small providers will enable them to remain viable and to share and build on their particular areas of expertise;
- d. learner choice – all learners should normally have local access to high quality 16-19 provision in a range of settings and any proposals for change to this provision should take into account the views of all stakeholders;
- e. affordability, value for money and cost effectiveness - proposals for change should include how any capital and recurrent costs and savings will lead to improved educational opportunities.

LSC Proposals to Close Inadequate 16-19 Provision

4.53 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 (as amended by the Education Act 2005) gives the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) powers to propose the closure of 16-19 schools judged to require Special Measures. Where a 16-19 school is proposed for closure in such circumstances there should be a presumption to approve the proposals, subject to evidence being provided

that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

Conflicting Sixth Form Reorganisation Proposals

4.54 Where the implementation of reorganisation proposals from the LSC conflict with other published proposals put to the Decision Maker for decision, the Decision Maker is prevented (i.e. by the School Organisation Proposals by the LSC for England Regulations 2003 - SI 2003 No. 507) from making a decision on the “related” proposals until the Secretary of State has decided the LSC proposals (see paragraphs 4.13 to 4.14 above).

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION

Initial Considerations

4.55 When reviewing SEN provision, planning or commissioning alternative types of SEN provision or considering proposals for change, LAs should aim for a flexible range of provision and support that can respond to the special educational needs of individual pupils and parental preferences, rather than necessarily establishing broad categories of provision according to special educational need or disability. There are a number of initial considerations for LAs to take account of in relation to proposals for change. They should ensure that local proposals:

- i. take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings;
- ii. offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of local authority day and residential special provision;
- iii. are consistent with the LA’s Children and Young People’s Plan;
- iv. take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, within a learning environment in which children can be healthy and stay safe;
- v. support the LA’s strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- vi. provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice, so that individual pupils can have the fullest possible opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community;
- vii. ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year-olds, taking account of the role of local LSC funded institutions and their admissions

policies; and

- viii. ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements of special educational needs will require amendment and all parental rights must be ensured. Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority should be involved.

4.56 Taking account of the considerations, as set out above, will provide assurance to local communities, children and parents that any reorganisation of SEN provision in their area is designed to improve on existing arrangements and enable all children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

The Special Educational Needs Improvement Test

4.57 When considering any reorganisation of SEN provision, including that which might lead to some children being displaced through closures or alterations, LAs, and all other proposers for new schools or new provision, will need to demonstrate to parents, the local community and Decision Makers how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs. All consultation documents and reorganisation plans that LAs publish and all relevant documentation LAs and other proposers submit to Decision Makers should show how the key factors set out in the paragraphs below (4.58 to 4.61) have been taken into account. Proposals which do not credibly meet these requirements should not be approved and Decision Makers should take proper account of parental or independent representations which question the LA's own assessment in this regard.

Key Factors

4.58 When LAs are planning changes to their existing SEN provision, and in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate likely improvements in provision, they should:

- identify the details of the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of:
 - a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy;
 - b) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;
 - c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
 - d) improved supply of suitable places.

- LAs should also:
 - i. obtain a written statement that offers the opportunity for all providers of existing and proposed provision to set out their views on the changing pattern of provision seeking agreement where possible;
 - ii. clearly state arrangements for alternative provision. A 'hope' or 'intention' to find places elsewhere is not acceptable. Wherever possible, the host or alternative schools should confirm in writing that they are willing to receive pupils, and have or will have all the facilities necessary to provide an appropriate curriculum;
 - iii. specify the transport arrangements that will support appropriate access to the premises by reference to the LA's transport policy for SEN and disabled children; and
 - iv. specify how the proposals will be funded and the planned staffing arrangements that will be put in place.

4.59 It is to be noted that any pupils displaced as a result of the closure of a BESD school (difficulties with behavioural, emotional and social development) should not be placed long-term or permanently in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) if a special school place is what they need. PRUs are intended primarily for pupils who have been excluded, although LAs can and do use PRU provision for pupils out of school for other reasons such as illness and teenage pregnancies. There may of course be pupils who have statements identifying that they have BESD who have been placed appropriately in a PRU because they have been excluded; in such cases the statement must be amended to name the PRU, but PRUs should not be seen as an alternative long-term provision to special schools.

4.60 The requirement to demonstrate improvements and identify the specific educational benefits that flow from proposals for new or altered provision as set out in the key factors are for all those who bring forward proposals for new special schools or for special provision in mainstream schools including governors of foundation schools and foundation special schools. The proposer needs to consider all the factors listed above.

4.61 Decision Makers will need to be satisfied that the evidence with which they are provided shows that LAs and/or other proposers have taken account of the initial considerations and all the key factors in their planning and commissioning in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate that the reorganisation or new provision is likely to result in improvements to SEN provision.

OTHER ISSUES

Views of interested parties

4.62 The Decision Maker should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them including: pupils; families of

pupils; staff; other schools and colleges; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers; LAs; the LSC (where proposals affect 14-19 provision) and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership if one exists, or any local partnership or group that exists in place of an EYDCP (where proposals affect early years and/or childcare provision). This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period. The Decision Maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the Decision Maker should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

C

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Insert the information asked for in the expandable box below each section.

Contact details

1. The name of the local education authority or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHESTER, CH1 1SQ
Transforming Learning Communities Team, Cheshire County Council,
Children's Services, Room 417, County Hall, Chester, CH1 1SQ.
Church Lawton Primary School, Cherry Tree Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3EL (875/2346).

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

31 August 2009.

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

Public consultations were held from 1 December 2008 until 23 January 2009, and formal statutory consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents and interested members of the community on 9 December 2008, and with other statutory consultees, in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance and statutory requirements.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;

- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- (d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

An initial period for informal consultations ran from 25 June to 5 August 2008. Public meetings were held at Alsager Civic Centre on 30 June; Sandbach Town Hall on 1 July; and at Congleton Town Hall on 2 July 2008. Members of the community were given the opportunity to drop in and meet officers from the County Council to discuss the options which had been announced on 25 June 2008.

Subsequently a period of formal consultations ran between 1 December 2008 until 23 January 2009, with formal consultation meetings with the staff and with the governors of Church Lawton Primary School and drop-in sessions for parents of pupils attending the school and the public held on 9 December 2008.

Briefing documents for both periods of consultations were distributed to staff, governors and parents, as well as being placed on the County Council's website. Key documents relating to the formal consultation period are included as part of **Annex A**, and the resolution of the County Council's Children Services Executive on 17 February 2009 is included at **Annex B**.

A schedule giving details of those consulted is attached at **Annex C**

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To remove surplus places through the closure of Church Lawton Primary School, which is a small school with a high level of surplus places and a low take-up of places by the local community.

To ensure that pupils currently attending Church Lawton Primary School, continue to receive education of a sustainable high quality. Children at the school are currently taught in three classes, due to low numbers, with one class spanning four year groups. Numbers of pupils at the school are set to continue to fall if it remains open, to the point where its sustainability would be put in question.

To make more effective use of resources within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) by reducing the additional allowances paid to schools to support the curriculum outside the allocation produced by Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPUs).

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Of the Cheshire schools within two miles of Church Lawton and likely to receive pupils if it closes, four are considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted (Grade 1) in their most recent inspection, one 'good with outstanding features' (Grade 2), and one is newly amalgamated and is yet to be inspected. Church Lawton was judged 'satisfactory' (Grade 3) in its most recent inspection.

These schools are:

Rode Heath Primary School
Scholar Green Primary School
Alsager Highfields Community Primary School
Excalibur Primary School
Pikemere School
Cranberry Primary School

Between them, these schools provide about 1300 places to pupils of primary age, and 52 nursery places (Cranberry Primary School). Faith-based education is provided at Woodcocks' Well CE Primary School (Church of England) and is also available in the area at St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School (Catholic).

All the schools mentioned above, including Church Lawton Primary School, have Contextual Value Added scores (KS1-2) of above the Local Authority average (2007) and this looks set to continue for 2008 (2008 provisional CVA scores).

There is no doubt that the proposal to close Church Lawton Primary School will have very little impact on standards, diversity and quality of educational provision in the local area.

Provision for 16 -19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on—

- (a) the educational or training achievements;
- (b) participation in education or training; and
- (c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

Parents of pupils attending Church Lawton Primary School at the time of closure will be offered places at other local schools, in accordance with parents' preferences, subject to the availability of places and with a right of appeal should it not be possible to meet any parent's preference(s). The Governors of Cranberry Primary School, Cranberry Lane, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2LE have expressed a willingness to offer a place to all of the current Year 5 children at Church Lawton Primary School and to enable appropriate specific teaching arrangements should enough of the group transfer.

The schools within a two-mile radius of Church Lawton Primary School are listed in **Annex D**.

In January 2009 there were 234 spare places at these schools (see **Annex E**). Agreed changes in the capacity of Alsager Highfields Community Primary School, Scholar Green Primary School and Cranberry Primary School mean that by January 2013, there are anticipated to be 169 spare places in this group of schools.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Church Lawton Primary School is a mixed gender community primary school which provides places for 105 pupils aged 4 – 11. Actual and forecast pupil numbers are as follows:

| Actual | Actual | Actual | Forecast | Forecast | Forecast | Forecast |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Jan 2007 | Sept 2008 | Jan 2009 | Jan 2010 | Jan 2011 | Jan 2012 | Jan 2011 |
| 67 | 68 | 46 | 66* | 63* | 59* | 58* |

* Forecast based on January 2008 actual numbers. Forecast figures for January 2009 were then 62. The loss of pupils from the school in the last 12

months means that these current forecasts are likely to be correspondingly too high.

In January 2009 there were 11 nursery pupils at the school's 52 place nursery unit. There are sufficient pre-school places in the area to provide places for parents seeking admission to nursery or other pre-school provision in September 2009.

In January 2009 there was one pupil at the school with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and one pupil receiving Individual Pupil Funding. This individual support will continue at receiving schools through Local Authority delegated funding.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or further education colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- (a) any interim arrangements;
- (b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- (c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

Please refer to response to Question 8.

Details of current and forecast pupil numbers, capacities, admission numbers and number of year groups at all other primary schools within a radius of two miles are attached at **Annex D**.

Parents will be asked to express their preferences for places at alternative schools, and any parents whose preferences cannot be met will be able to appeal.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

Please refer to response to Question 8.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

No permanent arrangements for community use in the form of leases to outside agencies are in existence. However the school is used for a range of activities such as the meeting place for senior citizens, for the village fete committee and for 5 a-side football competitions. One other venue for public use – Lawton Memorial Hall – exists in Church Lawton, but is considered significantly inferior to the school.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

The school has also developed a range of extended services and it is considered highly likely that these would be available on a comparable basis at alternative schools.

Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

It is anticipated that the great majority of pupils displaced as a result of the closure of Church Lawton Primary School will live within statutory walking distance of their new school(s). However, applications for school transport to alternative schools will be considered on the basis of the Local Authority's published School Transport Policy. For those parents of Year 5 children taking up the offer of a places at Cranberry Primary School, the distance between Cranberry Primary School and Church Lawton Primary School is 1.96 miles.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

See response to question 15

Related Proposals.

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the local education authority or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

The proposals are not related to any other proposals which have been, or are about to be published.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered—

- (a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport to other schools;
- (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006.

| |
|----------------|
| Not applicable |
|----------------|

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out—

- (a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- (b) the body's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- (c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

| |
|----------------|
| Not applicable |
|----------------|

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

| |
|---|
| Of the Cheshire schools within two miles of Church Lawton and likely to receive pupils if it closes, four are considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted (Grade 1) in their most recent inspection, one 'good with outstanding features' (Grade 2), and one is newly amalgamated and is yet to be inspected. Church Lawton was judged 'satisfactory' (Grade 3) in its most recent inspection. |
|---|

Progress made by children with learning difficulties and disabilities is considered superior to that at Church Lawton at the five schools from within this group for which a current Ofsted inspection report is available.

Both the general provision of education and the progress that can be expected for children with special needs will be improved.

CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHESTER: PROPOSAL TO
DISCONTINUE CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHESHIRE

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHESTER CH1 1SQ intends to discontinue Church Lawton Primary School, Cherry Tree Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3EL on 31 August 2009.

Parents of pupils attending Church Lawton Primary School at the time of closure will be offered places at other local schools, in accordance with parents' preferences, subject to the availability of places and with a right of appeal should it not be possible to meet any parent's preference(s). These schools include: Alsager Highfields Community Primary School, Fairview Avenue, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2NW; Cranberry Primary School, Cranberry Lane, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2LE; Excalibur Primary School, Ivy Lane, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2RQ; Pikemere School, Pikemere Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2SW; Rode Heath Primary School, Heath Avenue, Rode Heath, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3RY; Scholar Green Primary School, Congleton Road, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3HF.

The standard, quality and range of educational provision for children with Special Educational Needs will be improved. Children with Statements of Educational Need or additional support will have this support maintained, and they and other children will have access to an improved range of learning opportunities in more sustainable educational settings.

It is anticipated that the great majority of pupils displaced as a result of the closure of Church Lawton Primary School will live within statutory walking distance of their new school(s). However, applications for school transport to alternative schools will be considered on the basis of the Local Authority's published School Transport Policy, which is available on request from County Hall, Chester and published in the Local Authority's Guide for Parents and Carers and on the County Council's School Transport website at www.cheshire.gov.uk/transport/School+Transport. The proposed closure is not expected to lead to any significant increase in the current level of car use.

Formal statutory consultations were held with staff, governors, parents and interested members of the community on 9th December 2009, and with other statutory consultees, in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance.

In the opinion of the County Council, the proposals are not related to any other proposals which have been, or are about to be published.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Transforming Learning Communities Team, Cheshire County Council, Children's Services, Room 417, County Hall, Chester, CH1 1SQ, and on the County Council's website at www.cheshire.gov.uk.

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the County Solicitor, County Hall, Chester, CH1 1SF.

Signed: G L Budd, County Solicitor

Publication Date: 19 March 2009

Explanatory Notes

1. It is proposed that playing fields at the Church Lawton Primary School site will cease to be used as such, although no proposals have been formulated at present for alternative use of the premises and site;
2. Cheshire County Council will be replaced by Cheshire East Council on 1 April 2009. The new authority will receive all the responses sent to the above address and will take over the role of Cheshire County Council in this process by operation of law. Arrangements

have been made to ensure that mail to the County Solicitor will be collected and passed to Cheshire East Council. Likewise, requests for the proposal to the Transforming Learning Communities Team will still be administered from the address given.

Full Proposal Annex A**APPENDIX 1**

MEETING : SCHOOL PLANNING SELECT PANEL
DATE : 26 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF : The Principal Manager – Planning and Development
 Contact : Bryan Slater, Room 422, County Hall, Chester
 Officer Tel: 01244 973384
 Email: bryan.slater@cheshire.gov.uk

TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES (TLC) REPORT OF THE OPTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE LOCALITY REVIEW FOR ALSAGER, CONGLETON, SANDBACH AND HOLMES CHAPEL

INTRODUCTION

1 This Discussion Paper sets out the outcomes of the formal public consultations held on the options identified by the Locality Review of this area and makes recommendations for further actions.

BACKGROUND

2 At its meeting on 1 September 2008, the Panel received a Discussion Paper on the outcomes of informal consultations. It made recommendations to the Children's Services Executive that it authorise public consultations on a number of options.

3 These recommendations were accepted by the Children's Services Executive on 13 October 2008, with expanded wording of the recommendations relating to:

- Offley Primary School;
- the undertaking of a review of the operation of catchment areas in Congleton;
- actions required of officers on some of the original recommendations.

The full list of decisions of the Children's Services Executive on 13 October is set out in the attached **Appendix 1**.

4 The decision relating to the possible closure of Church Lawton Primary School was subsequently called in for consideration by the Children's Services Scrutiny Select Committee on 24 November 2008. The Committee made the following decision.

"That the Lead Member for Children's Services be advised to defer a decision on Church Lawton Primary School and the school be given a period of two years in which to turn itself around before a decision is made on its future".

5 This advice was considered by the Children's Services Executive on 27 November, when the original decision made at the meeting on 13 October was confirmed.

6 As a result, formal consultations on proposals relating to the closure of Church Lawton Primary School have been held between 1 December 2008 and 23 January 2009, with a "drop in" session for governors, parents and staff being held at the school on 9 December 2008. A consultation document was issued.

7 Formal consultations on proposals relating to

- (i) Offley Primary School
- (ii) Sandbach Community Primary School
- (iii) Daven Primary School
- (iv) Cranberry Primary School

have been held during the same period, with "drop-in" sessions held for Offley/ Sandbach on 13 January 2009 and for Cranberry Primary School on 20 January 2009. Consultation documents were issued in each case.

8 A report on the possibility of establishing a centre to support 14 -19 education at the Offley Primary School site was received by the Panel on 1 December 2008. Its recommendation that this possibility be no longer pursued was accepted by the Children's Services Executive on 15 December 2008.

9 **Appendix 2** provides a summary of the feed-back obtained through the informal "drop-in" sessions for Church Lawton Primary and for Sandbach Community & Offley Primaries, through meetings with staff and Governors for Church Lawton Primary, and also summarises the issues raised in response forms, Emails and letters for all the consultations which had been received up to 14 January 2009. All the response forms, Emails and letters received up to the end of the consultation period will be available for inspection by members in each of the Members' Group Rooms from 12 noon onwards prior to this meeting of the Panel, and will also be available for reference during the course of this Panel meeting. An oral summary of the feedback received after 14 January will be provided at the meeting of the Panel.

10 Members are encouraged to read the feed-back documentation to gain an overview of the range of perspectives expressed and the nature of the concerns raised.

11 The Panel is invited to make recommendations:

- a) to the Council on 12 February 2008 as to whether it should support, and to the Children's Services Executive on 17 February as to whether it should authorise, the publication of statutory notices proposing the closure of Church Lawton Primary School in September 2009, and
- b) to the Children's Services Executive on 17 February as to whether it should agree the proposed changes at Offley, Sandbach Community, Daven and Cranberry Primary Schools.

- 12 This paper is being made available to the Cheshire East Shadow Cabinet, which meets on 3 February. Any advice from that body will be reported to the Council and Children's Services Executive.

DISCUSSION

A. Church Lawton Primary School

13 Reports of the meeting with staff and Governors of Church Lawton Primary School are included in Appendix 2, but since these meetings were not public, the reports will not be included in the publicly available documents which will subsequently be presented to Council and to Children's Services Executive.

14 The views expressed at the parents' drop-in session, in the response forms, Emails and letters were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed closure, and the most frequently made points were:

- that the Local Authority has not responded as it should to the Action Committee's alternative proposals;
- that the school should be retained because of its importance to the community;
- that the consultation process was flawed in some way, or its outcome pre-determined;
- that Church Lawton Primary School is a good school, providing well for the children there;
- that there will be difficulty in finding alternative schools for the children;
- that alternatives to closure should have been pursued.

15 Statutory Guidance sets out the factors to be considered by decision makers when they take a decision on proposals to close a school. Formal impact assessments will therefore be presented when any statutory notices are determined. For Church Lawton, these formal assessments will need to cover:

- standards and school improvement
- special educational needs (SEN) provision

16 In addition, although the provision in the Guidance relating to schools designated as "rural" do not apply to Church Lawton, some of the factors which must be considered in such cases are relevant to it – in particular considerations concerning community impact, and alternatives to closure. These are therefore included in the following overview of the range of relevant factors for consideration in the case of Church Lawton.

Standards: Standards at the school are considered satisfactory, and the grading of the most recent Ofsted inspection was also 'satisfactory.' There is however an ongoing educational challenge associated with a very small primary school - currently children are taught in three classes, one of which covers four year groups. Of the seven schools within two miles and therefore most likely to receive children from Church Lawton, should closure go ahead, four are considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted, and two 'good with outstanding features.' One is newly amalgamated and has not yet been inspected.

Special Educational Needs: The school is not exceptional, either in the incidence of special educational needs (although this was judged 'above average' in the 2006 Ofsted inspection), or in its expertise in meeting the needs of these pupils. All children with special needs would have these fully met at any of the likely receiving schools, should closure go ahead.

Community impact: This factor is considered of great importance to many respondents to the consultation. No permanent arrangements for community use in the form of leases to outside agencies are in existence. However the school is used for a range of activities such as the meeting place for senior citizens, for the village fete committee and for 5 a-side football competitions. One other venue for public use – Lawton Memorial Hall – exists in Church Lawton, but is considered significantly inferior to the school.

The school has also developed a range of extended services and it is considered highly likely that these would be available on a comparable basis at alternative schools.

No race equality, sex or disability discrimination issues are believed to arise from these proposals.

Alternatives to closure: The possibility of examining federation with another school/schools has not been broached formally in discussions with the school Governors, however informal responses have indicated a strong aversion to such a notion.

The Need for Places: There are seven schools within a two mile radius of Church Lawton Primary School. These currently have significant levels of surplus places (287 in January 2008), and this position remains the case for the period for which future numbers can be projected. Assuming all the other proposed changes resulting from the TLC review have taken place, current projections show 149 spare places at these schools by 2013 – when Church Lawton is projected to have 58 on roll if it remains open. There is, therefore, a considerable amount of capacity which could accommodate the pupils currently at Church Lawton Primary, or expected to attend there in the future, were it to close. It should be noted that of the pupils currently attending Church Lawton, 29.4% live in the County of Staffordshire, who have stated that they would expect to be able to offer alternative places in the event of closure. Although Church Lawton has its own maintained Nursery Unit, this had 7 pupils registered in October 2008 – and 45 vacancies. Alternative provision for these pre school pupils is also readily available locally.

B Offley Primary School/Sandbach Community Primary School

17 The views expressed at the parents' drop-in session, in response forms Emails and letters are summarised below:

- have all housing projects been taken into account?
- there was a strong level of support for both parts of the proposal;
- others expressed concern that 315 was too small for Offley Primary and stated that Sandbach Community Primary should close;

- there was strong opposition to the idea of a 14 -19 centre, and a strong desire to have it confirmed that this idea had been dropped;
- some concern was expressed about the sustainability of Sandbach Community Primary with 105 children;
- parents of children at Offley Primary were keen to what would now happen to the released accommodation;
- all eighteen response forms from parents of children at Sandbach Community Primary School expressed support for the proposals relating to that school.

C Cranberry Primary School

18 The views expressed at the parents' drop-in session, in response forms, Emails and letters will be summarised orally at the meeting of the Panel.

D Daven Primary School

19 The views expressed, in response forms, Emails and letters will be summarised orally at the meeting of the Panel.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A Church Lawton Primary School

20 Most of the school's budget is based on its pupil numbers which, in turn, define the number of staff and the resources available to the school. Because the Fair Funding formula provides additional support for small schools, the budget per pupil at Church Lawton Primary School is £4,642 – which is 52% more than the Cheshire average. Based on the current funding formula and 2008/9 values, if the school were to close there would be a saving of approximately £99,000 in a full year, which would be distributed within the Dedicated Schools Budget. The first year saving would be proportionately less, and offset by any additional costs arising from redundancy or early retirement.

21 If closure goes ahead, it may be possible to follow previous Cheshire practice in offering a place for each child at one named alternative local school. Failing this, consideration should be given to Year 5 pupils, who have one further year of primary education starting in September 2009. The current Year 5 at Church Lawton numbers 11 pupils. If the school closes, it may be possible to explore an arrangement to keep this group (or as many whose parents wished this) together in a local school for their final primary year, alongside any younger siblings. The cost of doing either of these things would further reduce the first year savings.

22 The school site is in the ownership of the County Council, and consideration would need to be given to the use of the site in the event of closure.

23 If the school closes, an individual assessment will be needed to determine whether or not children will need to have transport provided to their alternative school.

B Offley Primary School/Sandbach Community Primary School, Cranberry Primary School and Daven Primary School

24 In the case of each of the schools, there are two potential cost elements – the capital cost of adaptations to the buildings, and any ongoing revenue implications of having schools which have lower maximum pupil numbers than currently operating in a different set of physical premises.

25 Capital costs will be calculated in the light of the feasibility studies underway for each school, and approval will be sought from Cheshire East Council for these to be met from the Primary Capital Programme (PCP) allocation for 2009 – 11.

26 Because Cheshire's Fair Funding formula provides additional support for smaller schools, costs per pupil will generally rise as schools become smaller. This will be offset by savings resulting from more efficient usage of buildings than if the schools continued to shrink in size while using all their current accommodation.

PREMISES ISSUES

27 In order to ensure the long-term availability of the accommodation housing the Children's Centre already operating at Daven Primary School and that proposed at Sandbach Community Primary School, it is

RECOMMENDED;

That the Panel recommends to the Children's Services Executive on 17 February that the relevant parts of the buildings at Daven Primary School and at Sandbach Community Primary School be permanently removed from the premises of the school and brought under the direct control of the Local Authority.

CONCLUSION

A Church Lawton Primary School

28 Church Lawton Primary School was built to accommodate 210 pupils, has a current capacity of 105 and had 46 pupils on roll in September, together with 6 part time Nursery pupils. Numbers are expected to continue to fall. The school currently operates with three mixed age classes, with the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils taught in the same class. Standards are currently satisfactory. A very low proportion of children from its own catchment area attend the school and a significant proportion of children who do attend the school live outside Cheshire.

29 The cost per pupil is very high. There are alternative places at the seven schools which are within a two mile radius.

30 The school is well regarded by parents whose children attend it, and is seen as a caring environment. 21% of children on roll in January 2008 were on the SEN register, but this is not exceptional and the school is not regarded by the Local Authority as having a particular expertise in special education. Only one child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and one pupil receives Individual Pupil Funding. All of the children at the school on the special needs register would have their needs fully met at alternative local schools.

31 Community groups do use the school. However, there is alternative local accommodation, albeit not considered ideal.

32 Retention or closure requires a judgement to be made as to whether the arguments put forward for retention justify the high costs that would be involved to retain a very small school that will inevitably face significant educational challenges, in a situation where there is a surplus of school places available within two miles of Church Lawton Primary School.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Panel decides whether to recommend to Council on 12 February, and the Children's Services Executive on 17 February to authorise, the publication of statutory notices proposing closure of Church Lawton Primary School in Summer 2009.

B Sandbach Community Primary School/Offley Primary School

33 The proposed reduction in net capacities of the two schools from September 2010 provides the required number of primary school places for Sandbach, and gives each school a net capacity closely following projected future pupil numbers. Care has been taken to take into account the future effect of all known housing developments in the town.

34 The proposals for the alternative use of released accommodation would allow for the establishment of Sandbach's Children's Centre in the buildings at Sandbach Community Primary, the continued use of most of the former Infant school building at a remodelled Offley Primary School, and the possibility of the development of additional services for children within those premises. The alternative use of buildings at Offley will not prejudice their future use to provide school places, should this be needed.

RECOMMENDED

That the Panel recommends that the Children's Services Executive on 17 February authorise the changes proposed in the net capacities of Sandbach Community Primary School (from 210 to 105) and of Offley Primary School (from 420 to 315) from September 2010.

C Cranberry Primary School

35 The proposed reduction in the net capacity of Cranberry Primary School provides, in association with other proposed changes, for an appropriate reduction in pupil places in the Alsager area, and gives the school a net capacity in line with projected future pupil numbers.

36 The proposals for the alternative use of the accommodation at Cranberry will allow a cost effective use of existing facilities within a remodelled Cranberry Primary School, and for the location of integrated Children's Services within the released accommodation. The alternative use of buildings at Cranberry will not prejudice their future use to provide school places, should this be needed.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Panel recommends that the Children's Services Executive on 17 February authorise the change proposed in the net capacity of Cranberry Primary School (from 315 to 210) from September 2010.

D Daven Primary School

37 The proposed reduction in the net capacity of Daven Primary School provides, in association with other proposed changes, for an appropriate reduction in pupil places in the Congleton area, and gives the school a net capacity in line with projected future pupil numbers.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Panel recommends that the Children's Services Executive on 17 February authorise the change proposed in the net capacity of Daven Primary School (from 420 to 210) from September 2009.

| |
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| This report has been prepared in accordance with the Checklist for Members Reports and relevant matters have been included. |
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| | |
|---------------|--|
| Local Members | <i>Cllr M Asquith, Cllr R Fletcher, Cllr S Wilkinson, Cllr K Oliver, Cllr P Mason, Cllr W Wolstencroft, Cllr D Brickhill, Cllr N Price, Cllr R Giltrap</i> |
|---------------|--|

Appendix 1

ALSAGER, CONGLETON, SANDBACH & HOLMES CHAPEL TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES (TLC) REVIEW

DECISION OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES EXECUTIVE ON 13 OCTOBER 2008

On 13 October the Children's Services Executive considered the outcome of the informal consultations held in June - August on the emerging options for the Alsager, Congleton, Sandbach & Holmes Chapel Transforming Learning Communities Review, and approved the following recommendations:

- (1) statutory public consultation be authorised on the possible closure of Church Lawton Primary School with effect from September 2009;
- (2) a) consultation be authorised on the reduction in the net capacity of Offley Primary School to 315 places located in a single building;

b) officers be authorised to investigate the possibility of using the premises of the former Offley Primary School as a centre for delivering 14-19 education for the locality, and to report to a future meeting of the School Planning Select Panel covering
 - (i) the potential use of such a facility
 - (ii) the appropriateness of its location adjacent to Offley Primary School
 - (iii) the physical arrangements that would be appropriate for such a facility including access and transport arrangements
 - (iv) in the event of the recommendation of officers being that the establishment of a 14-19 Centre should not proceed, alternative uses for the former Infant School building
- c) authorise consultation on the reduction in the net capacity of Sandbach Primary School to 105 places with the Children's Centre for Sandbach and co-located Children's Services to be based in the released accommodation.

Note: the above proposals would not require the publication of public notices but could be decided by a future meeting of the Children's Services Executive in the New Year; and that any consequential changes in Admission Arrangements (PANs) would need to be consulted upon as part of the statutory consultation on changes to admission arrangements for September 2010.

- (3) consultation be authorised on the reduction in the published admission number for Daven Primary School from 60 to 30 to give a capacity of 210 with effect from September 2009, with the released accommodation becoming available as a centre to support multi-agency working in the Congleton locality;

Note: the above proposal would not require the publication of public notices but could be decided by a future meeting of the Children's Services Executive in the New Year; and that any consequential changes in Admission Arrangements (PANs) would need to be consulted upon as part of the statutory consultation on changes to admission arrangements for September 2010.

- (4) Officers be asked to undertake a review of the operation of primary school catchment areas in and around Congleton;
- (5) Officers be authorised to invite the Chester Diocesan Board of Education and the Governors of Chelford CE Primary School to develop proposals for the revision of the school's net capacity to 60 by re-designation of the use of one classroom in such a way that future potential use of the building for an expanded Chelford CE Primary School, should this become warranted, is not compromised;
- (6) Officers be authorised to submit to the Cheshire East Shadow Council information relating to primary pupil numbers in the Holmes Chapel area for future review and possible proposals;
- (7) Officers be asked to develop proposals, in conjunction with Governing Bodies, in respect of the group of schools identified below for potential Federations:

Chelford CE VC, Peover Superior Endowed, Lower Peover CE VA, Marton and District CE VA, Brereton CE VA, Smallwood CEVC, Astbury ST Mary CE VA, Scholar Green, Woodcocks Well CE VC and Goostrey Community;
- (8) statutory consultation be authorised as part of the admission arrangements for September 2010 in respect of changes in Published Admission Numbers:

| School | Current Net Capacity | Proposed Net Capacity | Current PAN | Proposed PAN |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Haslington Primary | 329 | 280 | 50 | 40 |
| Brereton CE | 150 | 147 | 30 | 21 |
| Sandbach Heath | | | | |
| St Johns | 150 | 180 | 30 | 25 |
| Marlfields Primary | 180 | 210 | 30 | 30 |
| Buglawton Primary | 178 | 210 | 30 | 30 |
| Astbury St Mary CE | 112 | 126 | 16 | 18 |
| Scholar Green | 210 | 180 | 30 | 25 |
| Alsager Highfields | 233 | 263 | 40 | 37 |
| Smallwood CE | 112 | 126 | 16 | 18 |
| Woodcocks' Well CE | 103 | 89 | 15 | 12 |
| Black Firs Primary | 240 | 270 | 40 | 38 |
| TOTAL | 1997 | 2051 | 327 | 294 |

- (9) consultation be authorised as part of the admission arrangements for September 2010 on reduction in the published admission number for Cranberry Primary School from 45 to 30; and

- (10) Officers be asked to develop proposals for the use of the released former Cranberry Infant School building which retains it for use as a nursery and which enable the development of co-located Children's Services in such a way that future potential use of the building for an expanded Cranberry Primary School, should this become warranted, is not compromised.

Reasons for Decision: The recommendation will give effect to the advice of the School Planning Select Panel on 1 September 2008 in relation to each of the schools described in the recommendations, in line with the Council's approach of reviewing school provision on a locality basis through the Transforming Learning Communities process.

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Full Proposal Annex A**APPENDIX 5**

MEETING : COUNCIL
DATE : 12 FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF : ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Contact : Bryan Slater, Lead Officer, Room 422, County Hall, Chester
Officer Tel: 01244 973384
Email: bryan.slater@cheshire.gov.uk

**TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES: CHANGES TO SCHOOLS IN
ALSAGER, CONGLETON, SANDBACH & HOLMES CHAPEL: PROPOSED
CLOSURE OF CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

INTRODUCTION

1 The attachments to this Decision Paper were considered by the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009. This follows formal public consultations, held in December 2008 and January 2009, on the proposed closure of Church Lawton Primary School arising from the Transforming Learning Communities (TLC) locality review.

2 The material considered by the Panel which relates to Church Lawton Primary School is as follows:

- Discussion Paper considered by the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009, specifically:

Discussion: Paragraphs 13 – 16

Financial issues: Paragraphs 20 – 23

Conclusions and recommendations: Paragraphs 28 – 32

- Summary of responses to the formal consultations: Appendix 2A, together with supplementary sheet;
- Summary of consultation meetings with Staff and with Governors: Appendices 2B & 2C;

3 The Governors' two – year recovery plan, which was submitted to the Lead Member for Children's Services was also considered by the Panel. This also attached.

4 The recommendation of the Panel was as follows:

'that the Council on 12 February 2009 support, and that the Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009 authorise the publication of statutory notices

proposing the closure of Church Lawton Primary School in Summer 2009, subject to any further developments concerning the school's recovery plan'.

5 The attached letter to the Chairman of Governors explained the advice which the Panel had received and which had led to its recommendation. It also explained that, should there be any further development of the Governors' recovery plan, a revised version could be made available to this meeting of the Council, or to the meeting of the Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009.

6 If a revised version of the Governors' two – year recovery plan is received, it will be included in the attached papers.

7 Council has the opportunity to comment, if it wishes, on the Panel's recommendation before the matter is considered by the Children's Services Executive on 17 February 2009.

RECOMMENDED:

That Council considers the Discussion Paper and associated documents presented to the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009 regarding Church Lawton Primary School, together with any further development of the Governors' recovery plan, and considers the recommendation made by the Panel to the Children's Services Executive.

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| This Decision Paper has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines for Members' reports, and relevant matters have been included. |
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| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Local Member | County Councillor Roy Giltrap |
| Background Documents | Not applicable |
| Available for inspection at | Not applicable |

Full Proposal Annex A**DECISION PAPER 5**

MEETING : CHILDREN'S SERVICES EXECUTIVE
DATE : 17 FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF : THE PRINCIPAL MANAGER – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Contact : Bryan Slater, Lead Officer
Officer Tel No: (01244) 973384
Email: Bryan.Slater@cheshire.gov.uk

TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES: REPORT ON THE OPTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE LOCALITY REVIEW FOR ALSAGER, CONGLETON, SANDBACH AND HOLMES CHAPEL – OUTCOMES OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1 The attached Discussion Paper and Appendices were considered by the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009, and were supplemented by an oral report and tabled summary of responses received during the final stages of the formal consultations. All this material is included in the attachments. (Appendices 1-3)

2 For the sake of clarity, a summary of all responses received during the whole consultation period in relation to each of the formal proposals is also appended as follows:

- Annex 1: Church Lawton Primary School – proposed closure
- Annex 2: Offley Primary School – proposed reduction in net capacity
- Annex 3: Sandbach Community Primary School – proposed reduction in net capacity
- Annex 4: Cranberry Primary School – proposed reduction in net capacity
- Annex 5: Daven Primary School – proposed reduction in net capacity

3 The recommendations of the School Planning Select Panel are set out in the attached Appendix (Appendix 4).

4 The recommendation of the Panel in respect of the proposed closure of Church Lawton Primary School was referred to Council on 12 February 2009. The paper received by Council is also attached as an Appendix (Appendix 5). Any comments made by Council in response to the recommendation contained in that paper will be reported to the Children's Services Executive.

5 Also attached is the revised version of the recovery plan submitted by the Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary which was included in the papers received by Council (Appendix 6).

6 If any further revision of the Governors' recovery plan is received it will be forwarded.

7 The following commentary of the Governor's recovery plan is based on the revised version included in the papers for Council:

(i) General

Following the meeting of the School Planning Select Panel, a letter was sent to the Chairman of Governors confirming the oral advice of officers to the Panel that the plan as then submitted:

- gave insufficient evidence of how the plan would achieve its various aims – such as, but not exclusively, achieving the necessary financial position, or increased pupil numbers – and that it contained no detail of the school's current baseline position, or of overall or intermediate improvement targets in relation to the range of issues it seeks to address;
- did not show how if, even if successful, the plan would impact on the broader picture of the provision of school places in the light of projected overall pupil numbers in the Alsager vicinity which was faced by the local authority.

The revised plan forwarded for consideration at the meeting of the County Council has been added to in a number of areas.

These additions do not appear to have provided convincing evidence covering the deficiencies identified in the earlier version. Taking the whole plan in its current form, the following comments are offered:

(ii) Rationale

This section correctly identifies the key issues facing the school, but does not provide convincing answers to them. If the school were to close in summer 2009, year 6 will have transferred to secondary school. Year 5 is the only year-group where alternative placements may prove at all difficult, but the local authority would ensure each child was so placed. The table showing how pupil numbers would be built up to 75 by 2010/11 is aspirational, and shows that this would simply be at the expense of other local schools.

(iii) Leadership and Management

These roles and responsibilities are those that might be expected to be in place in any well managed school.

(iv) Marketing

The detail provided does not indicate the link between the various actions proposed and their anticipated effect.

(v) Use of premises

The various initiatives may increase the alternative uses of the school buildings, although the current audit of extended services for the area does not appear to support the need to do so. In any event, alternative use does not provide a rationale for the retention of the school.

(vi) EIP and Trust Status Initiatives

The school's view of its role with regard to SEN would not be recognised across the EIP partnership, and the effect of any move towards Trust status does not have any clear implications regarding the viability or sustainability of the school.

(vii) Local Authority

The plan does not give sufficient detail regarding the relationship between future pupil numbers, staffing of the school and the school's finances to enable any accurate budgetary scenarios to be drawn up. A significant and sustained increase in pupil numbers is required to bring the budget back into balance.

8 In respect of the proposed closure of Church Lawton Primary School, the critical issue for the Authority remains the significant over-supply of primary school places in the locality. There is no evidence, either from pupil forecasts or from the recovery plan produced by the school Governors, that places are needed at the school. If it remains open, Church Lawton would remain a very small school with attendant sustainability and financial issues. Alternative places are available at good schools in close proximity to Church Lawton.

9 In respect of proposals for other schools, no fundamental concerns have been raised during consultations.

RECOMMENDED: That the Lead Member for Children's Services approve:

- (1) that in relation to the establishment of Children's Centres at the two schools, the relevant parts of the buildings at Daven Primary School and Sandbach Community Primary School be permanently removed from the premises of the school and brought under the direct control of the Local Authority with effect from 1 September 2009 (or such alternative date as may be agreed in consultation with the relevant School Governing Body);**
- (2) that statutory notices be published proposing closure of Church Lawton Primary School in summer 2009;**
- (3) that the net capacity of Sandbach Community Primary School be reduced from 210 to 105, and the net capacity of Offley Primary School be reduced from 420 to 315, both to take effect from September 2010;**
- (4) that the net capacity of Cranberry Primary School be reduced from 315 to 210 from September 2010;**

- (5) that the net capacity of Daven Primary School be reduced from 420 to 210 from September 2009.**

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation will give effect to the advice of the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009 in relation to each of the schools described in the recommendations, in line with the Council's approach of reviewing school provision on a locality basis through the Transforming Learning Communities process.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Checklist for Members Reports and relevant matters have been included.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Local Members | Councillors R Fletcher, R Giltrap, N Price and W Wolstencroft |
| Background Documents | None |
| Available for Inspection at | None |

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Appendix 6

Full Proposal Annex A

***Church Lawton
Primary School***

***Headteacher:
D.Ian McKay B.Ed***

***Chairman of Governors
R. J. Farrell M.Sc., B.Sc.***



***Cherry Tree Avenue
Church Lawton
ST7 3EL***

***Tel: (01270) 872547
Fax: (01270) 882673***

22nd January 2009

Councillor D. Rowlands
Children's Services Director
Cheshire County Council
County Hall
Chester
CH1 1SQ

Dear Councillor Rowlands

This letter replaces the previous letter handed to you at the meeting at Church Lawton Primary School on 20th January 2009. A revised Two-Year Recovery Plan is attached, which takes into account issues raised at the above meeting, we would particularly like to draw your attention to the matter of Federation.

We the governors for Church Lawton Primary School ask you to give serious consideration to the case for keeping Church Lawton Primary School open. We submit the enclosed Two-Year Recovery Plan which we believe forms the basis for an upswing in pupils numbers within the school and also addresses how the premises may be used more effectively.

PUPIL NUMBERS

The Recovery Plan outlines what we believe is a realistic and achievable objective of pupil numbers within a two year period. The Plan describes procedures which if introduced will, we believe, enable the pupil number target to be met. Once an increase in numbers is observed confidence in the School will begin to emerge and the School will then be able to continue to flourish. We also believe that Federation with other schools would act as a boost to pupil numbers and we have started to actively pursue this option.

COMMUNITY

It is important to recognise that Church Lawton is a village community in its own right and as such is not part of the larger neighbouring community of Alsager. The original Church Lawton Gate Primary School was established in 1843 and in the past as many as three schools have served the Church Lawton community. Several years ago we lost our Youth & Community Centre and since that time the current School has acted as the hub of the community hosting such events as the Village Fete, Village Football Tournament and has provided facilities to act as a local polling station. Village life as we know it in this country

needs a focal point to ensure community cohesion. The closure of the school would deprive the village of this community cohesion.

SITE AND BUILDINGS

The School site occupies a pleasant rural position, with access to nearby local resources such as the Trent and Mersey Canal, fields and the local church. The buildings are in very good condition and have been well maintained and resourced. The School provides an ideally learning environment. It is difficult to imagine what sort of alternative use could be found for such a site should the decision be taken to close the School.

FINANCE

We appreciate that keeping a small school open has financial implications and that there are numerous small schools in Cheshire where it is more expensive to educate children. However set against this fact is that a significant number of parents send their children to this school because of what this school offers. The particular needs of our pupils are best met in smaller class sizes, this is the moral and humanitarian case against the financial case. However with appropriate financial support from the Local Authority we believe the implementation of the Two-Year Recovery Plan will begin to increase pupil numbers and lessen the financial burden.

We trust that you will give careful consideration to the points we have raised and we look forward to been given the opportunity to turn the School around through the introduction of our Recovery Plan.

Yours sincerely

Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary School.

Full Proposal Annex A***Church Lawton
Primary School***

Headteacher:
D.Ian McKay B.Ed

Chairman of Governors
R. J. Farrell M.Sc., B.Sc.



Cherry Tree Avenue
Church Lawton
ST7 3EL

Tel: (01270) 872547
Fax: (01270) 882673

**TLC FORMAL CONSULTATION
TWO-YEAR RECOVERY PLAN****Rationale:**

- that the School addresses within an initial two year period the situation of a falling role scenario by setting out a recovery plan based on realistic increases in pupil numbers
- that the School addresses the uses that its premises could be put to by building on its role as a vital hub within the Church Lawton community and making a substantial contribution to community cohesion in line with the TLC initiative
- that those organisations which support the School should make a recognised and coordinated contribution to the success of the School, its pupils and its families and that income generation is explored through community use enterprises
- that the school addresses the Financial issues it faces by moving towards sharing resources utilising Federation opportunities and investigating Trust Status within the Alsager Schools initiative
- That adoption of this two-year plan would alleviate the placement of pupils where currently there is little spare capacity in years 5 and 6 in local Alsager primary schools.

This Two-Year Recovery Plan has been drawn up by the Governing Body of Church Lawton Primary School and is based on the “Alternative Proposal” previously submitted during the Informal Consultation period and the recommendation of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee made on 24th November 2008.

The coordination of these initiatives will fail to happen if the School is closed.

| CURRENT & ESTIMATED PUPIL DISTRIBUTIONS FOLLOWING ADOPTION OF THIS PLAN | | | | | | |
|---|---------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | Current | | 2009/2010 | | 2010/2011 | |
| Area | Numbers | % | Numbers | % | Numbers | & |
| Church Lawton | 8 | 17.5 | 16 | 26.0 | 22 | 29.5 |
| Alsager | 15 | 32.5 | 13 | 22.5 | 12 | 17.0 |
| Scholar Green | 9 | 19.5 | 8 | 15.5 | 6 | 8.0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| Out of County | 14 | 30.5 | 21 | 36.0 | 34 | 45.5 |
| Total | 46 | 100 | 58 | 100 | 74 | 100 |

A recent survey revealed that 28% of parents who removed their pupils from the school as a result of the TLC process would return their children to the school in the event of the school remaining open for at least another two years.

The current number of year 6 pupils due to leave the school this summer is low – 6 pupils. School Nursery Unit currently has 14 pupils as possible intake. The successful targeting of Out of County pupils will continue through close work with two local outside nurseries who provide care for parents from Staffordshire but who work in Cheshire.

Target new build areas on Church Lawton/Alsager boundary (two awaiting Planning approval close to Church Lawton Primary School).

PURPOSE OF THE RECOVERY PLAN

To offer proposals that will enable the School, within a two-year period, to reach pupil numbers within $\pm 10\%$ of the revised planned capacity of 75 pupils suggested in the above “Alternative Proposal”.

To monitor progress the one-year milestone is 60 pupils $\pm 10\%$.

RECOVERY PLAN ACTIONS

| 1. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| Development Area | Action Planned | Timescales | Contact |
| Senior Management Team | Development of a clear ethos based on the following main criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of education; • Caring nature of the School; • Marketing to raise pupil numbers and the profile of the School. | Summer Term | S.M.T. |
| Roles | Named Staff/Governors/Parent will have identified marketing areas of responsibility (eg) Website, media, leaflets, visits. | Summer Term | S.M.T. |
| Performance Management | The monitoring of staff in their above roles will form part of the PM process. | 2009/2010 School Year | PM Assessors |

| 2. MARKETING | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Development Area | Action Planned | Timescales | Contact |
| Website | Develop New Website Tool with Professional Developers Development of website contents to ensure it becomes an active recruitment tool with input from numerous stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils – School Council, governors, friends of the School. Need to consider how prospective parents search for schools to ensure an early 'hit'. | Complete End January 2009 End January 2009 | M. Avis |
| Media | Utilisation of local press to enhance parental and prospective parent awareness. Leaflet circulation in the following areas: estate agents, houses for sale, libraries, medical centres etc. Continue to develop new Prospectus to standards set by new website. Personal visits to target homes and nurseries. | On Going End March 2009 End March 2009 | S.M.T. |
| Media | Parental recommendations to prospective parents. The 30.5% of parents from 'out of County' provides a foothold to attract children from these areas. Details and prospectus to be left. Use of Open Days. School events to attract the younger generation, e.g. concerts, sport. | Throughout 2009/2010. | S.M.T. |
| Signage to School | Contact Council to arrange Signs to school from Main Roads are marked as Church Lawton Primary School. New Sign outside School to clearly state Website address. | For Autumn Term | P & F Governing Body |

| 3. USE OF PREMISES | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| Development Area | Action Planned | Timescales | Contact |
| Wrap Around Care | Development of wrap around care with the Local Providers such as Sally Anna's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after school club • holiday club. | Target to start offering in Autumn Term | S.M.T. |
| Parents and Toddlers Club | Already successfully implemented. To be marketed further. | Complete | Change Team |
| Nursery | Investigate methods to expand on successful current Nursery to be able to offer "9 to 3" provision. Use of third party or asking parents to make small contribution towards costs. | Target to start offering in Autumn Term | S.M.T |
| Community Use Senior Citizens | Greater use by Senior Citizens Groups. Provide further activities for existing Group and extend to other Groups e.g. luncheon clubs, afternoon dances. | Summer Term | S.M.T. |
| Community Use | School clubs targeted at parents, e.g. aerobics. | Summer Term | Premises & Finance Governors |
| Community Use | Contact U3A and other Education providers to offer School Facilities as venues for courses. | Target to start offering in Autumn Term | S.M.T. |
| Community Use | Consider contact with Relate and Social Services to explore use of School as "neutral" venue. | Investigate | S.M.T |
| Community Use | Contact Cheshire Libraries to explore possible use as a community library. | Investigate | S.M.T |

| 4. EIP & TRUST STATUS INITIATIVES | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------|---------------|
| Development Area | Action Planned | Timescales | Contact |
| EIP | EIP involvement with Alsager schools is a developing area. School venue will be used for various initiatives. | On Going | S.M.T. |
| Localised Delivery of Special Needs | Continuing established leading role in local delivery of Special Needs within the EIP through the facilities/expertise within the School. | On Going | S.M.T |
| Trust Status | School is a founder member in the investigation of Trust Status and continues to have active involvement. Premises could be utilised for Trust initiatives, e.g. specialist areas – SEN. | On Going | S.M.T. & G.B. |

| 5. LOCAL AUTHORITY | | | |
|--------------------|---|------------|------------------------------|
| Development Area | Action Planned | Timescales | Contact |
| Finance | <p>Liaison with LA to ensure support with proposals and advice/guidance to ensure compliance with any financial constraints.</p> <p>Planned actions already on-going:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three year Financial Recovery Plan already in discussion with LA including alignment of staff numbers to appropriate levels for pupil numbers; • Use of Federation to reduce SMT and administration costs; • Rental income from external community proposals and extended School Hours provisions; • Targeted increase in pupil numbers to generate additional income. | On Going | Premises & Finance Committee |
| Federation | Governors are actively seeking Federation with other schools. Initial contact with Pikemere School, Alsager has been made to explore the option. | On Going | Governing Body |

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Full Proposal Annex A

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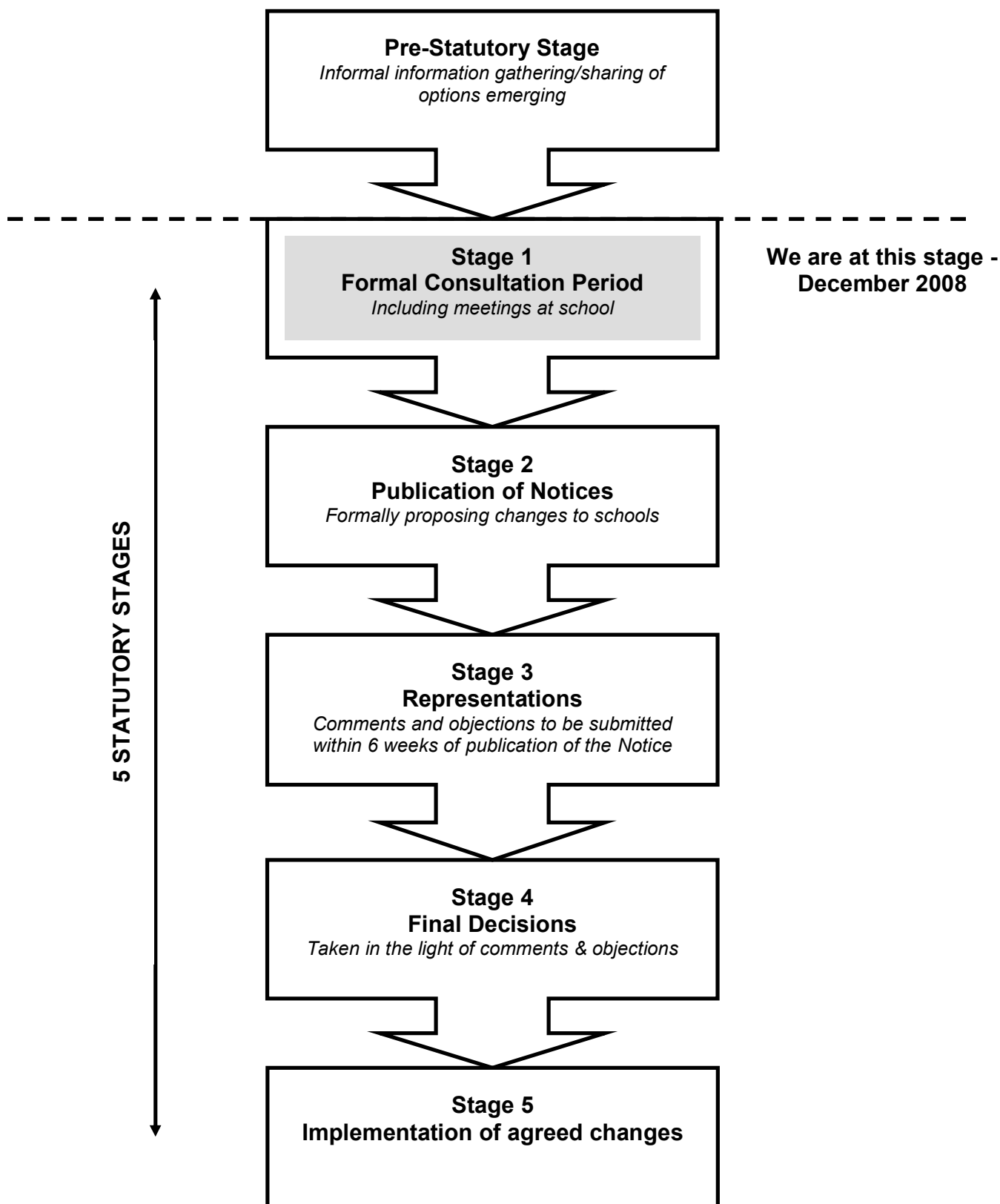
**PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF
CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION
December 2008 and January 2009**

Linda Brown
Acting Director of Children's Services
Cheshire County Council
County Hall
Chester CH1 1SQ

December 2008

MAKING CHANGES TO SCHOOLS



PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1 To undertake formal consultations with the parents / carers of pupils at Church Lawton Primary School and other interested parties to ascertain their views, before any final decision is taken regarding the proposal to close the school in summer 2009.

INTRODUCTION

2 The County Council is continuing its work in response to 'Every Child Matters' and the Children Act 2004. The Government has put schools at the heart of the change and Cheshire's response is a wide ranging review of its education provision – Transforming Learning Communities. This review addresses a broad range of issues, including the need to manage the effect of a reducing number of pupils, the drive to continue improving outcomes for children, and meeting the requirements of the Children Act. Significant changes are also needed in the delivery of services for children and families.

3 The purpose of this document is to outline the reasons for proposing the closure of Church Lawton Primary School and to encourage you to give your views on this proposal.

WHY IS CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL BEING CONSIDERED FOR POSSIBLE CLOSURE IN SUMMER 2009?

4 The area to the south and east of Alsager is currently served by four schools: Scholar Green Primary School, Rode Heath Primary School, Woodcocks' Well CE Primary School and Church Lawton Primary School. Overall there are too few pupils attending the four schools to sustain them all.

5 Church Lawton Primary School has a capacity for 105 pupils, having been designed and built to accommodate 210 pupils. Changing use of the accommodation has reduced the school's capacity to its current level. Scholar Green Primary School has a capacity for 210 pupils (which it is proposed will be reduced to 180 in September 2009). Rode Heath Primary School has a capacity for 210 pupils and Woodcocks' Well CE Primary School has a capacity for 103 pupils (which it is proposed will be reduced to 89 in September 2009).

6 There has been a significant reduction in pupil numbers at Church Lawton Primary School since 1999. In January 2008 the school had 68 pupils registered on roll and 35.2% surplus places. This surplus is forecast to rise to 44.8% in 2013.

7 The forecasts for January 2013, based on January 2008 numbers of pupils for each of the three other local schools are:

| | NUMBER ON ROLL | SURPLUS PLACES | % SURPLUS PLACES |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Rode Heath PS | 159 | 51 | 24.3 |
| Scholar Green PS | 136 | 44 | 24.4 |
| Woodcocks' Well CE PS | 87 | 2 | 2.2 |

(This table assumes reductions in capacity at both Scholar Green PS and Woodcocks' Well CE PS in 2009).

Figures for the remaining schools in Alsager are:

| | NUMBER ON ROLL | SURPLUS PLACES | % SURPLUS PLACES |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Alsager Highfields CPS | 263 | 0 | NIL |
| Cranberry PS | 175 | 35 | 16.7 |
| Excalibur PS | 209 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Pikemere School | 208 | 2 | 1.0 |
| St Gabriel's Catholic PS | 196 | 14 | 6.7 |

(This table assumes a reduction in capacity at Cranberry Primary School to 210)

8 The Ofsted inspection report of Church Lawton Primary School (November 2006) stated that the School “provides a satisfactory standard of education”. The personal development of children was good, and pupils made satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the Foundation Stage. However, pupils of higher ability did not always achieve as well as they should in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. Achievement overall was rated as satisfactory.

9 The overall effectiveness of the school was also rated as satisfactory by Ofsted, as was leadership and management, teaching and learning, the curriculum and other activities. Care, guidance and support were considered “good” and it was noted by Ofsted that the school’s “warm and caring atmosphere” was the reason why a number of parents have actively chosen to send their children to the school. In January 2008 over 30% of the children at the school lived outside the county of Cheshire.

10 In spite of Church Lawton Primary School’s overall satisfactory performance, the significant fall in the school’s roll and its relative lack of popularity in the local community give cause for concern. In January 2008, only 22.1% of parents who live in the school’s catchment area chose to send their children to Church Lawton, in contrast with other local schools. In January 2008, the figures were:

| School | Percentage of children living in catchment area who go to the school |
|-----------------------|--|
| Church Lawton PS | 22.1 |
| Scholar Green PS | 62.5 |
| Rode Heath PS | 77.1 |
| Woodcocks' Well CE PS | 60.0 |

11 The considerable reduction in the number of pupils attending the school over recent years and the present low number on roll, which looks set to decline further, puts in question the future stability and sustainability of the school. For these reasons the Council is considering the possible closure of Church Lawton Primary School in the summer of 2009.

MOVEMENT OF PUPILS

12 There are 7 schools within a two-mile radius of Church Lawton Primary School which between them have a significant number of surplus places. These are the schools in the tables in paragraph 7, but excluding Woodcocks' Well CE Primary School which is 2.4 miles from Church Lawton. The availability of places at a large number of schools has come about because of the overall decline in pupil numbers within the locality.

13 As noted above, around 78% of pupils from within the Church Lawton Primary School catchment attend other schools, and because numbers at the school are bolstered by parents living some distance away, only a small proportion of children at the school live locally. Again this contrasts strongly with other local schools. In January 2008, the figures were:

| School | Percentage of children at the school who live in its catchment area |
|-----------------------|---|
| Church Lawton PS | 22.7 |
| Scholar Green PS | 61.3 |
| Rode Heath PS | 77.1 |
| Woodcocks' Well CE PS | 50.0 |

PUPIL NUMBERS

14 Church Lawton Primary School has a Net Capacity of 105 places. Historic and forecast pupil numbers on roll at the school are as follows:

| Historic | Number on Roll | % of Surplus Places |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| January 1999 | 103 | 1.9% |
| January 2000 | 95 | 9.5% |
| January 2001 | 92 | 12.3% |
| January 2002 | 95 | 9.5% |
| January 2003 | 96 | 8.5% |
| January 2004 | 86 | 18.1% |
| January 2005 | 85 | 19.0% |
| January 2006 | 73 | 30.5% |
| January 2007 | 67 | 36.2% |
| Current (most recent PLASC data) | Number on Roll | % of Surplus Places |
| January 2008 | 68 | 35.2% |
| Forecast | Number on Roll | % of Surplus Places |
| January 2009 | 62 | 41.0% |
| January 2010 | 66 | 37.1% |
| January 2011 | 63 | 40.0% |
| January 2012 | 59 | 43.8% |
| January 2013 | 58 | 44.8% |

(The above forecast figures are projected from the January 2008 numbers on roll)

The actual pupil numbers for September 2008 indicate that these projections are likely to be an overestimate.

15 Primary pupil numbers have declined significantly across the County in the past 10 years, as well as across the country as a whole. However an increase in live births has meant that pupil numbers have increased marginally in some areas, but this still leaves a pressing need to reduce surplus places in those areas where supply of places significantly exceeds the demand from the local population.

ADMISSION TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

16 There are places available at nearby schools. Parents have the right to look for and access provision in any of these or other schools should they so wish. Should the decision be taken to proceed with the closure of the school, the Authority will work closely with parents and receiving school(s) to help to "manage" the move as effectively as possible.

TRANSPORT

17 29.4% of the pupils currently attending Church Lawton Primary School live in the county of Staffordshire. One child lives in Stoke-on-Trent, 32 live in the catchment areas of other Cheshire schools, and the remaining 15 live in Church Lawton's catchment area. A table giving details, and a distribution map of pupils' homes is attached.

18 If Church Lawton Primary School is closed, an individual assessment will be required for displaced children to determine whether or not transport should be provided to their alternative school. This will need to be carried out in liaison with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire local authorities.

SITE AND BUILDINGS

19 No decision has been made regarding the future use of the Church Lawton Primary School site and buildings should the school close. This would be dependent on current planning policies and restrictions relating to alternative uses at the time of closure. The approval of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) would also be required for any proposed alternative use of the playing field area.

FINANCE

20 Most of a school's budget is based on its pupil numbers which, in turn, defines the number of staff and the resources available to a school. Therefore, the fewer the pupils, the smaller the budget. If pupil numbers drop below a certain level then the Fair Funding formula provides additional support for small schools.

21 The budget per pupil at Church Lawton Primary School is £4,642 which is 52% more than the Cheshire pupil average of £3,049 (all figures are based on the current funding formula using 2008/09 values). This additional cost reduces the funding available to other schools.

22 The option to close Church Lawton Primary School would, in the long term, reduce expenditure by at least £99,000 per annum (based on the current funding formula using 2008/09 values). There may be additional costs which may be offset against the formula savings initially. All net savings will be re-distributed within the Dedicated Schools Budget.

STAFFING

23 If the proposal to close Church Lawton Primary School is agreed, then all posts in the school would cease to exist. However, continuing provision would need to be made for the children in receiving schools and retaining the valuable skills and experience of staff of the closing school would be a key factor in ensuring a smooth transition for pupils. Existing staff would be re-employed, as far as possible, in the receiving school/s. The Local Authority would also work closely with other schools in the review locality to identify further opportunities for staff re-deployment and would ensure that staff at the school were fully supported throughout the closure process.

HOUSING

24 The Local Authority takes account of new housing developments in its projections for individual schools. Data is routinely gathered from Congleton Borough Council, which is the local planning authority, regarding on-going and planned housing development and this is matched to school catchment areas. A 'child yield' factor is then applied to the developments to arrive at an estimate of the scale of additional demands for school places that might be expected from the new housing.

25 The gross figure of 'child yield' (the additional pupils from new housing) is adjusted to reflect present patterns of attendance and is known as the 'adjusted child yield.' For example, if 70% of the pupils presently resident in the catchment area attend the local school and 30% attend an alternative school, the estimated number of pupils from new housing will be allocated to these two schools in the same proportions.

26 On the basis of available information, the Authority is confident that, should Church Lawton Primary School close, there will still be sufficient school places in the area to meet demand.

TIMESCALES

27 Following this consultation, the County Council's School Planning Select Panel - an all-party group of County Councillors - will meet to receive a report on the consultations and decide on its recommendation.

28 If the Panel recommends closure and this is subsequently approved by the Children's Services Executive, formal Notices proposing closure would be published and displayed at Church Lawton Primary School, at other locations in the area and in the local press. There would then follow a period of at least six weeks for objections and comments on the proposed closure.

29 At the end of this period a final decision would be taken. If there are no objections the decision can be taken by the Executive of the County Council. If there are objections to the proposal for closure these would be taken to a special Sub Committee of the Executive for decision.

30 This timetable means that, if following the consultation, the Council proposes closure, a final decision on closure in summer 2009 could be reached by early spring 2009.

31 It is proposed that the programme for the implementation of any change would be:

| | |
|---|--|
| December 2008 and January 2009 | Formal Public Consultations at Church Lawton Primary School as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents & Public – Tuesday, 9th December 2008 (5.00 pm - 7.00 pm) • Staff – Tuesday, 9th December 2008 (3.30 pm) • Governors – Tuesday, 9th December 2008 (4.15 pm) |
| 23 January 2009 | Closing date for responses |
| Consideration of the outcomes of the public consultations by: | |
| Week beginning 26 January or 3 February 2009 | School Planning Select Panel; and |
| 12 February 2009 | County Council; and |
| 17 February 2009 | Children's Services Executive |
| 24 February – 7 April 2009 | Publication of Notices – if a decision is taken to proceed. This would be followed by a period of at least six weeks during which objections and representations, e.g. in support, could be lodged |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| April / May 2009 | Final decision taken by Cheshire East Authority |
| August 2009 | Proposed date that the closure would take place |

HOW DO I COMMENT ON THE PROPOSALS?

32 There will be a drop-in session (explained in the following pages) for parents and other interested members of the community on Tuesday, 9th December 2008, between 5.00pm and 7.00pm at Church Lawton Primary School with officers from the County Council. County Councillors may also be present. All views expressed will be recorded and considered.

33 You can complete the attached form or, alternatively, you can complete an electronic version which can be accessed via the County Council's website at: www.cheshire.gov.uk/TLC. You may also write directly to Trish Burnett whose contact details are given in paragraph 34 below. Please forward your comments by Friday, 23rd January 2009.

34 For further information, contact Trish Burnett – Transforming Learning Communities, Cheshire County Council, Room 417, County Hall, Chester CH1 1SQ, 01244 972379, Trish.Burnett@cheshire.gov.uk.



This is an explanation of how a 'drop-in' session is organised.

WHAT IS A 'DROP-IN' MEETING?

A 'drop-in' session is an event arranged for parents and members of the community to come and ask questions and seek clarification, on an individual or small group basis, on issues about the recommendation/s for their school. There is no formal presentation of the recommendation/s but all parents will have received this booklet explaining the proposal/s prior to the session.

All questions and statements are recorded as well as the answers given by the officers. These form part of the documentation given to County Councillors who will discuss, debate and make a decision at their subsequent meetings.

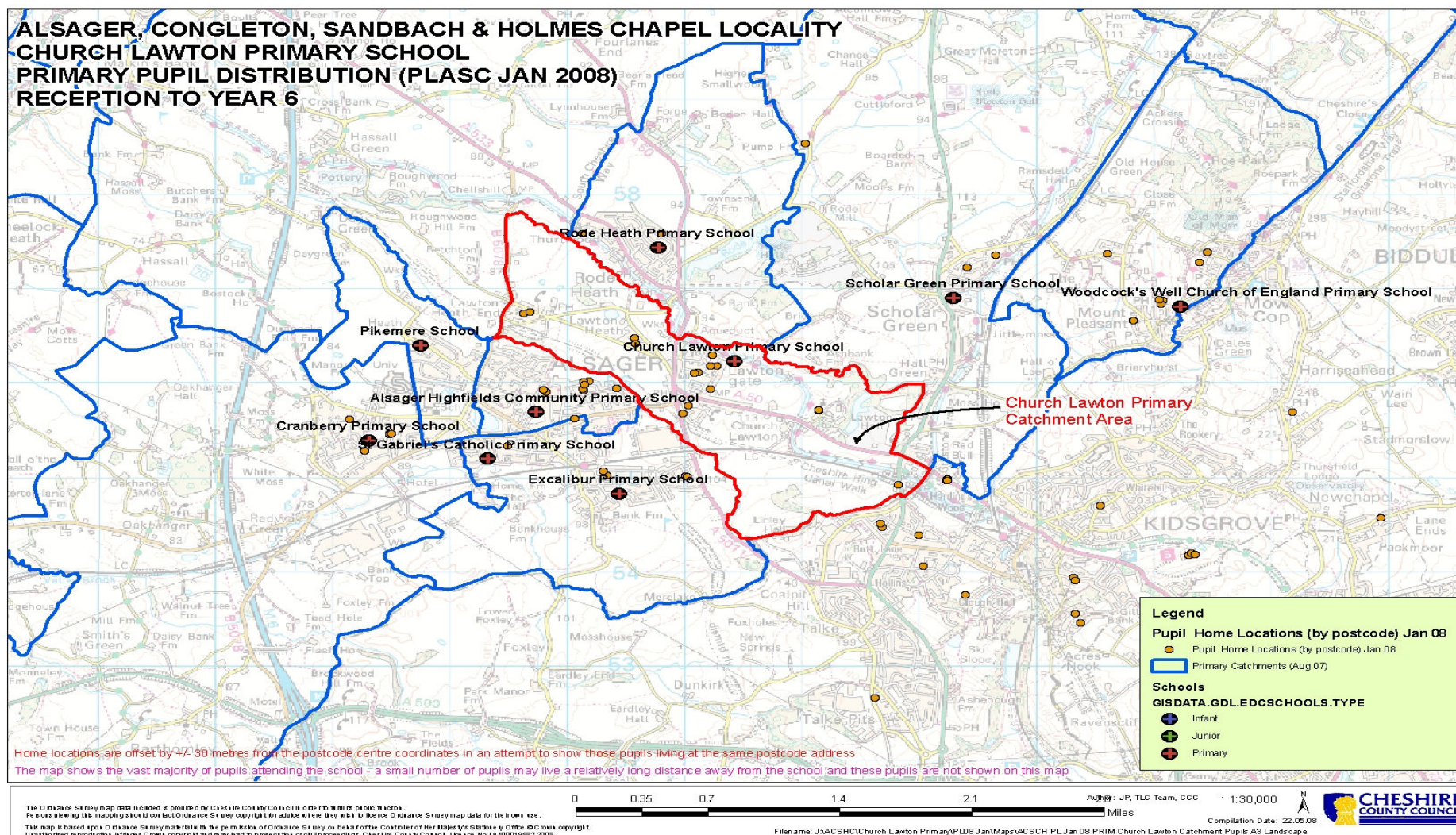
WHO WILL I SPEAK TO?

The session has a number of officers who are seated at tables ready to listen to you and explain and respond to your questions. There is also a second officer at each table who records your questions and statements and the answers given to you.

WHY DO WE CONDUCT THE MEETING IN THIS WAY?

This style of event gathers a greater quantity of and wider views than an 'open' public meeting. It also ensures that everyone has an opportunity to speak and allows for individual concerns to be raised in a more structured manner.

Appendix 1: Pupil Distribution Map for Church Lawton Primary School, (Source: PLASC Jan 2008)



Appendix 2: Where do the pupils who attend Church Lawton Primary School live? (Source: PLASC Jan 2008)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|----|
| <div><div>School Attended</div><div>School Catchment Area</div></div> | Church Lawton Primary School | 9 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 47 | 0 | 21 | 68 | 68 |
| | Alsager Highfields Community Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Church Lawton Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cranberry Nursery and Infant and Junior Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Excalibur Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Offley Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Rode Heath Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Scholar Green Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Woodcocks' Well Church of England Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total Number of Pupils attending the schools listed, who live within the Locality | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total Number of Pupils attending the schools listed, who live outside the Locality but within Cheshire | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Number of Pupils attending the schools listed, who live outside Cheshire | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Number on Roll (Mappable) inc SEN Pupils, PLASC Jan 2008 (All Areas) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Number on Roll (Inc SEN Pupils) PLASC Jan 2008 (All Areas) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Notes

- (1) Analysis considers pupils in the maintained sector only, from Reception to Year 6 pupils. Any Special Unit pupils are included.
- (2) The pupils analysed by postcode within the PLASC Jan 2008 return represent on average 99.9% of pupils within the database, ie on roll at Cheshire primary schools at January 2008. Those pupils not analysed did not have associated postcode data in order to map them.



**Proposal to Close
Church Lawton Primary School**

Consultation Response Form

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate your views and add any comments you wish to make.

Do you agree with the proposal to close
Church Lawton Primary School in summer 2009?

Agree Disagree

☐ ☐

Comments (if any)

Please tick the relevant box(es) to indicate any of the following that apply to you:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Parent/Carer of Present Pupil(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/Carer of Pre-school Child | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Name

Address

Signed Date

Please return this form to: Trish Burnett, Cheshire County Council, Room 417, County Hall, Chester CH1 1SQ by **23rd January 2009**. Alternatively, you can complete an electronic version of the form, which can be accessed via the County Council's website at: www.cheshire.gov.uk/TLC

Full Proposal Annex A

**APPENDIX 2C
SCHOOL PLANNING SELECT PANEL
26 JANUARY 2009**

**SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE
OF CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH THE GOVERNING BODY OF
THE SCHOOL HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2008**

The matters covered in the meeting were:

- the Governors' alternative business plan for a retained school and how this would be taken forward as a two-year recovery plan;
- the desire of the school community for there to be an open public meeting;
- the reason why the existence of surplus places above 10% across an area was important;
- why the per pupil cost at Church Lawton was so high;
- future use of the premises if the school closed;
- the issues faced by parents in seeking alternative schools;
- whether all known housing developments had been taken into account in producing pupil forecasts.

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Proposed Closure of Church Lawton Primary School – Formal Consultation
Event
Tuesday 9th December 2008 (5.00-7.00pm)

The formal consultation event took place at Church Lawton Primary School for parents / carers and members of the local community on Tuesday 9th December between 5.00pm and 7.00pm. Approximately 60 people attended (parents/carers, grandparents of pupils, staff, governors, members of the local community, the Local County Councillor, representatives of Church Lawton Parish Council, Members of Cheshire East Shadow Council).

The main concerns raised were as follows:

Consultation arrangements

- The consultation document is worded in a negative way, giving the impression that closure was a foregone conclusion;
- Disagree with the format of consultation; should be one meeting for parents where all can hear everything that is said;
- The process has been made too long and confusing with the informal consultations;
- The consultation document focuses on areas for improvement but this is unfair when Church Lawton isn't being compared against other schools;
- The LA submission for the consultation meeting seemed to differ from the original documentation presented at the informal consultations.

General comments on the proposal

- Proposal is driven by the need to save money;
- Belief that the proposal is based on the fact that it would upset the least number of people;
- Why didn't the LA step in before now i.e. when it realised the numbers were falling?
- What has the LA done to support the school? If there had been more support we might not be in this situation;
- Redistributing money if the school closes would be at a loss to the school and the children as they will be put into larger classes elsewhere;
- Proposals were timed too late for proper and full consideration by parents – feel they should have been made aware of the issues relating to the continued

viability of the school and falling rolls earlier so they could have considered what strategies to attract more children to the school;

- Friendships groups and class sizes (larger classes) would be affected if children transferred to other schools;
- Critical for pupils to change school when commencing Year 6;
- Proposal could cause staff to opt for more secure jobs elsewhere;
- Specialist staff could be vulnerable before closure because of reduced funding;
- What work has the TLC team undertaken in examining the use of surplus capacity at the school, and why hasn't this been included in the documentation?

Views on Church Lawton Primary School

- The LA will be closing an excellent school without considering the pupils; It has small classes and doesn't just concentrate on SAT results. Children are given an all-round education there;
- The LA is promoting ECM; why does it not consider how distraught the children will be if the proposals go ahead?
- What will happen to the nursery?
- The school was in a similar position a few years ago yet it survived;
- There are large numbers of children with SEN issues and these are well supported;
- Being a small school Church Lawton has the flexibility to care for each child individually, especially vulnerable children;
- The school has an excellent ethos;
- Small class sizes is a large factor in attracting parents to the school;
- The school has not been marketed properly; some parents in the area are not aware of the school's existence; this should have been addressed by the governors;
- Pupils removed from their local schools due to bullying have settled in very quickly at Church Lawton.

Decision-making process

- The County Councillors who will be making the decision on the future of the school should have attended the consultation event to speak to parents and listen to their views;
- Why was the advice offered by Scrutiny Committee for a 2 year reprieve for the school overturned?
- The fact that the decision to reject the advice of the Scrutiny Committee advice was made by Cllr Rowlands, who had supported the original recommendation for closure, represented a flaw in the decision making process. Will Cllr Rowlands read all the responses? He should visit the school;
- Why is the LA rushing this proposal through before the new council comes into existence?
- Clarification on how the final decision would be made and by whom, was sought.

Admissions; Parental preference

- Parental preference will be removed; preference for Church Lawton but could not risk completing form to that effect; would have preferred to have known the

school's position before completing the preference form; require guarantee that LA can give parents their next choice;

- Timing of announcement caused confusion for parents and had a negative effect on next year's intake to the school; TLC has caused parents to move their children before a decision has been made which is making the situation worse for the school; not enough time given to choose another school;
- The process is dragging on and this in turn is not helping the school to recover; this is not fair on children or parents;
- Timescales for this proposal are tight; how can parents plan?
- Will consider home education if closure proceeds;
- Weren't made aware that school existed when looking to apply for a school place.

Pupil places in local area

- Not enough Yr 1 places in the remaining schools to accommodate all displaced Church Lawton Yr 1 pupils;
- Child currently in a mixed Y3/4 class of 12 pupils in total; is there any guarantee that the same class organisation would be available in alternative schools?
- Had contacted all schools in the area who stated they were full in the relevant year group;
- I can't get my children into the same school of my choice (Yrs 1 & 3, and an 18 month old child);
- Why close the only school in Church Lawton when Alsager has 5 or 6 schools?
- Concern that if Church Lawton closes it will overload other schools in the area;
- All other Alsager schools are full, so private education is my only other choice;
- All the good schools are full;
- Query over accuracy of data;
- How can you assess children coming from new housing?
- Concern that the local housing estate currently mainly houses elderly people; what will happen when young families move in?
- If the school does close, the village definitely won't attract young families;
- We have been looking into ways to bring younger families into the village; one of the schemes is to look into converting the larger houses owned by the elderly into affordable apartments for young families;
- There are many children coming from outside the County;
- Have you taken into account the prospective pupils coming from the two nurseries?
- There are plans for new build in the area, this will impact on numbers for the school; have these been considered?

Alternative options

- A 2 year reprieve is needed while Cheshire County Council and Cheshire East change over, giving the school the chance to market itself fully and turn itself around;
- The school has developed an action plan; why has this not been considered?
- Could not the option of federation or trust status for the school be considered?

Rural status

- Why is Church Lawton not classed as a rural school? Feeling that Church Lawton is classed as rural when it suits; lack of consistency.

Travel Issues

- What assistance will be given for transport to alternative schools?
- Will now have to travel by car rather than walk to school as next preference is too far away.

Community issues

- The needs of the community must be taken into account;
- The school is used by the community and is the only meeting place left in the village; it is the central point for all activities;
- Strong feeling that this would tear the heart out of the community and not encourage new families into the area;
- The school is unique and at the heart of the community;
- The Parish Council were advised a number of years ago by the Borough Council that they could not use the school for extended services as it wouldn't be covered by the insurance. The Parish Council would support this if it were pursued once again;
- The teenagers of the village currently have use of the school playing fields for recreation but where would they go if the school closes?
- The village has recently lost its youth centre which has meant the loss of the guide and scout groups; to lose the school would mean the demise of the village;
- The village is split into three sections, the school is located centrally to these sections;
- There is no mention of the Church Lawton community in the document and the effect on it if the school closes;
- The loss of the school would have a detrimental effect on house prices and property sales in Church Lawton;
- More extended services could be explored if the school was reprieved for a two-year period.

Future use of school building

- Concern about what will happen to the grounds if the school does close;
- What are the plans for school building if it closes?
- Will residents be able to influence the future use of the building and will they be informed about what will happen to it?

CSPD/PGB

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**SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE
OF CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH THE STAFF OF THE SCHOOL
HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2008**

The matters covered in the meeting were:

- the authority's assessment of surplus places in the light of local housing developments;
- the inclusion of reference to Ofsted in the consultation document and the authority's view of alternative schools;
- factors affecting parents' decisions to send their child to the school;
- the procedure involved in the TLC review and the duty of care owed to staff;
- local factors affecting the distribution of pupils and staff to alternative schools if closure went ahead;
- the grading of Teaching Assistants and the issue of safeguarding.

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C11

Full Proposal Annex A

ANNEX 1
CHILDREN'S SERVICES EXECUTIVE
17 FEBRUARY 2009



Report of the consultation feedback received

Church Lawton Primary School – proposed closure

| Respondents | Number | Disagree | Agree |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Parents/Carers | 39 | 39 | - |
| Local Residents | 48 | 47 | 1 |
| Pupils of School | 23 | 22 | 1 |
| Relatives of Pupils | 21 | 21 | - |
| Parents of Former Pupils | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| Former Pupils | 6 | 6 | - |
| Governors/Staff | 8 | 8 | |
| Others | 17 | 17 | - |

Most frequent comments were:

- The school is vital to the community;
- The school has provided a good education and given a good start to many pupils;
- The school caters well for special needs;
- The school has a caring ethos;
- This is a small rural school providing local education;
- The closure of the school will lead to Church Lawton becoming no more than a dormitory area

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C12

APPENDIX 2

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS
UNDER STANDING ORDER 35**

**ITEM 5: TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES: REPORT ON THE
OPTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE LOCALITY REVIEW FOR ALASAGER,
CONGLETON, SANDBACH AND HOLMES CHAPEL – OUTCOMES OF
THE FORMAL CONSULTATION**

CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Questions from Mrs Kate Lawton, Parent

Point 1. Given the following information:

- The 'Securing Learning for the Future' document clearly states that "*only where absolutely unavoidable*, the closure of some schools will take place".
- January 2008, *The Times*, reported that schools minister, Jim Knight, was to urge Local Authorities to consider more '*creative*' alternatives to the closure of primary schools.
- Information provided by the Dcfs shows the number of maintained primary schools to close in England between September 2007 and August 2009 to be 336, with a further 157 proposals published since 1st September 2008.

Based on the information contained within the TLC's 'Securing Learning for the Future' document, the Schools Minister's recommendation, and the fact that already a large number of primary schools in England are already set to close;

QUESTION 1: What alternative ways of effectively managing surplus school places in the Alsager area have the Council actively considered and carried out before deciding to put forward an option to close Church Lawton Primary School?

RESPONSE:

The Council's document "A Case for Change" makes it clear that:

***"... SUCH DECISIONS [CLOSURES] WILL BE TAKEN ONLY
WHERE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE
SCHOOL IS VIABLE OR REQUIRED ..."***

As far as Church Lawton Primary School is concerned, the closure proposal is being made because it is felt that this point has now been reached.

The LA has previously agreed to recalculate net capacity at the school and has reduced it from 210 to 105 places, thus potentially freeing up accommodation for alternative uses such as extended services. Nevertheless, the school currently has significant surplus capacity, which is set to increase.

Other measures have included adjustment of net capacity at other schools (and using the accommodation for alternative uses) and school amalgamations (Cranberry Infant and Junior). There have been no primary school closures in the Alsager area for some years.

The underlying and inescapable fact is that pupil numbers across the area have been falling for a number of years – and are likely to continue to do so into the future – which means there is simply too much provision and therefore, in the case of Church Lawton where a significant number of surplus places have become concentrated, it is necessary to pursue the option of closure.

QUESTION 2: What measures have the Local Authority taken in actively supporting Church Lawton Primary School in addressing the capacity issues either prior to, or during the TLC process?

RESPONSE:

The LA has previously co-operated with the Governing Body in the downward adjustment of the school's net capacity. 105 places have already been discounted.

The Governors are responsible for the overall control and management of their premises and, while it is recognised they cannot control overall demographic decline in the area, there are other measures to do with alternative use of the premises and overall promotion and marketing of the School which could have featured strongly as part of their core strategic planning. Schools are, by law, self governing and self managing. Local Authorities are prevented from interfering in either aspect of school life, but offer Headteachers and Governors advice and support which they themselves choose whether or not to accept. Church Lawton has been treated in exactly the same way as every other Cheshire school in this respect. Equally, parents must by law have their preference met, if possible, when deciding which school to send their children to. The ability of Local Authorities to act in the way envisaged in the question is therefore limited to the role described above.

QUESTION 3: If not, then why not?

RESPONSE:

Please see answer to previous question.

The 'alternative proposal' and the 'two year recovery plan' presented by the School's governing body both provide viable and effective means of addressing the surplus places within the school and in supporting Cheshire's target of local surplus places, following the 10% guideline from the Dcfs.

QUESTION 4: Why therefore have the Council continued to disregard these plans by continuing to recommend the school closure?

RESPONSE:

The Local Authority has provided Governors with feedback on their plan, and suggested how it might be improved. The revised version of the plan has been made available to Council and to this meeting.

Nevertheless, the view of the officers is that the additions made to it do not provide convincing evidence of the deficiencies communicated to the School Governing Body in ways described in the report to today's meeting of the Children's Services Executive.

However, even if the Governors' action plan were to prove successful, Church Lawton would remain a very small school, and would only achieve the increased pupil numbers envisaged in the plan by recruiting from other local schools which would then suffer under-capacity problems themselves.

QUESTION 5: Why is the school not being actively supported by the Council with these proposals to address the capacity issue?

RESPONSE:

Please refer to answers to previous questions.

Point 2. The housing within Church Lawton is, at present, predominately occupied by an older generation of home owners. Over time homes will inevitably become vacant and, as the majority of housing within the village is family-orientated, then it is envisaged that more families will eventually begin to filter into the area.

Also, given that there is evidence from the County Council that birth rates in Cheshire are on the increase and statistical data from the Health Authority confirms a recent up-turn in the number of births in Church Lawton and in the event of the Council reducing the net capacity and pupil admission numbers within many of the other local schools;

QUESTION 6: Where do the new Cheshire East Unity Authority envisage these new-borns and children of families moving into the area will attend for their education if there is no longer a local primary school based within the village of Church Lawton and the capacity within other local schools is reduced?

RESPONSE:

There are 7 primary schools within two miles of the School which will be able to offer good quality provision for the small numbers of children in the area who otherwise might have attended Church Lawton, should the school close.

All current known housing proposals have been taken into account in the forecasting of pupil numbers.

Point 3. Local Government Re-organisation 2009

QUESTION 7: Why hasn't a decision been made in Cheshire to put the TLC process on hold until after the local government re-organisation has taken place in April 2009?

RESPONSE:

There has been thorough consultation with Cheshire East Council over the course of the last year. There is a clear indication that the new LA recognises the need for TLC to proceed as planned and therefore have endorsed Cheshire County Council's course of action. Members recognise that the issues to do with mismatch of provision to demand are already significant and the current situation involves a wasteful and ineffective deployment of the resources available to the LA and its schools. Delay will do nothing other than to make the position more acute.

QUESTION 8: Would it not be more appropriate for the new incoming authority to be given the opportunity to make it's own decision, based on it's own process, data and information thus providing the Cheshire East with a more solid foundation upon which to base a final decision?

RESPONSE:

No. The data and information available to the new LA will be no different to that currently available to Cheshire County Council. The TLC process has been initiated and the new LA will be in a position to determine the outcome if statutory closure notices are published.

Point 4. Many of the parents at Church Lawton School have more than one child currently attending the school. There is currently a distinct lack of surplus places within local schools in the current Year 5 group. If the school closes then the friendship group of this current year 5 will have just one year left at the primary stage of their education. If these children have to attend an

alternative school, not of their choice and without being transferred alongside their already established friends, at this absolutely crucial stage of their lives, this could prove to be potentially emotionally and educationally devastating.

Therefore if it is finally decided that Church Lawton Primary School is to close by September 2009, and as the new Cheshire East Unity Authority will be ultimately responsible for the final closure and management of school transfers then:

QUESTION 9: What guarantee is there from the new Authority that it will effectively manage the transfer of pupils to schools of choice, especially when it has already been established that many of the year groups within other local schools are already full to capacity?

RESPONSE:

It is not the case that many of the year groups within other local schools are full. If the School closes, the LA will operate its managed transfer process and through that will aim to meet as far as is possible all parental preferences. This has been very successful in the past. It must be recognised, however, that as in all admissions arrangements no absolute, copper-bottomed guarantee can be given about places or the destination of individual children. That said, the LA will do its utmost to meet parents' wishes and enable, facilitate and broker places wherever it is possible to do so.

It may be possible to explore an arrangement to keep the current year 5 (or as many as their parents wish this) together in a local school, together with any younger siblings.

QUESTION 10: What guarantee is there from Cheshire East that siblings will be able to transfer together to the same school of choice?

RESPONSE:

Please see response to previous question.

QUESTION 11: What guarantee is there for 'friendship groups' already well established at Church Lawton to be able to transfer together to the same school of choice, but to also attend the same transfer school with their siblings?

RESPONSE:

Please see response to previous question.

Point 5. In recent years the importance of effective participation of pupils in school development has gained increasing recognition. The TLC has acknowledged that it is committed to the involvement of pupils in Cheshire and the 'TLC Pupil Engagement Protocol' strategy suggests a mechanism for involving young people throughout the process. Also that the

involvement of School Councils will be fundamental to the success of the strategy.

It is highlighted in this strategy document that as a general principle, the involvement of young people should:-

- start at the very beginning of the process
- be conducted in a way which is meaningful and comprehensible to them
- be realistic, focusing on decisions over which they can genuinely influence the outcomes
- result in any agreed proposals being implemented and,
- conclude with feedback to the young people about the results of their involvement

The strategy quite clearly states that “the challenge to involve Primary age pupils is even greater, simply because of the far greater number of schools. Once again the most efficient and effective conduit is likely to be through the School Councils”.

Church Lawton Primary School has a School Council.

QUESTION 12: Why, therefore, has the TLC not implemented their own strategy by consulting with, and addressing the needs, views and the rights of all the children currently attending Church Lawton Primary School from the very outset of the TLC process?

RESPONSE:

The view of the LA is that judgement has to be exercised regarding the way in which these matters are dealt with, particularly where young children are involved. The usual practice has been to treat each case where there is the possibility of a closure on an individual basis according to the particular circumstances at the school and the advice of senior staff. Some schools have dealt with the matter through the school council, others have used registration groups.

Although the consultation document has been written pre-dominantly for an adult audience, pupils are identified clearly as a category of respondents on the response form. A significant number of Church Lawton pupils have taken that opportunity to respond directly, we assume after discussion within the family. There have also been direct responses from young people who were formerly pupils. Some adult respondents have also taken into account the views and feelings of children at the school. Children have also attended the drop-in event and have been able to feed back their views which have then been reported to elected members on exactly the same basis as other responses.

Reading the responses leaves no doubt about the views of a significant number of children. The consultation, in that respect, has clearly been effective and meets statutory requirements.

Article 13 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that “Children and young people have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them, or to others”.

QUESTION 13: As the pupils at Church Lawton Primary School have not been consulted, or involved, from the very outset of the TCL process is this because the information surrounding the possible closure of the school is considered to be ‘damaging’ to them, or others?

RESPONSE:

The LA does not accept that pupils have not been consulted, and believes that the manner in which pupils have been kept informed and their views sought has been appropriate to the circumstances.

QUESTION 14: If so, why is the Council still considering the option of closing a school with such a high level of vulnerable children on its roll?

RESPONSE:

The work the school does with all of its pupils is recognised, but it is not the case that Church Lawton Primary School has an exceptional proportion of vulnerable children, or that it has exceptional expertise in supporting such children. The needs of all children currently at the school would be fully met at other schools, were it to close.

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**Church Lawton Primary School
Complete Proposal**

ANNEX B

**DECISION OF THE COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES EXECUTIVE ON
17 FEBRUARY 2009**

**Transforming Learning Communities (TLC): Report on the Options
Identified by the Locality Review for Alsager, Congleton, Sandbach &
Holmes Chapel: Outcome of the Formal Consultations**

Decision

Decision: That

(1) that in relation to the establishment of Children's Centres at the two schools, the relevant parts of the buildings at Daven Primary School and Sandbach Community Primary School be permanently removed from the premises of the school and brought under the direct control of the Local Authority with effect from 1 September 2009 (or such alternative date as may be agreed in consultation with the relevant School Governing Body);

**(2) the statutory notices be published proposing closure of
Church Lawton Primary School in summer 2009;**

(3) the net capacity of Sandbach Community Primary School be reduced from 210 to 105, and the net capacity of Offley Primary School be reduced from 420 to 315, both to take effect from September 2010;

(4) the net capacity of Cranberry Primary School be reduced from 315 to 210 from September 2010;

(5) the net capacity of Daven Primary School be reduced from 420 to 210 from September 2009.

Reasons: The recommendation will give effect to the advice of the School Planning Select Panel on 26 January 2009 in relation to each of the schools described in the recommendations, in line with the Council's approach of reviewing school provision on a locality basis through the Transforming Learning Communities process.

Made By: Children's Services Executive

Date Made: 17/2/2009

Comes Into

Force: 25/2/2009

C14**Church Lawton Primary School
Complete Proposal****ANNEX C****CONSULTATIONS ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF CHURCH
LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL****STAKEHOLDERS ADVISED OF THE CONSULTATIONS AND OF THE
DROP- IN EVENT AT CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 9
DECEMBER 2008 AND SUPPLIED WITH THE CONSULTATION
DOCUMENT**

| STAKEHOLDER | DETAIL |
|---|--|
| Parents & Carers, Pupils – CLPS | |
| Staff - CLPS | |
| Governors - CLPS | |
| Local schools | Rode Heath Primary School |
| | Scholar Green Primary School |
| | Woodcocks' Well CE Primary |
| | Pikemere School |
| | Alsager Highfields Community Primary |
| | Cranberry Primary |
| | Excalibur Primary |
| | St Gabriel's Catholic Primary |
| | Alsager School |
| Diocese | Chester Diocese Board of Education |
| | Diocese of Shrewsbury Schools Commission |
| CAPH Chair | V Cotterill |
| Local County Councillor: Cheshire | R Giltrap |
| Local Councillor: East Cheshire | E Alcock |
| | R Bailey |
| | A Barratt |
| Chief Executive, East Cheshire | E Wenzel |
| Strategic Director for People, East Cheshire | J Weeks |
| Local Councillor: Congleton BC | E Alcock |
| | A Barratt |
| | J Cliff |
| | A Large |

| | |
|--|---|
| | G Burgess |
| | T Farrell |
| | R Fletcher |
| | S Morris |
| | J Burgess |
| | D Hough |
| Chief Executive: Congleton BC | G Chambers |
| Director of Children's Services, Staffordshire County Council | G Rowney |
| Director of Children's Services, Stoke City Council | P Traves |
| Alsager Town Council | Via Clerk |
| Church Lawton Parish Council | Via Clerk |
| Odd Rode Parish Council | Via Clerk |
| Member of Parliament, Congleton | Lady Winterton |
| School Planning Select Panel | RD Andrews |
| | JP Findlow |
| | DK Rowlands |
| | P Nurse |
| | B Jones |
| | V Davies |
| | S Roberts |
| On advice of Headteacher, CLPS – members of the local community | 9 names |
| Early years child provision within a two mile radius of CLPS: | |
| Secondary School | Alsager School |
| Primary / Infant School | Church Lawton Primary |
| | Cranberry Primary |
| | Alsager Highfields Community Primary |
| | Excalibur Primary |
| | Pikemere School |
| | Rode Heath Primary |
| | Scholar Green Primary |
| | St Gabriel's Catholic Primary |
| Maintained Nursery Unit | Church Lawton Primary |
| | Cranberry Primary |
| Out of School Club | Little Scholars Pre School & Busy Scholars Out Of School |
| | Park Hall Day Nursery |
| | Whiz Kids - Excalibur |
| | Whiz Kids Out of School - Cranberry |
| | Whiz Kids Out of School - Pikemere |
| | Whiz Kids St Gabriel's Out of School |
| | Acorn Out Of School Club |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | Sally Anna's Day Nursery |
| | Highfield Hoppers |
| Pre School Playgroup | St Gabriel's Parish Play group |
| | Scholar Green Pre School |
| Day Nursery | Little Scholars Pre School & Busy Scholars Out Of School |
| | PIPS Day Nursery |
| | TownHouse Private Day Nursery |
| | Park Hall Day Nursery |
| | Excalibur Play and Learn |
| | Pikemere Pre School |
| | TownHouse Private Day Nursery |
| | Sally Anna's Day Nursery |
| | Highfield Hoppers |
| | Blue Skies Day Nursery |
| Private Childminders | 11 names |

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**Church Lawton Primary School
Complete Proposal**

ANNEX D

Primary Sector Schools within two miles of Church Lawton Primary School

Pupil Numbers

Cheshire Local Authority Schools

| | Actual | Actual | Actual | Forecast | Forecast | Forecast | Forecast | Forecast |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| School | Jan 2007 | Jan 2008 | Jan 2009 | Jan 2009 | Jan 2010 | Jan 2011 | Jan 2012 | Jan 2013 |
| Church Lawton | 67 | 68 | 46 | 62 | 66 | 63 | 59 | 58 |
| Alsager Highfields | 259 | 269 | 278 | 276 | 271 | 269 | 263 | 263 |
| Cranberry | 285* | 261* | 237 | 232 | 213 | 200 | 191 | 175 |
| Excalibur | 202 | 195 | 203 | 207 | 207 | 211 | 210 | 209 |
| Pikemere | 212 | 215 | 214 | 207 | 206 | 204 | 206 | 208 |
| Rode Heath | 145 | 157 | 160 | 154 | 158 | 156 | 159 | 159 |
| Scholar Green | 157 | 152 | 153 | 146 | 146 | 135 | 130 | 136 |
| St Gabriel's Catholic | 202 | 208 | 206 | 204 | 201 | 199 | 199 | 196 |
| Totals | 1529 | 1525 | 1497 | 1488 | 1468 | 1437 | 1417 | 1404 |

Staffordshire Local Authority Schools

| School | | Jan 2008 | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Dove Bank | | 158 | | | | | | |
| The Reginald Mitchell | | 211 | | | | | | |
| St John the Evangelist Catholic | | 161 | | | | | | |
| St Saviour's Church of England | | 149 | | | | | | |
| Totals | | 679 | | | | | | |

*total pupils at Cranberry Junior and Cranberry Infant

Cheshire Local Authority Schools

| School | Admission Number | Number of Year Groups | Capacity |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Church Lawton | 15 | 7 | 105 |
| Alsager Highfields | 40 | 7 | 233 |
| Cranberry | 45 | 7 | 315 |
| Excalibur | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| Pikemere | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| Rode Heath | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| Scholar Green | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| St Gabriels's Catholic | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| Total Places | | | 1703 |

Staffordshire Local Authority Schools

| School | Admission Number | Number of Year Groups | Capacity |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Dove Bank (Community) | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| The Reginald Mitchell | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| St John the Evangelist Catholic | 30 | 7 | 210 |
| St Saviour's Church of England | 30 | 7 | 161 |
| Total Places | | | 791 |

Information relates to the 2008/09 academic year

**Church Lawton Primary School
Complete Proposal**

ANNEX E

CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Spare places at local schools – January 2009

| School | Net Capacity | Vacancies |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Rode Heath | 210 | 51 |
| Excalibur | 210 | 13 |
| Alsager Highfields | 233 | 19 |
| Scholar Green | 210 | 60 |
| St Gabriel's Catholic | 210 | 8 |
| Pikemere | 210 | 5 |
| Cranberry | 315 | 78 |
| Total | | 234 |

Spare places at local schools – January 2013 projection

| School | Net Capacity | Vacancies |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Rode Heath | 210 | 56 |
| Excalibur | 210 | 11 |
| Alsager Highfields | 263 | 9 |
| Scholar Green | 180 | 39 |
| St Gabriel's Catholic | 210 | 14 |
| Pikemere | 210 | 3 |
| Cranberry | 210 | 37 |
| Total | | 169 |

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**CHURCH LAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED CLOSURE IN RELATION TO
THE DECISION-MAKERS GUIDANCE**

| Guidance Para. | ISSUE / CONSIDERATION | CURRENT POSITION | IMPACT OF CLOSURE |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| | STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT | | |
| 4.19 & 4.20 | Improvement of standards and opportunities for children | <p>The last Ofsted Inspection in September 2006 reported an overall Grade 3 (satisfactory) for effectiveness of the school.</p> <p>Standards are currently satisfactory.</p> <p>The number on roll has fallen. In September 2008 there were 46 pupils in school + 6 part time Nursery pupils.</p> <p>There were only 8 pupils who live in the Church Lawton 'catchment area' attending the school at that time.</p> <p>Due to the low numbers on roll there are now only 3 classes – Class 1 (the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are all taught in the same class), Class 2 (Year 3 and Year 4) and Class 3 (Year 5 and Year 6).</p> | <p>Places available in range of alternative schools providing good quality education and within reasonable distance for access.</p> <p>Rode Heath Primary, Alsager Highfields Primary and Excalibur Primary School were all given an overall Grade 1 (Outstanding).</p> <p>Scholar Green Primary School – Grade 2 'Good with Outstanding Features.'</p> <p>Cranberry Primary School – newly amalgamated therefore no Ofsted grades available - school has not yet been inspected.</p> <p>These and other "receiver" schools would be strengthened by additional pupils, become more cost-effective and in better position to deliver improved standards. (More diversity and subject expertise; more opportunities for professional development; more opportunities for pupils to work together in a range of groups/classes; more secure curriculum continuity and progression; more capacity to improve teaching and learning thereby raising standards).</p> |
| 4.21 | Impact on SEN issues | <p>Children currently have their needs met within mainstream provision. There is one pupil with a Statement of Special Education Needs and one pupil receiving Individual Pupil Funding.</p> | <p>Children would similarly have their needs met within mainstream provision at other local schools, drawing on the same support mechanism currently in place deriving from the local Children and Young People's Plan.</p> |

| Guidance Para. | ISSUE / CONSIDERATION | CURRENT POSITION | IMPACT OF CLOSURE |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| | | | The two pupils with additional needs will continue to receive support through Local Authority delegated funding, with appropriate amendment to the one statement of special educational need. Both the general provision of education and the progress which can be expected for children with special needs will be improved, based on the most recent Ofsted inspections of local schools. |
| 4.20 | Impact on underperforming groups | Not a significant issue. | Likely to be minimal. |
| 4.20 | Impact on race equality issues | Not a significant issue. The majority of pupils are from white British background with few from other ethnic backgrounds or at an early stage of learning English. | Likely to be minimal. All Cheshire Schools are prepared or are dealing with children who have English as a second language. There is a wide range of support for schools to establish this provision where it is not operational. This provision is monitored by the Authority. Translation of documents and provision of a translator were not required in the school. |
| 4.28 & 4.29 | Impact on Choice and Diversity | <p>Originally built as a 210 primary school with a maintained nursery. This has subsequently been reduced to a net capacity of 105 with 46 on roll at January 2009 PLASC.</p> <p>High surplus places and high unit costs would continue which perpetuate inefficient and uneconomic deployment of the public funds available to the LA and its schools.</p> <p>Based on the 2009/10 Section 52 budget statement, Church Lawton's cost per pupil is £4336 compared to the average for primary schools of £3112.</p> | Perceived by current parents as a reduction in choice particularly the village community. However there were 66 pupils living in the catchment area in January 2008, of which 15 attended the school. The remaining 51 children attended a number of schools in the surrounding area. In January 2009, there were 234 spare places at 7 schools within a 2 mile radius of Church Lawton Primary School. |
| 4.30 & 4.31 | Impact on faith provision | Little or no impact. Not a faith school. | No significant impact. |
| 4.32 | Contribution to ECM | Children's ability to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being in later life are dependent on schools being able to provide a full and high-quality education; this is at risk because the school is facing a future of extremely low pupil numbers. | Local schools to which children are likely to transfer will be able to provide access to better educational provision on a more sustainable basis, making support for them achieving their potential through these ECM outcomes significantly improved. |

| Guidance Para. | ISSUE / CONSIDERATION | CURRENT POSITION | IMPACT OF CLOSURE |
|----------------|--|--|---|
| | NEED FOR PLACES | | |
| 4.34 & 4.35 | Match of supply and demand in respect of places (surplus places) | Taking the primary schools in the area of Alsager as a group, the % surplus places in summer 2008 was 18.68%. This is projected to be 11.8% by 2013 because of changes to other schools. | Closure of Church Lawton Primary School in addition to changes agreed to other schools in the area will bring the level of surplus places in the area to 9.6% in 2013 |
| 4.33 | Match of provision with future demand | See above | See above |
| 4.33 | Match of supply and demand in respect of pupil and parents needs and wishes | See comments above about current relationship between Church Lawton Primary School and its catchment area. | Given the existing high level of choice in favour of other schools, and the projected level of surplus places in nearby schools, closure will have only a minimal impact in relation to parental wishes. |
| | COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL | | |
| 4.36 | Impact on community | Some community activities currently occur at the school or are sponsored by it. | The school has developed a range of extended services and it is considered highly likely that these would be available on a comparable basis at alternative schools. |
| 4.38 | Impact on community cohesion and race equality | Not a significant issue. | . |
| 4.39 & 4.40 | Impact on travel and accessibility for all | <p>In order to examine the impact on travel and accessibility for all, the existing journey to school of pupils attending Church Lawton Primary School and living in Cheshire East have been examined. The analysis has not included the out of County pupils or nursery pupils.</p> <p>The children's existing journey has been compared with the journey pupils will take, assuming that they will be attending their nearest appropriate primary school.</p> <p>Currently pupils 21 are driven to school, 5 pupils walk and 8 children car share.</p> | <p>Using the recommended figure* that it is acceptable for primary age pupils to walk up to 1 mile to and from school, then of the 21 pupils who currently are driven 19 could walk to their nearest school and 2 would need to be driven. 1 pupil who currently walks could continue to use this mode of travel and of the 8 pupils who car share could walk to school. 4 children who currently walk will need to travel over 1 mile to their nearest school three of the walking journeys can be classed as unpleasant as they either have to walk adjacent to or have to cross a major road with a national speed limit. The 4th child is on a hazardous route and may require transport to be funded</p> <p>*Yellow School bus commission September 2008 As the majority of pupils are currently driven to Church Lawton Primary School it is unlikely that there would be a significant impact. If the school were to close and subject to parental preference for an alternative school, it is possible</p> |

| Guidance Para. | ISSUE / CONSIDERATION | CURRENT POSITION | IMPACT OF CLOSURE |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | that there may be an increase in pupils walking to their local school |
| 4.41 | Equal opportunities: sex, race, disability | Currently no issues | Likely to be minimal. All Cheshire Schools have policies, training, provision and support to ensure requirements are met. The Local Authority monitors these policies. |
| 4.42 & 4.43 | Rural Schools and sites: Alternatives to closure Transport implications Impact on community | N/A – Church Lawton Primary school is not designated a rural primary school under the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) 2008 | N/A |
| | SPECIFIC AGE PROVISION ISSUES | | |
| 4.46 & 4.47 | Impact on early years and nursery provision | Maintained nursery provision currently available at the school. Uptake of places (at 01/09) – 11/52 | Sufficient alternative places in maintained, voluntary and independent sectors within a 2 mile radius of the school. See the attached report and map. |
| | OTHER ISSUES | | |
| 4.62 | Views of interested parties | Opposed by parents and governors who have challenged the proposal on the grounds of possible future changes in local demographics, loss of a community focal point, procedural failings and the production of a two year recovery plan that governors believe would address the issues facing the school. | The Local Authority response to the objections (attached) responds to the key issues raised by the objectors. |