



Committee and date

Cabinet

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Item No

8D

Public

Proposals to Close Wakeman Secondary School – Report on DfE Stage 1 (Pre-Statutory) Consultation

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Summary

On 15 February 2011, Cabinet commissioned pre-statutory consultation on proposals for the closure of The Wakeman School. This report details the outcomes from the consultation; the recommendation of the Corporate Director for People's Services and asks Members to consider whether to proceed with formal (statutory) proposals.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) note the outcomes from the pre-statutory consultation;
- (2) proceed to formal proposals to close The Wakeman School with effect from 31 August 2013 and offer places to pupils on roll at the school at Meole Brace School Science College in line with the recommendation of the Corporate Director - People's Services. No pupils would be admitted to year 7 or year 10 in September 2012. Pupils in Year 9 would be offered places in July 2012 in Meole Brace School Science College.

1. Background

On 15 February 2011, Cabinet considered a report on the future organisation of Shropshire schools. At the meeting, Cabinet resolved to consult on 10 proposals to alter the organisation of schools in Shropshire. The consultation period ran from 28 February to 8 April 2011. A number of strategies were used to inform stakeholders and collect views. The outcomes are attached to this report. The report followed an extensive consultation on the vision and criteria which were to underpin school organisation. Area review meetings were also held to determine which proposals were appropriate to each area.

2. Proposals

Following the area review of area 8 (Shrewsbury), officers considered the available responses and data and, after considering a range of possible options, proposed that The Wakeman School should be closed.

Cabinet is asked to decide whether to proceed with formal statutory proposals to close The Wakeman School.

3. Consultation

The proposals were published on 8 February. Cabinet approved consultation on the proposals on 15 February 2011. The Secretary of State has provided non-statutory guidance that the consultation period should last for at least six weeks and should avoid school holidays. For this reason, the consultation was formally scheduled to open on 28 February, following the half term holiday and end on 8 April. Following the Cabinet meeting on 15 February, the consultation was widely publicised in the media and on the Council's website.

Details of the proposals and the data underpinning them were included in the report to Cabinet. At the launch of the formal consultation period, updated information on pupil numbers became available from the 2011 Annual School Census and the publication of school performance data by the DfE. Copies of the updated data for each were distributed to all schools in the area and the Local Elected Members. A consultation document was prepared using the updated data and distributed to all parents, governors and staff of the schools (see Appendix 1). A special section of the Council's website provided more information.

Officers, and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Service, have held consultation meetings with each school included in the proposals. The notes of the meetings for The Wakeman School are attached at Appendices 2a and 2b. Responses to the consultation were received by post, e-mail, via the Customer Service Centre and via the Council's website. A number of respondents raised questions or asked for additional information. These were replied to as soon as possible. A file containing all responses received is available to Members.

Formal responses to the consultation were received from the school Governing Body and Shrewsbury Town Council. These are included at Appendix 3.

The response from the governing body of The Wakeman School states that the school offers a good quality education for its pupils, there has been major investment in the building, that the school has been damaged by rumours about closure which have affected pupil numbers, that the data provided by the Council has been misleading or inaccurate, that the Council has failed in "due diligence" and that there are other options for saving money.

The response from Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) states that STC has reluctantly come to the conclusion that changes in demography over a long period of time mean that there is no longer a role for an 11-16 institution in the Wakeman building. They ask for protection for pupils undertaking GCSE courses during the transition period, specifically requesting that 2011/12 Year 9 students are transferred to their new school a year ahead of the school's closure to reduce

unnecessary disruptions to their education. Shrewsbury Town Council also state that they would wish to see the building remain in use for education at a further or higher level.

Between the publication of the report on the 8 February and the close of consultation on 8 April 82 individual responses and requests for information were received. The main comments contained in the individual letters are referred to in Section 4 of this report, whilst the balance of individual comments and concerns and the responses to these can be found in Appendix 4.

Cabinet members visited The Wakeman School on Thursday 7 April.

4. Key Issues and Factors for Consideration

The key issues are the effect on:

- standards of education
- local communities
- equal opportunities and community cohesion
- diversity of provision
- financial implications
- staffing.

4.1 Effect on Standards of Achievement

4.1.1 The last full Ofsted inspection of The Wakeman School was on 30-31 March 2011. At the time of writing this report, the outcomes of this inspection had not yet been published.

The last published inspection report on the school was from 19-20 September 2007. The overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be satisfactory. The key judgements about: achievements and standards; teaching and learning; curriculum and other activities; and leadership and management were also satisfactory. The judgement about: personal development and well-being;

and care, guidance and support were good. The school's capacity to make any necessary improvements was judged to be good. 11 of the 19 contributory judgements towards the overall conclusions were good with the remainder satisfactory.

The key indicators for standards of achievement vary from year to year. Taking recent years together, the headline indicators for attainment and the progress pupils make from their different starting points are below average.

- 4.1.2 The last full Ofsted inspection of Meole Brace School Science College was on the 19-20 November 2008. The overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be good. The key judgement about: capacity for sustained improvement; and meeting the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils were good. 17 of the 23 contributory judgements towards the overall conclusions were good, five were outstanding and one was satisfactory.

The key indicators for standards of achievement vary from year to year. Taking recent years together, the headline indicators for the attainment of pupils are above average and the indicators for the progress that they make from their different starting points are broadly average.

- 4.1.3 During the consultation process, attention was drawn to the effectiveness of Wakeman School in supporting pupils with additional educational needs and the impact that these pupils have on some of the key indicators for standards of achievement. The effectiveness of the school in supporting those with additional needs was recognised and is celebrated. It was also recognised that the composition of year groups in the school can have an impact on performance indicators. It was noted that the quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress is also judged good at Meole Brace School Science College.

- 4.1.4 The additional funding available to Meole Brace School Science College resulting from extra pupils from The Wakeman School, together with Meole

Brace School Science College's good record of deploying resources to provide value for money, will provide more resources and flexibility to further improve teaching and learning for pupils in the community. As Meole Brace School Science College is at least as good as The Wakeman School on the key indicators of performance and better on many, and has a good capacity for sustained improvement, there are no educational reasons for not taking forward the proposal.

- 4.1.5 Should the proposals proceed; pupils will require support during the transition process. The intention of the proposals is that there will be no intake into Years 7 or 10 in September 2012. This means that pupils currently in Year 8 (who were the subject of particular concern from STC) would transfer earlier than other pupils to new schools where they would undertake the whole of the GCSE study. At the end of the 2013 academic year, when the site would close, only the Year 9 group (current year 7) and Year 8 (September 2011's Year 7) will transfer off the site.

4.2 Effect on the Local Community and the Environment

4.2.1 Issues Raised During Consultation

It was stated during the consultation that the local economy would suffer if the school was closed. It was also stated that the school was well placed to reduce travel times. The school argued that the buildings are energy efficient and that there has been a high level of investment.

4.2.2 Effect on Early Years and Extended School Provision

The school is currently used to a small extent to deliver post compulsory education (see also Consideration of Alternatives). The school is used by a drama school out of school hours.

4.2.3 Effect on local facilities and services

There would be no effect on local community facilities. However, some commercial services might be affected by lower footfall. This is unlikely to affect their overall viability.

4.2.4 Effect on local employment

There is unlikely to be any effect on local employment across Shrewsbury as a whole.

4.2.5 Home to School Travel

There are currently some pupils attending The Wakeman who live more than three miles from the named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College Secondary. Whether additional home to school transport would be required would depend on parental preferences over destinations.

Consideration would have to be given to whether any pupils with special educational or health needs would require transport.

4.2.6 Carbon Emissions and Investment

The Council invests in all its schools to the extent to which finances allow. In the case of The Wakeman, this has included the refurbishment of two science laboratories (£130k, 2007) and re-roofing of a section of the school (£41k, 2010). Each school is allocated a formula based sum from resources specifically granted by the government for capital expenditure by the school. The Wakeman has spent £600,000 on various projects funded by this route. Schools are expected to spend part of their revenue budget on repairs and maintenance. The school has also received a grant (and sponsorship) towards specialist school status (£150,000) and a small share of a grant to support 14-19 learning which was used in a £36k project to redevelop the creative and media facilities in the school.

The major element of capital investment was a project, funded by Government grant, to mitigate the effects of flooding on the school. This £2.6m project

replaced DT and IT facilities in a new block, but deliberately left the bottom floor of the building open to flooding. The Environment Agency have recently renewed the boundary wall and fencing of the school in a project which completes the Coleham Head flood defence scheme, but is not designed to protect Wakeman from further flooding to the lower floor.

The compact nature and traditional construction of the school buildings make them relatively energy efficient. However, the school uses 263,500kgCO₂ per year. As there would be no need to replace the school's accommodation, this would be saved.

As noted above, there might be a need during the transition phase for a small number of pupils currently at The Wakeman to be provided with home to school travel from north Shrewsbury to the town centre or a point closer to Meole Brace so that their total walking route is less than three miles and total journey is less than 75 minutes. If this travel is on public transport, this will support public transport in the town and would not result in additional carbon emissions.

4.2.7 Local Environmental Issues

The school maintains playing fields at Castle Walk, some 500m from the main building.

4.2.8 Discussion

There appears to be no environmental or community reasons why the proposals should not proceed.

4.3 Effects on Equal Opportunities and Community Cohesion

4.3.1 Issues Raised During Consultation

It was stated during the consultation that the school dealt particularly effectively with students with special and additional education needs. This has been addressed in the section on Quality of education, above. It was also stated that

the size of the school makes it easier for parents from ethnic minorities to make their voice heard.

4.3.2 Effects on Equal Opportunities

As noted above (Section 4.1) The Wakeman offers good education to pupils with special educational needs. However there is no evidence that it is significantly better than any other school in Shrewsbury in this regard. The closure would not impact disproportionately on any disadvantaged groups.

4.3.3 Effects on Community Cohesion

All schools in Shropshire have effective policies to address the needs of ethnic minorities. There would be no overall effect on racial equality or race relations.

4.3.4 Discussion

There are no equal opportunity or community cohesion reasons why the proposals should not go ahead.

4.4 Effect on Diversity of Provision

4.4.1 Issues Raised During Consultation

No particular issues were raised.

4.4.2 Effect on diversity of governance

The Wakeman is a community school.

4.4.3 Effect on faith places

There are no faith places in secondary schools in Shrewsbury. The closure of The Wakeman would increase the proportion of faith places in secondary schools in Shropshire.

4.5 Demography and Population

4.5.1 Issues Raised During Consultation

There was considerable discussion during the consultation period about future demography and the effects of future housing development.

4.5.2 Projections of pupil numbers in the area, including proposed receiving schools

Secondary pupil numbers in Shrewsbury are in significant decline as and will continue to decline until at least 2016. After this period, without further housing development in the area, pupil numbers will recover slowly and, according to Office For National Statistics projections, will stabilise in the early 2020s at about 2008 levels.

4.5.3 Future Housing Development

The Core Strategy which will underpin the Local Development Framework for Shropshire calls for the construction of 8,300 new homes in Shrewsbury from now until 2026. This would seem to indicate a future major growth in pupil numbers. However, new developments in Shropshire over the last 10 years have provided 12,000 new houses yet despite these developments the total school population in Shropshire had been reduced by 3,000 children. New houses did not necessarily provide new children.

Further, unless there is considerable additional employment generated in the area, the main effect of building is likely to be movement of population within the town and between the town and nearby villages.

Detailed examination of pupil numbers and building rates (see appendix 5) have shown that the most likely outcome is that the current schools in Shrewsbury, without The Wakeman, will be able to cope without expansion until at earliest 2020. In 2017 and 2019 there will be Year 7 intake that is above current admission numbers (net The Wakeman). This will be managed within existing provision. By 2020, not only will the future direction of pupil numbers be firmly established, it is likely that there will be clear indications of the type and scale and location of development in the second half of the 2020s.

4.5.4 Discussion

Pupil number projections indicate that it is likely that there will come a time when additional secondary places would be required in addition to the five schools excluding the Wakeman. However, this is at least 10 years in the future, and it is extremely unlikely that the current Wakeman would be well placed to serve major new developments, which would be peripheral to the town. In the meantime, the cost of maintaining the current Wakeman building as an operating school would be prohibitive.

The proposal would free significant resources for the next two generations of secondary school pupils and then allow the replacement school places to be built to serve the new developments rather than require children to move to where places already exist.

4.6 Financial Implications

4.6.1 Issues Raised During Consultation

The school stated during the consultation that the savings would not be significant compared to the effects on pupils and there are opportunities for dual use of the premises. The issue of the future use of the site and buildings was also raised.

4.6.2 Effect on funding to other schools (based on 2011/12 budgets)

- Total funding redistributed

If the Wakeman School were to close, £1,726,990 would be available for redistribution. Of this, £1,350,550 is pupil related and would follow the pupils to their destination school; £34,382 of the pupil related total is specific Special Educational Needs support. Some of the funding would be used to set up new classes in receiving schools (creating opportunities for continuing employment). However, some pupils would take up unfilled places in existing classes and the funding which follows them would be available for redeployment to other front

line education uses such as non-statemented Special Educational Needs support or curriculum development.

- Funding redistributed net of pupil-related funding

Wakeman School receives £376,440 in non pupil related funding. This will become available for redistribution through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The possible effect on this sum of home to school transport is dealt with below.

4.6.3 Home to School Travel

As noted above, there might be a need, depending on the destination choices of parents, for some pupils currently at Wakeman to receive home to school transport. As only a proportion of pupils would be eligible, only three years will transfer, and the youngest year will only spend three years in the destination school, this would be both limited and short term. The actual number of pupils involved and hence the cost is impossible to predict at this point. The preferred method would be to issue bus passes for existing service buses to bolster public transport. There are a total of 22 pupils who could be eligible for transport. If all of these opt for transfer to Meole Brace, the cost would be approximately £3,200 in 2012/13, £8,800 in 2013/14, £5,600 in 2014/15, £3,200 in 2015/16 and £0 thereafter.

4.6.4 Financial Implications for The Wakeman School of New Funding Formula

On 1 April 2011 the Council implemented a new local funding formula for distributing Dedicated Schools Grant across all Shropshire's primary, secondary and special schools in line with Shropshire's new policy on school organisation and the vision for education in Shropshire. A much simpler and more transparent formula has been developed with more of an emphasis on pupil-led funding. A key focus was on reducing the current per pupil funding variation between schools in Shropshire.

On 15 February 2011 Shropshire Council's Cabinet, having considered the outcomes of an eight week consultation period with schools and School Forum, elected to phase the implementation of a new funding formula beginning 1st

April 2011. Subsequent to this decision the Government directed that no school should lose more than 1.5% of pupil led funding in financial year 2011/12 following the mainstreaming of grants into dedicated schools grant. If the formula were to be implemented in full The Wakeman School would, over time, lose £157,242 (9.1% of its 2011/12 budget) as a result of changes to the funding formula, at a time when its budget is reducing as a result of pupil number reductions. This gives rise to concerns for its future financial stability, regardless of the decision on the current proposals.

4.6.5 Capital Expenditure

There is sufficient accommodation in other Shrewsbury secondary schools to accommodate all the pupils projected to transfer from the Wakeman. There would be no immediate capital implications from these proposals. There would be a need in the early 2020s to consider whether the appropriate response to rising pupil numbers would be to expand one or more existing schools, to create a new school or to rebuild and extend an existing school on a new site. In part, this would depend on the development of educational practice over the next decade as well as the total availability of funding (including for other community facilities sharing the site), patterns of parental preference, location of major developments, whether there are new sources of employment and therefore the extent to which new housing attracts new pupils. In view of this number of variables, it is not possible to give a definitive planning position at this time. If a new school is needed, this would be funded in part by S106 agreements, part by Community Infrastructure Levy payments, and from Government grant. The cost of the recent six form entry school at William Brookes cost £20m (net of community facilities included in the project) and there is no reason to believe that the real terms cost of an additional school would be any higher, and the costs of extensions to existing schools would be considerably lower.

4.6.6 Future Use of the Site and Buildings

If the school were to close, the normal procedure would be for the school site and buildings to be declared surplus to requirements by the Council. The site

would firstly be considered for educational use, then for purposes in the following order: other Council use, community use (or a combination of public uses), and then for disposal for other uses. The eventual solution would have to demonstrate best value to the Council, which would include making capital available to invest in other education buildings.

4.6.7 Dual Use

The School have suggested that dual use of the school premises could save costs. As noted above, the school currently has a budget of £1.73m. Much of this funding could be redeployed if the school were closed, with only a proportion being used to fund expenditure on new classes. Only a small amount of the £1.73m is currently used to heat light and maintain the building and it only these costs which could be reduced by a dual use arrangement. One suggestion is that the Council should use part of the building to house staff. Apart from the security and parking issues which would have to be addressed to allow this is to happen, the Council is undergoing a severe retrenchment at the moment and does have any need of additional accommodation as it already owns sufficient building stock.

We have considered the possibility of dual use but at this time it is not considered to be a practical option.

4.6.8 Discussion

The current proposals would lead to £1.73m of funding being redistributed to schools in Shropshire, with the largest proportion of that going to schools in Shrewsbury. The non pupil element of £376k would be available for redeployment through the funding formula to all secondary schools.

There would be no immediate capital implications, although there may be a need for extra school places in the next decade. It is too early to tell the scope of these pressures as there are many variables, but it is expected that developer contributions and government grant would play a large part in paying for any new provision. In the meantime, the cost of maintaining the current arrangements impacts on every secondary pupil in Shropshire.

4.7 Effect on Staffing

4.7.1 Current Staffing

The school currently employs 45.70 FTE, composed of 25.60 FTE teaching staff, 11.76 FTE support, administrative and technical staff and 8.34 FTE site staff. A proportion of these staff can be expected to follow the pupils (see below). It is hoped that those who wish to continue in the Council's employment can fill vacancies which arise naturally in other schools.

4.7.2 Efforts to Maximise Continuing Employment

The Council has negotiated an agreement with the recognised unions, and is seeking governing bodies' agreement to a staffing protocol to maximise continuing employment. This would be accomplished by giving first preference or guaranteed interviews to teaching and non-teaching staff members at threat of redundancy as a result of any continuing proposals. Individual staff members would be given support with seeking continuing employment. It should be noted that the last round of school amalgamations did not result in any compulsory redundancies, although it is recognised that numbers redeployed were lower than they would be at The Wakeman and the economic situation more was buoyant at the time.

4.8 Consideration of Alternatives and Conclusion

4.8.1 Make no change

The Wakeman School has a high number of unfilled places and has consistently low numbers of applications making this school their first preferences, which was evident even before the current proposals. As a result, it is subsidised to a significant degree. This subsidy is due to reduce as a result of the recent changes to the funding formula and this will lead to additional pressure on the school's budget. It is possible that if no changes are made the school could become unable to meet the requirements of the national curriculum. The financial impact of the subsidy to Wakeman on other schools is considerable. As such, no change is not an option.

4.8.2 Other proposals.

- Federation

The Council considered whether The Wakeman would be sustainable in federation with another Shrewsbury school. However, the high fixed costs per pupil of the current site and the reducing budget of the school led the Council to believe that it would be difficult to find a partner for the school at this time.

- Alternative Uses

The Council considered whether using part of the part of the school building for another use would make the school sustainable. The school have also suggested this in their response to the consultation. We have considered the possibility of dual use but are not convinced that, at this time, this is a workable option. There was some interest in obtaining sole use should the building fall empty at some point in the future. The Council also considered use by officers. However, the Council's budget is under severe pressure at present and is already considering ways or making savings by disposing of high cost elements of its own estate. The Council considered whether there were commercial uses which could share the site with the school. It was identified that this was not impossible, but that there was currently a surplus of commercial office space in the town centre. Given the lack of parking, it would be difficult to set rent levels which undercut commercial offers and still contribute sufficient funding to the school to make it viable or in the best location.

Given that it is noted that the pupil numbers in Shrewsbury are probably going to rise above the current capacity of the remaining schools in the 2020s, it might be possible to mothball the buildings of The Wakeman School and open a new school in 10 to 15 years. However, this would involve considerable cost and would leave an empty building in a key location in the town for an extended period. In addition, there is no certainty that the building would continue to be suitable for education in the 2020s without the continuing development and investment which other schools would receive in the interim.

- Changes to catchment

The Council considered whether there were changes to the overall Shrewsbury catchment or to admissions arrangements which would make The Wakeman School sustainable. The only change which could be envisaged would be to artificially reduce the admissions number of other Shrewsbury schools. This would mean denying parents applying to these schools the possibility of their child being admitted to those schools. Parents from anywhere in Shrewsbury who want to send their children to Wakeman already have the chance to do so because the school is currently undersubscribed. The Council would have to consult with the parents of each of the other schools over the changes, and it would be difficult to see how such a proposal could be justified in a public consultation.

4.8.3 Continue with proposal to close The Wakeman School.

The current proposal addresses the issues of overcapacity in the town which will extend at least until the end of this decade. It also provides security of good quality education to the future pupils of the school who, despite the school's high standards and the staff's considerable efforts could well be affected by the forthcoming pressure on the school's budget from both continually reducing pupil numbers and reducing formula allocations. As pupil numbers continue to fall, it could become difficult to attract or retain sufficient specialist staff to deliver the expected range of subjects, or even to use specialist teachers to deliver the full national curriculum. In the event that this proposal went ahead we would look, in the first instance, to utilise the building in an educational context.

4.8.4 Conclusion

The current proposals to close The Wakeman School would address the issues of low pupil numbers, high unfilled places and high cost per pupil currently faced by The Wakeman School. It would also avoid the situation where pupil's education could be affected by a budget which is reducing as a result of both rapidly falling pupil numbers and the effect of the new funding formula. The proposals give time for good planning of any transitions, and in fact only two

year groups would transfer out of the closing school in 2013 to other secondary schools in town. There would be financial benefits to the transferring pupils and other pupils in town schools from pupils taking up unfilled places in classes, and there would be a benefit to all secondary pupils from the reduction in allocations for fixed costs and operating subsidies currently received by The Wakeman School.

5 Recommendation of the Corporate Director - People's Services

The Corporate Director – People's Services recommends that Cabinet proceed to publish formal proposals to close The Wakeman School and offer places at Meole Brace School Science College to any pupils displaced by the proposals.

6 Next Steps

If Cabinet accepts the recommendation of the Corporate Director - People's Services to close The Wakeman School, the next step would be to publish Statutory Proposals to give effect to this decision.

Publication of proposals would be followed by a six week consultation period during which comments would be invited from interested parties. It is intended to bring a report back to Cabinet on this phase of consultation on 20 July 2011.

School Organisation Remaining Stages

The report to Cabinet on 15 February contained a detailed timetable of the future school organisation consultation. This section outlines the remaining stages. Expected dates are included for illustrative purposes for any proposals which are agreed by Cabinet by 4 May 2011. Stage 1 has already taken place.

Stage 2 (16 May if proposals are taken forward)

Stage 2 is the act of formal publication of proposals. The proposals are published in two defined formats. The first, short format is published in a newspaper which circulates in the area served by the school and is displayed at the school on the boundary and in the school office. The longer format is available on the Council's website and is made available to the main consultees. It includes a number of items of defined information about the proposals, including the name of the alternative provision in the case of a school closure.

Stage 3 (16 May to 24 June)

Stage 3 is a period of Representations on the proposals. Its six calendar weeks duration is defined in Regulations and cannot be shortened or extended, even for school or public holidays. Representations can either be in favour or opposed to the proposals, but cannot be about amending the current proposals in any substantial way. This would involve the Council withdrawing its current proposals and then returning to stage 1 with a new set of proposals.

Stage 4

Stage 4 is the decision making stage. For Foundation, Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled schools, Stage 4 can have 2 parts.

Stage 4a (20 July) relates to the Cabinet's decision on the statutory proposals. The decision must be taken within two months of the end of Stage 3. The Cabinet can decide to agree or reject the proposals but can only modify them in minor ways.

Stage 4b applies if the Diocese (and in the case of Foundation or Voluntary Aided schools, the Governing Body), exercises their right to appeal the Council's decision to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. Appeals must be made within four weeks of the decision, and if an appeal is made the Council must pass information to the Adjudicator within one week. The Adjudicator is supposed to make a decision within six weeks, but previous experience suggests that this stage would not start until after the summer break.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Primary School Organisation – Report to Cabinet 15 February 2011

Report of the Independent Policy Commission on Primary School Organisation in

Shropshire

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The Human Rights Act 1998 states (Article 2 of the First Protocol) that no person shall be denied the right to education. However, there is no requirement on the Council to provide a school of a particular type or character (including religious character) or a right to a place within a specific maintained school.

A proposed closure or amalgamation of a school does not, therefore, affect an individual pupil or parent's human rights

Environmental Appraisal

There are no major environmental issues to be considered. See section 4.2 of the main report, and appendix 4.

Risk Management Appraisal

If the Council do not take action, there is a risk that the financial challenges faced by the school will lead to its failure. If the Council takes no action on school organisation matters, there is a risk that educational improvement in Shropshire will slow or reverse as too much of the available resources will be spent on maintaining the inefficient use of buildings and subsidising unfilled places.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The Independent Policy Commission undertook public consultation in coming to its recommendations, which included producing a new educational vision, school organisation policy and criteria. The Council developed a draft vision, policy and criteria in consultation with schools and through the mechanism of a Cross Party Task and Finish Group. The council then consulted on the draft vision, policy and criteria which underpins this report during Summer 2010. The vision, policy and criteria were approved by Cabinet and Council on 10 and 11 November 2010.

The Council then undertook a series of local review meetings during December 2010 and January 2011, which provided evidence and suggestions for the Cabinet paper on 15 February which led to the current consultation. The current consultation is Stage 1 (pre-statutory consultation) in the DfE process for school organisation changes, and has been undertaken in accordance with statutory and non-statutory guidance. The evidence underpinning the proposals was published in the Cabinet report of 15 February. The official consultation period was from 28 February until the 8 April. A supplementary consultation document for parents and carers was produced just after the start of the official six week consultation period of consultation, and at the same time updated data was circulated to schools. School were asked to gather the views of their parents through their normal consultation arrangements. Meetings were held at each directly affected school with school staff, governors and interested members of the community (including, particularly, parents)

The Council has publicised the email address, postal address and telephone numbers for responses through the local press and broadcast media, on the Council website, at the meetings and in the supplementary consultation document.

Cabinet Member

Cllr. Aggie Caesar Homden

Local Member

All Shrewsbury Members

Appendices

- 1 Consultation Document as originally sent out (information contained in the original report was updated for the consultation document and has been updated again for this report)
- 2a Notes of meeting with Governors
- 2b Notes of meeting with Parents and Other Members of the Community
- 3 Formal responses from the Governing Body and Shrewsbury Town Council
- 4 Key points from responses and commentary by officers
- 5 Further analysis of projected pupil numbers in Shrewsbury

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 is the Consultation Document as originally sent out (information contained in the 15 February Cabinet Report original report was updated for the Consultation Document and has been updated again for this report).

Proposal to Close The Wakeman School: Consultation Document

Introduction

The Council is seeking the views of parents, pupils, staff, governors and other interested parties on the proposal that The Wakeman School should close, in order to help Members make a full and informed decision regarding the future of the school. It is important to recognise that at this stage in the process no decisions have been taken and the responses to the consultation will be taken on their merit.

This consultation document sets out the key facts of the proposal and the ways in which you can express your views. There will also be a meeting with senior Council officers at which the proposals will be explained in more detail and you will be able to ask questions. This document cannot set out all the facts which could be relevant. Other information is likely to be published during the consultation process, and the Council welcomes your views on what information would be useful. All the information in the document is believed to be correct at the time of publication but if you do have questions or comments, or would like clarification of the process please let us know.

The results of the consultation, including notes of the meetings and all written submissions, will be set out for Cabinet Members on 4 May when they come to consider whether to take the proposal on to the next stage. In making responses, it is important to remember that the purpose of the consultation is to inform Members; and that one well formed argument could carry as much weight as all other responses combined.

Description of Proposals

The Council is consulting on a proposal to stop admitting pupils to Year 7 or Year 10 at the Wakeman School from 22 July 2012, and to close the school with effect from 31 August 2013.

Pupils attending Year 9 in July 2012 would be guaranteed a place at Meole Brace School Science College. All pupils attending the school in July 2013 will be guaranteed a place at Meole Brace School Science College. In both cases, parents will be able to apply for a place in any other Shropshire school, and, if a place is available, to transfer their child to that school.

Background to the Proposals

This consultation was authorised on 15 February 2011 by the Council's Cabinet. The report to Cabinet is available at www.shropshire.gov.uk/educationforshropshire. The Cabinet report was the result of an extended process of consultation and joint working which began in early 2008, when Shropshire County Council agreed to set up an Independent Policy Commission (IPC) to look at the future organisation of primary and secondary schools in Shropshire. The new Shropshire Council accepted the recommendations of the IPC to set up a Cross (political) Party Working Group to oversee the development of a new Education Vision and school organisation criteria. The Cross Party Task and Finish Group asked officers to undertake consultation in summer 2010 to inform the new Vision and Criteria. These were adopted by Cabinet, and then Council, on 10 and 11 November 2010 respectively. There was then a further consultation in late 2010 and early 2011, including meetings with head teachers and chairs of governors, which resulted in a report which was accepted by the Task and Finish Group, and then the current set of proposals were prepared by officers for consideration by Cabinet.

Links to the report of the IPC and to the Vision for Shropshire Learners can be found on the Education for Shropshire webpage (see above).

Why has this proposal been brought forward?

The proposal set out above links to the approved criteria for school organisation as set out below.

The Wakeman School has 327 pupils on roll (Jan 2011 School Census) in a building with 675 places. Pupil numbers are reducing rapidly year on year as larger year groups leave at the top of the school and replaced by much smaller intake groups in Year 7. Meole Brace School has 978 pupils in a building with 1215 places. However, projections show that by September 2013 the total pupil numbers will be 1256. This figure is marginally above the nominal capacity of Meole Brace School based on its current admission number, but within the calculated capacity of its accommodation. In addition, it is likely that some pupils will opt for other schools. These figures include the effect of development which already has planning permission.

Shrewsbury has been identified in the principles of the Local Development Framework as being an area of further residential development. There are two areas of development proposed currently. There are sufficient secondary school places in Shrewsbury as a whole to accommodate these developments currently planned. However, the effect is likely to be that a larger proportion pupils from North Shrewsbury transferring from year 6 to year 7 will be admitted to the Grange or Sundorne Schools rather than Meole Brace School.

Criteria

The proposal set out above links to the approved criteria for school organisation as follows:

1. Quality of Education

Wakeman School was last inspected by Ofsted on 19/9/2007. At that time, the school was judged to be Satisfactory. Meole Brace School was inspected on 19/11/2008 and was found to be Good. Pupil level achievement data show the Wakeman School to be below both the national and Shropshire averages.

2. Use of Resources

a. Efficient use Buildings

Wakeman School has 348 unfilled places out of 675 (52%) and this is forecast to rise sharply. The local area is forecast to have 21% of places unfilled over the next five years. The school has the following issues regarding the suitability of its accommodation: it is close to the river and the basement (no longer used for teaching) floods at intervals; its sports fields are separated from the school by some distance; there is very limited parking with almost all staff required to park off-site; and it has no space on site to create any more accommodation. Its Condition data is currently being updated.

b. Revenue Effects

Closing the school would save £437,664 in fixed costs. There would be no additional transport costs. The net change in revenue resources which would occur from a closure is therefore a saving of £437,664.

c. Capital Requirements

There would be no immediate need for capital investment in additional accommodation if Wakeman School were to close. There would be likely to be a one-off capital receipt arising from the sale of the Council's interest in the school site.

Access

47.4% of pupils currently walk to Wakeman School and 8% cycle. If the proposal was implemented, there is no reason why these pupils could not continue to walk or cycle to an alternative school. The Meole Brace and Wakeman Schools are separated by 2.6km (1.6 miles). All in-area transferring pupils will have a place with the statutory walking distance (3 miles) of their home.

What Would The Proposal Mean For The Staff Of the Schools?

If there is a requirement for staffing levels to be reduced, the Council will work with trade unions and the governing bodies of other Shropshire schools to find alternative employment for the affected staff. Some staff might choose to take voluntary redundancy; others may be at a stage in their life where they are ready to retire.

What Will Happen To The School Buildings?

If, at the end of the consultation process, the school closes the Council will declare the school building and grounds redundant. The premises would then most likely be considered for disposal. The ultimate use would depend on the new owner. Any money which was raised by the Council through the sale of assets would be used to invest in Shropshire schools.

Community and Environmental Appraisal

Meole Brace School Science College is only 2.6km (1.6 miles) from the Wakeman School, although some of the current pupils live further away (and some nearer). There are good walking and cycling routes between the two. There might be some changes to trading patterns within the town, but as most Wakeman pupils remain on site during the day; these are unlikely to be significant. The Local Development Framework principles indicate that Shrewsbury will be a centre for development in the county in the next two decades, and the Core Strategy is likely to include proposals for two sustainable urban extensions on the edges of the town. Even if the proposal to close The Wakeman goes ahead, there will be sufficient places in the town to cope with currently planned development, further infill and the two urban extensions. None of the likely development areas are close to Wakeman and in all cases there is another school more conveniently placed to take pupils. If there is further significant development to the west of the town, there is a case to develop a new or extended secondary school to serve that area. Pupils from development in that area would be more than three miles from The Wakeman School.

Further Information

Further information on the Council's Education for Shropshire initiative can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk/educationforshropshire.

Next Steps

No decisions to close schools have been taken at this stage of the consultation process. The consultation is intended to provide Councillors with the information they need to decide whether or not to take this proposal on to the next stage, which would be the publication of Statutory Proposals to close the school. Cabinet will take that decision based on the information in a report prepared by officers following the closure of this round of consultation. The report will include notes of meeting and all consultation responses. The timetable for the next steps is set out below.

8 April	The current round of consultation ends.
27 April	The report to Cabinet is published.
4 May	Cabinet considers the report.
Only if Cabinet decide to continue the proposal:	

16 May	Statutory Proposals published for representations
24 June	Period of representations ends
13 July	Cabinet report on representations published
20 July	Cabinet to take final decision on proposal

Making your views known

The council wants to hear your views. You can submit your response by:

Email	educationforshropshire@shropshire.gov.uk
Website	www.shropshire.gov.uk/educationforshropshire
Telephone	Customer Service Centre 0345 678 9008
Mail	Education for Shropshire Guildhall Frankwell Quay Shrewsbury SY3 8HQ

Meetings for staff, governors, and parents and other interested members of the community will be held on **Thursday 24 March 2011 at 4.30, 5.30, and 6.30 pm** respectively at Wakeman School

Appendix 2A

**NOTES OF A MEETING HELD AT WAKEMAN SCHOOL HELD ON 24 MARCH
GOVERNORS MEETING HELD AT 5.30pm**

Recorded as present:

Governors/ Staff: 13

Officers/Members:

Aggie Caesar-Homden – Lead Member CYPS
David Taylor – Corporate Director – People's Services
Karen Bradshaw – Group Manager – Learning and Skills
Tim Smith – Assistant Director
John Rowley – Assistant Director
Norrie Porter – Head of Premises and Planning
Cathy Barnett – Note Taker

Karen Moore welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the LA officers:
David Taylor, Karen Bradshaw, Tim Smith, John Rowley and Norrie Porter.

DT welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed over to Aggie Caesar-Homden who explained that as a cabinet member she was at the meeting to hear the views of those present and to feed back to the other members.

DT acknowledged that the situation was difficult; he explained that he would deliver a short presentation before opening the floor to questions.

Throughout the presentation it was reiterated that this proposal was not about standards. David acknowledged that staff did a very good job, particularly with students who have struggled elsewhere.

Q. What is meant by the need to use resources more effectively?

DT explained that the process was about spending more money on teaching and learning and less on sustaining buildings.

**This school is one of the best maintained schools in Shrewsbury.
Why are you closing a well maintained school with excellent facilities – why have we been singled out?**

DT referred back to the criteria noting the high number of surplus places. He also explained that parental preference was also a factor.

What are the plans for the building? How can you justify the money that has been spent here?

DT – Essentially the issue is that there are savings to be made. As yet we have no plans for the building.

Andy Rayment questioned the numbers used by the LA. He stated that the proposal would hit the poorest the hardest.

David explained that he was happy to take the information that Mr Rayment had away with him and to look at them.

David was asked if he was going to change the figures used.

David explained that the figures would be considered alongside those in use.

Have you considered the economic effect on the town? You will remove teenagers from the town centre. The town needs the school in order to thrive.

David said that he was listening carefully to people's views on this.

Do you accept that rumours are to blame?

I appreciate the point you are making – the fact remains that there are too many secondary places in Shrewsbury.

Why are certain schools allowed to increase their numbers?

In the last five years only one school has increased its capacity. This was due to the fact that we built a sports hall for the school. When building work such as this takes places we are obliged to reassess capacity.

Karen Moore explained that when the school was at capacity it was over full.

Andrew Rayment added that there were buildings in Shrewsbury schools that could not cope with extra students.

Norrie Porter disagreed with Mr Rayment's comments explaining that money was constantly being invested in improving infrastructure in Shrewsbury and, in fact, all Shropshire schools.

Andy Rayment stated that he felt all secondary schools in Shrewsbury should be downsized.

NP explained that this had been considered but that it could restrict parental choice. Additionally it would not provide the savings required.

Andy Rayment explained that he felt the process was flawed as community impact had not been investigated.

David explained that one purpose of the consultation period was to collect information about community impact.

Beverley Baker spoke about the negative effect she felt the closure would have on the town. She explained that she was concerned that if the proposal went ahead the town would lose vitality and personality.

The issue of transport was raised as a concern.

TS explained that as part of the process one school had to be nominated for pupils to attend. He reiterated that there was no obligation for students to attend Meole Brace and for some pupils other schools may be more suitable. We understand that the situation is not easy but schools are having to make redundancies, they are struggling to balance their books – no change is really not an option.

Why is your priority not quality of education?

TS – it absolutely is – we are undergoing this process to secure sustainable provision in Shropshire.

A point was raised about alternative proposals. If alternative proposals were brought forward would they be listened to?

DT – In principle we are open to suggestions but proposals will need to be viable and sustainable.

The amazing facilities on offer here mean the school could be used for:

- **Media training**
- **Vocational courses**
- **14-19 provision**
- **Support for statemented children**

The LA should support us in keeping our numbers up.

DT – we need to give parents freedom of choice

You are reducing choice through closing Wakeman

TS – It all goes back to the question of resources. We cannot afford to go on as we are.

Karen Moore: The amount you are saving through closing Wakeman is quite small.

DT – The saving is year on year.

TS – The situation is genuine, we have too many places.

Karen Moore: Some schools have money in reserves – this money could be better spent.

TS- I agree but there is a limit to the amount we can take back.

David thanked the governors for their contributions and closed this section of the meeting.

Appendix 2B

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD AT WAKEMAN SCHOOL HELD ON 24 MARCH 2011 COMMUNITY/PARENTS' MEETING HELD AT 6.30pm

Recorded as present:

Parents/Staff/Students/ Community: 119*

* This is the number of attendees who signed in as present; a head count suggested that the figure was closer to 200.

Karen Moore welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the LA officers: David Taylor, Karen Bradshaw, Tim Smith, John Rowley and Norrie Porter.

Karen Moore informed those present that she had received apologies off Daniel Kawczynski.

DT welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed over to Aggie Caesar-Homden who explained that as a cabinet member she was at the meeting to hear the views of those present and to feed back to the other members.

DT introduced the structure of the meeting and proceeded to deliver the power point presentation.

TS and NP provided further information on numbers and finances.

DT explained that useful conversations had taken place with staff and governors and that this section of the meeting would give others the opportunity to have their say.

Parent at the school – ‘you are all this together – this is a party political movement – the current government is all about cuts. This school will be sold off to prop up the council. Our MP is not here to hear our views’.

A teacher and parent at the school explained how numbers had been driven down by rumours of closure. The council has done nothing to support us in this fact. Pupil numbers have declined whilst others schools have been allowed to expand.

DT stated that officers had responded appropriately to rumours when faced with them. NP reinforced that the admissions team had been diligent in quashing rumours about the school. He went on to explain that only one school in the area had expanded. This expansion was down to the fact that a sports hall had been built for the school. Following building work there is a requirement by law to reassess the capacity of a school – in this case capacity increased by six pupils per year group.

A parent suggested that the way forward was to increase numbers at the Wakeman. The school plays a crucial role and is the only town centre school. Ideas that were suggested were:

- **A look at management structures/potential for amalgamation Priory and Meole**
- **Utilisation of resources more creatively**
- **Temporary use of building for alternative use until numbers pick up**

Another parent explained that her children could only survive in a small, inclusive school such as Wakeman. The sixth form college requires more space – can not the building be shared with them?

A parent raised a specific point over her child's individual circumstances. Concern was expressed that the longer walk would prevent the child, who had diabetes, from walking to school alone. This would reduce independence and flexibility and bring additional cost.

NP explained that individual situations such as this would be assessed and support would be provided where necessary.

A follow up point was raised regarding getting to school as a parent explained that her child would have to catch the bus to Meole and this would result in extra costs.

The facilities and the fabric of the building were praised. It was suggested that the LA should look at alternative ways to save money.

The director of the Hive highlighted the enthusiasm and talent of Wakeman pupils. She asked the LA to look at Wolverhampton as an example - a town centre school had been removed there and the town had suffered greatly as a result.

An ex pupil explained how students chose Wakeman for a reason. It is a school that improves confidence and self esteem.

At this point Karen Bradshaw encouraged any current students who were in attendance to share their views on the proposal.

One student explained how she had faced bullying at her former school. She urged officers to save the school.

The head boy asked when cabinet members would be visiting the schools.

It was explained that the Cabinet would be visiting schools before the close of consultation.

Another student explained how she had always wanted to attend Wakeman. She explained that she did not know what she would do if the school had to close. The talent and work of the students was mentioned – particularly with respect to the arts.

Alan Parkhurst asked Tim Smith how much money was held in balances?

T.S explained that £7 million is held by schools. Tim stated that he shared Mr Parkhurst's concerns over balances held but explained that legislation prevented the LA from taking back and redistributing these funds. 'Although we have discretion to take some money back from the schools that have been holding it, local management means that we cannot take it all back'. In situations where schools can prove there were reasons for holding money e.g. for capital projects it is difficult. TS confirmed that Shropshire Council was addressing this issue.

Mr Parkhurst asked an additional question about future development in the town?

NP explained that somewhere into the 2020s it was expected that Shrewsbury might require more places. As the development would be likely to mainly be out to the West an additional school might possibly be needed and would be funded by developers.

A former student of Wakeman raised the following points:

- **Who will pay for the new uniform?**
- **If you consider the school in terms of the 'English Bac' this is a highly performing school**
- **Sixth form could utilise some of the space here**
- **The real issue is that people leave Shropshire for study/ work and never return**

Norrie Porter responded to the first part of the question explaining that, if the proposal were to go ahead then there would be time for families to plan for the cost of a new uniform. In past cases the council has been able to support those who required additional help.

David Taylor agreed that Wakeman was a good school and reiterated that the decision to bring this proposal forward had nothing to do with performance. DT said that he was willing to look into the possibility of sharing the building with the sixth form. The final point that was made was acknowledged, David explained that the council was committed to considering this issue, specifically noting a commitment to higher education, affordable housing and graduate employment.

The following points were heard and noted:

Councillor Andrew Bannerman echoed earlier points that had been raised. He explained the affection people had for the only town centre school. He raised the commercial and cultural benefits of having young, lively people in the centre of town. He asked what other school had an abbey, a river and all the cultural resources of the town centre as an additional classroom.

A year 8 student at the school described Wakeman as a family school. She explained that there were concerns over bullying at Meole and that she did not want to lose her school.

A year 7 pupil stated that everyone was friendly at the school and that she enjoyed her walk to school.

The chair of a local arts committee praised the quality and enthusiasm of students at the school.

How does shutting this uniquely placed, fantastic school give parents more choice?

Adam Fletcher asked the LA to consider the OFSTED report for the school – it is strong - half of the judgements are good. He noted the improvement that had been made and reiterated that the only reason for falling roles was the rumours that surrounded the school.

A year 11 student described the fantastic art and drama facilities at the school and asked what guarantee there was for provision to be as good elsewhere?

John Rowley explained that there was no negative judgement about provision here. Other schools did provide good opportunities for the arts.

The current head girl at Wakeman reinforced the point that students could be themselves at the school. She questioned whether support from the council had been as strong as it could have been. Time should have been taken to quash rumours.

Another student explained that this school was part of her life, just around the corner from her home.

Simone Hughes explained that she was here to speak on behalf of her son who was away travelling. She explained that staff at the school were dedicated to supporting vulnerable students. Reference was made to the multi-agency working that went on.

The assistant headteacher of Wakeman raised concerns that this decision was being taken by cabinet not council.

An ex pupil who had since become a member of staff explained that the school was in its prime and on the way up. It had industry level equipment and a fantastic ethos. He concluded by stating ‘we may be a small school but we do things big’.

A year 8 pupil explained the close relationship between staff and students and asked ‘where else can we get that family feel?’

David Taylor acknowledged that it was appropriate to finish with the student voice and reinforced that the LA was happy to receive emails, letters and calls about the proposal.

Karen Moore thanked everyone for attending, for their support and for making their views heard.

Appendix 3

Responses from Governing Body and Town Council

Dear David

Wakeman School

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy diary to talk about the Town Council's concerns regarding the recent consultation exercise. Members understand the reasoning for you not being able to attend our Council meeting and they very much appreciate your response to their questions, which have informed our discussions and conclusions.

One of the primary functions of a Town or Parish Council is to provide advocacy for its residents, many of which are vulnerable and have little/no opportunity to put over their opinions to the decision makers. Shrewsbury Town Council takes the view that it must look objectively at such situations and consider the broader picture. In this case it is not just about considering the future of the 327 pupils on Wakeman School's existing roll but what impact single sites have on the Council's ability to provide a quality, comprehensive educational offer to some 4000 secondary school students in and around Shrewsbury.

Members have come to the conclusion that the decline of Wakeman School has been ongoing since the turn of the century, the cause of which is likely to be the amalgamation of a number of factors including parental choice and the changing demography of the school's natural catchment area, this resulting in the size of the annual intake becoming unsustainable and total average costs for educating students placing a drain on the education system, in effect this is subsidised by those benefiting from a larger intake.

Members don't accept that the main cause of the school's decline is the result of a long-standing fear that the school shall close. It was felt that more could have been done by the school's management to address any such perceptions.

It is therefore with sadness that the Town Council accepts that the Wakeman School has to close in the interests of maintaining a quality standard of education for 11-16 year olds throughout the town.

Members are however mindful of the need to ensure minimal disruption to both the Wakeman students and also the students of those schools to which the Wakeman students shall be displaced.

Of particular concern to Members are the current Year 8 students who shall be midway through their GCSE course at the time of closure. Whilst it is planned to stop admitting Year 10 students from July 2012, what provision shall be made for existing students who shall start their GCSE courses at Wakeman School but finish their studies elsewhere.

Three possible scenarios need to be addressed:

- **That the student's new school may not necessarily offer the same subject;**
- **That the student's new school may offer the same subject, but under a different examination board;**
- **That the student's new school may offer the same subject/examination board, but the scheme of work may result in work being either missed or duplicated.**

The Town Council would wish to see 2011/12 Year 9 students are transferred to their new school a year ahead of the school's closure to reduce unnecessary disruptions to their education.

The Town Council feels that the Wakeman building has been subject to major investment as an educational establishment and the value of such far outweighs any economic value for change of use of the site.

Wherever possible the Town Council would wish to see the Council utilise the building for educational purposes, be it further/higher education. We are already aware that the Wakeman School building is being used to supplement 6th form activities. Members would very much wish to see discussions with such organisations as the 6th Form College to either use part or possibly wholly transfer activities to the site.

The Town Council has never hidden its desire for Shropshire and Shrewsbury to have either a University or host a satellite campus of an established University. Whilst in the current economic climate this may not be the optimum time for such an approach, the town would lend itself to University life and would in turn provide a reason for young people to stay within the area rather than move away.

This is a decision Members have not taken lightly; this being based upon information from the Education Authority, the School's own management as well as the parents and students within Members' Wards. We would be grateful if you will keep the Town Council informed of the outcome of the consultation process.

Yours sincerely



Helen Ball BA (Hons) FILCM Town Clerk

Response from Governing Body - The Wakeman School & Arts College

This attached submission outlines our response to the council's proposal to close The Wakeman.

It also provides a briefing for the visit of Cabinet Members on Thursday 7th April.

I hope that you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A J Rayment
Chair of Governors

Executive Summary

Governors, parents and pupils contend that The Wakeman School provides an invaluable contribution to the Local Authority's vision for the education of students in Shropshire and, as the consultation process has shown, is well supported by parents and the wider community. If carried through, the proposal to close the school will save little money. It will however damage the education of current pupils, reduce parent and pupil choice in Shrewsbury long term and be detrimental to the town as a whole. **The Wakeman is the 'town School'**.

Key points.

Quality of Education

LA officials recognise that The Wakeman provides a good quality education for its pupils. Headline 'league table' figures distort the picture because of the extent to which the school provides for SEN pupils and for pupils who have joined the school from other local secondary schools in challenging circumstances (13% in the year 11 cohort for 2010)

Building Issues

There has been major investment in the building in the last 10 years which has led to the provision of excellent, environmentally friendly facilities for teaching and learning – some of the best in the town and even the county as a whole.

Surplus places at the school

The school has been damaged by persistent and embedded rumours about closure. It is this factor that has impacted on pupil numbers and not other concerns about the

school. As soon as the school's future is secured parents and pupils will feel able to choose The Wakeman.

Misleading or inaccurate data.

The data provided by the LA for consultation has been misleading or inaccurate particularly in the areas of capacity planning, transport costs, and environmental issues. For example, it has become apparent that surplus places in Shrewsbury are a temporary feature. It is now acknowledged by the LA that, if the Wakeman closes remaining secondary schools will be unable to accommodate pupils within existing facilities by the end of the decade and **a new school** will be needed.

'Due Diligence'

There are serious concerns about the consultation process and the extent to which they meet the requirements of 'Due Diligence'. These are explored within the submission document.

Other options for saving money

The submission document explores the extent to which the proposals save money and suggests other ways forward such as 'dual use' options. For example, the school already provides facilities and teaching for the 6th Form College. It is actively investigating other opportunities for 'dual use' which would save money for the LA and other institutions and which would ensure best use of the building.

The Wakeman School & Arts College – submission in response to proposals for closure.

The Wakeman School and Arts College.

The Wakeman has unique qualities and assets, without which secondary education provided in Shrewsbury would be poorer. We strongly contend that the school provides an invaluable contribution to the Local Authority vision for the education of students in Shropshire and, with a secured future, will continue to do so. The school provides:

- A genuine inclusive approach that meets the needs of all students including those with special educational needs and those who have found it difficult to settle in other local secondary schools – an important service in view of the proposed changes to regulation regarding support for vulnerable children
- A distinct ethos based on the belief that ‘The Arts’ have a crucial role in motivating and engaging children
- A unique geographical position where we can truly reflect the benefits of learning, living and working in Shrewsbury – the ‘town’ school. The Wakeman's position in the heart of our county town means that the town is a resource which benefits the education of our students and the involvement of our students in the life of the town benefits Shrewsbury.
- A commitment to collaboration to maximise use of facilities and resources for the benefit of our students, other learners in the town and the wider community.

This proposal whilst seemingly alleviating surplus places in the short term will undermine the ‘vision’ long term, and lead to an increased attainment gap across the town.

Quality of Education

The school is providing an excellent service for many pupils and families from across the Town including areas considered to be the most deprived in the county. Any closure of The Wakeman will hit some of the most disadvantaged or vulnerable children in the county. For example The Abbey parish contains the third most deprived super output area in Shropshire and the proposed closure will impact on families from this area. LA data, mapping the distribution of Wakeman pupils across the town, shows that even when pupils seem to come from the more affluent electoral divisions many of our pupils live within areas that are pockets of comparative deprivation. The impact of an enforced change of schools for children who are already disadvantaged and vulnerable will be significant, particularly for those who will have to travel further to a new school. Why put at risk the education of hundreds of children in a school serving some of the poorest areas in the county?

As agreed by Ofsted, Education officials and other council officers, the school is being managed well by the head teacher and leadership team. The governors are very proud of the fact that the school is providing an excellent education for all pupils from A* ability to pupils with special needs. The school is a key resource that provides an important learning resource for young people of all abilities and backgrounds.

The Wakeman is not at the bottom of the league tables. Other local schools do less well than The Wakeman in all categories apart from Contextualised Value Added (CVA). The data for Wakeman does not tell the full story. The school caters for a very high proportion of students who transfer from other secondary schools often in challenging circumstances. For example 13% of our 2010 GCSE group joined the

school at the end of year nine or during years 10 and even 11. A high proportion of these pupils came from other seemingly more successful local schools and would have otherwise affected the results of those schools. A significant number had a history of very poor attendance. Many could not take a full set of GCSEs as their courses did not match. Others faced particular challenges that hampered their ability to cope with full time education. In almost all cases the support was such that these pupils were able to settle down and gain some qualifications. These results may not feature in the school's targets of 5 GCSEs including English and Maths, but are of enormous value. The same pattern of 'local transfer' of challenging pupils has occurred over a number of years to a greater or lesser extent and this has had the effect of depressing our headline achievement figures, particularly the CVA score. Without taking this into consideration, an objective comparison with other local schools cannot be made. LA officers confirmed at the consultation meeting at the school on 24th March that the quality of education provided at the Wakeman is good and not a factor in the proposal.

Building Issues

After the multi-million pound investment in the building, grounds and facilities it does not make sense that the council believes they should simply write it off. The loss to the taxpayer will not stand up to scrutiny and will damage the long term reputation of the Council.

The school has one of the finest pieces of classical state school architecture in Shropshire. Other secondary schools are in relative and in some cases, categorically poor condition - 1960's and 1970's building in need of expensive refurbishment and repair. Refurbishments and repairs will cost money. If the closure goes ahead there is the strong possibility that the citizens of Shropshire and tourists will have the legacy of another empty building with listed features (e.g. bell tower etc) in a conservation area boarded up and left to vandals. The building industry is struggling in the current economic climate and it is unlikely that anyone will have the resources to strip out and attempt to convert the town's beautiful, purpose-built education establishment into something completely different.

The proposal noted that the school is on a restricted site with no room for expansion. The school can accommodate a significant increase in current pupil numbers (up to 675). There is no need for expansion or refurbishment.

The specialist facilities at The Wakeman are very good and better than those available in many secondary schools in Shropshire. They are not transferable to other Shrewsbury schools and if The Wakeman is closed, they will be lost. The school is one of very few secondary schools able to accommodate wheel chair bound pupils and staff. It has a new sports hall, new changing rooms, a new dining room and excellent facilities for Food Technology, Resistant materials, Graphics, and ICT. The creative arts facilities are 'state of the art' for a school context and certainly the best in Shrewsbury, and perhaps Shropshire as a whole. The school has a very recently refurbished and updated performance hall, drama studio and stage. Around £500,000 has been spent during the past 3 years in upgrading science labs, reception area and facilities for digital media. There is an updated music room and superb facilities for music technology (including industry standard facilities for music recording). Visual

arts facilities are superb and include two arts studios, two digital media studios, and excellent facilities for ceramics.

The building is robust, self-contained and needs minimal expenditure on maintenance. It has already had the investment to make it fit for the long term needs of Shrewsbury.

Flooding

It was noted that the building is subject to flooding. Within the last 10 years £4m+ has been spent on specialist facilities that do not flood. Since that investment there has only been one occasion of closure and that was due to flooded footpaths and roads in the neighbourhood. The building has not been flooded. In severe winter weather the school is able to operate normally. Other schools have a higher closure record due to snow, frozen and burst pipes and problems with heating.

Sports Field

It is noted that the sports field is separated by some distance from the school. Pupils can easily access the field safely in under 5 minutes. This is not a problem. Many schools have similar arrangements that mean that pupils have to walk 5 minutes to various sections of playing fields or to other specialist facilities. The field is in a better condition than it has ever been due to the recent investment in a security fence.

Car Parking

Limited parking is noted as an issue. Why? The DfE does not always provide car parking for staff (e.g. Sheffield) and there are many places of work where there are no parking facilities. This is not a problem. Good parking facilities are available within easy walking distance of the school (100m). When the development is completed on the old Gay Meadow site there will be some designated parking for the school.

Environmental Issues

A 'freedom of information' request has revealed that, in terms of carbon emissions the building is currently the most environmentally friendly secondary school in the county. The 2010 and 2011 data presented for consultation showed carbon emissions per pupil which is nonsensical - carbon emission details can only relate to school buildings, not people. The comparisons that were provided were a deliberate misuse of data to suggest that The Wakeman is bottom of the table. Other secondary schools in Shrewsbury need considerable expenditure on substandard buildings and classrooms which are not energy efficient. Buildings use more energy than transportation or industry and the council needs to take steps to reduce carbon emissions. This proposal does not help with the carbon reduction targets the authority need to work to and it will have a detrimental effect on the environment. There needs to be 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Richard Rugg, the Carbon Trust's head of public sector says **"...there are "staggering" financial savings up for grabs from cutting energy consumption and carbon footprints"**. He says **"organisations need to ensure they are measuring energy consumption accurately...unless you have the right metrics...you can't tell what you are saving through energy efficiency measures so you lose credibility"**.

We feel that the LA has failed to grasp this issue despite points being raised on this topic last year. Closing The Wakeman does not provide a credible plan for the county to meet carbon emission targets and save expenditure on energy.

Small/medium sized Secondary Schools

Pupils and parents have chosen the school because of its values, the superb facilities it has and the community spirit that exists in a vibrant school. The Wakeman's motto is 'Achievement through Caring' and this informs its teaching and care in a fundamental way. The school has an inclusive ethos. It is well recognised by teaching professionals that learners do well in small/medium sized secondary schools like the Wakeman. Many pupils are progressing well when they have not coped previously in large secondary schools. For example a 12 year old pupil was featured in the Shropshire Star and spoke at the public consultation meeting on 24th March about moving to the Wakeman following severe bullying at another school and is now thriving. Wakeman parents have seen the benefits that a small/medium sized school bring to the community. The school can give many 'case study' examples which illustrate the difficulties that some pupils have experienced when part of a large secondary school. Such pupils have thrived on moving to The Wakeman.

Surplus Places

Reducing surplus places is not national education policy and it should not be a priority for the LA as government advice states there needs to be some slack in the system. 'The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010 says in 5.31 "***Even in areas where there is not significant demographic growth, we want local authorities to focus on supplying enough good places rather than removing surplus places.***" Surplus places are not a valid reason for closure of The Wakeman even if it is a long-term problem, and for Shrewsbury it is not.

The school needs to be provided with a level playing field to demonstrate that it is delivering a high standard of education and will continue to do so. As the LA proposal admitted the school has been damaged over the last few years by rumours of closure and is currently being damaged further by the closure proposal. During earlier consultation periods concerning Shropshire's educational strategy rumours of the school's closure were sustained and rife. Rumours have been heard in staff rooms across schools in the county (as reported to governors by supply teachers) in LA offices and throughout the town. It is as a direct result of these rumours that the school is significantly undersubscribed. The LA's own figures show that until 'school closures' were being discussed across the county (2008/2009) The Wakeman was holding its own in terms of numbers. Understandably, parents and pupils have been frightened off and are very reluctant to choose the school whilst its future is insecure. Vulnerable children who are so well served by the Wakeman are even more likely to be put off a school that appears insecure.

The reduction in pupil numbers has meant that the school has had to make significant staffing cuts year on year resulting in the loss of key teaching and support staff and further damage to the school. As soon as The Wakeman's future is secured parents and pupils will have confidence to choose the school and numbers will rise. We have already set up an action group that has led to a creative and high profile campaign to alert the town to the situation and to protest against closure. The action group will

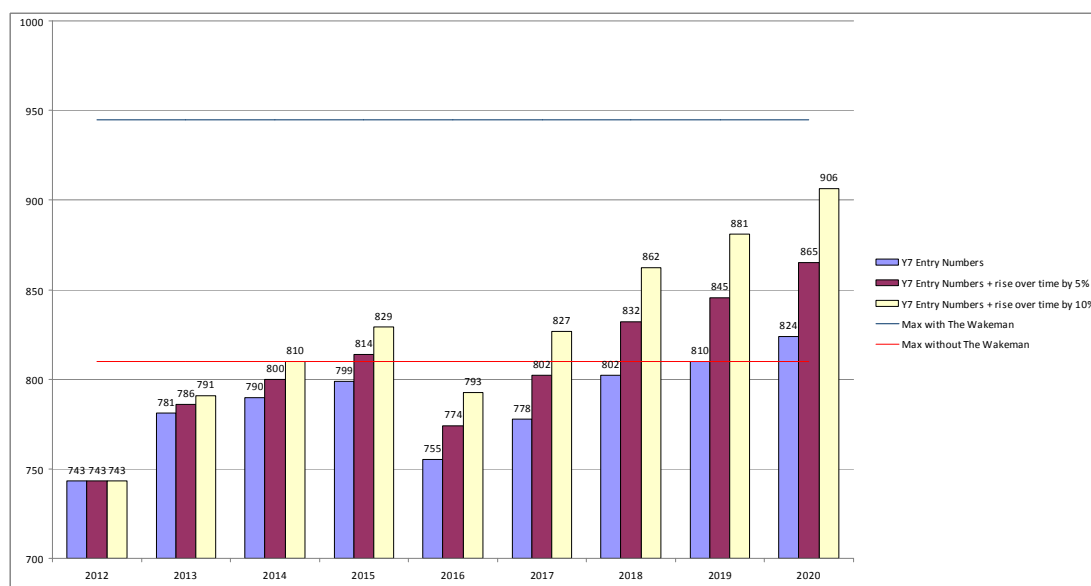
continue to promote the school and encourage new pupils to join the Wakeman as soon as its future is secured.

It needs to be understood that some Shrewsbury secondary schools have been allowed to increase their numbers at the expense of The Wakeman. An examination of admission numbers at The Priory and Belvidere over the last ten year shows quite clearly that admission numbers were allowed to increase at a time it was known that fewer secondary places would be needed. The admissions arrangements need to be realigned and made more equitable across the town so that the Wakeman is given its fair quota of pupils.

Capacity Planning

In the late 1990s local secondary schools were full and parents experienced many difficulties in securing a place at the school of their choice. Again many 'case study' examples which illustrate this point could be provided. There were examples of pupils whose parents applied to attend The Wakeman being offered places as far a field as Mary Webb in Pontesbury, 9 miles away. Parents were unable to secure places in the school even when siblings already attended. If the school closes similar problems will be experienced by many families in the future. Capacity Plans for Shrewsbury and outlying areas for the next 10 years demonstrate that there is growth in housing, pupil numbers etc. The Office of National Statistics state there is an increase of primary levels and by 2017 they will reach the highest levels since 1970s. Shrewsbury Secondary Schools need to be prepared and ready for growth in the 11 to 16 age group. Twenty five years ago the LA wanted to close schools because of the perceived problem of falling rolls. It was as well that this did not happen as in the following years, despite the predictions of surplus places, schools in Shrewsbury were bulging at the seams.

Without The Wakeman Shrewsbury secondary schools can take 810 Year 7 pupils. If The Wakeman closes, and there are no further housing developments and no intake of families from outside of the town, secondary schools will reach Y7 capacity in 2019 as illustrated in the graph that follows. This is based on known figures for pupils moving up from primary schools and Shropshire birth details.



In reality there will be new housing. There are 6050 new houses planned between now and 2026, most of which will be very close to the Wakeman as explained under **planned housing developments** later on. There will be families moving into Shrewsbury and the maximum capacity will be reached much earlier than 2019 so the graph also shows what the impact is if the year 7 figures increase over time by 5% and by 10%. If the closure goes ahead the impact will mean:

- The number of pupils not getting their 1st choice school will escalate as numbers get nearer and nearer to capacity. This will also generate considerable additional administrative overheads to sort out the issues;
- Schools will need to expand to meet future capacity needs and the taxpayer will be expected to fund new building projects costing £10ms to accommodate pupils.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area to promote diversity and increase - not reduce - parental choice. They have a legal duty to promote high education standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. The figures show that The Wakeman is essential for the future capacity needs of the town - the school has an ongoing role in the town.

New School

We note that the LA also recognises that there will be a need for additional places in the town by 2019 if The Wakeman is closed. At the consultation meeting on 24 March the audience was shocked to hear the announcement that a new secondary school would be required in the North West of Shrewsbury to meet the need for places! Rather than having to find over £35m for a new school which, as current legislation dictates, would be an academy school and outside of the LA's control, it would be far more cost effective to support The Wakeman through the next few years when pupil numbers across the town are reduced so that the town is able to meet future needs. The Wakeman will have to be supported until 2013 even if the closure proposal is

accepted to ensure that pupils remaining in the school are not disadvantaged. There are already secondary schools within relatively easy reach of the North West of town which currently cater for many students who could more easily attend the 'Town' school if its future was secured. The Wakeman is the only secondary school near the town centre and within 3 miles of the outer limit of the area allowed for building and therefore serves every child in Shrewsbury. Retaining the school would provide places for pupils from the growth areas and would ensure that the town remains a place for families.

Capital Revenue

As the LA is aware, there is a covenant that restricts the use of the building for educational purposes and this should be respected. It is concerning that the council believes capital revenue generated from the sale of the school site is a positive reason for closure. Some estimates suggest that the site would only generate between £1.5m and £2m, an insignificant sum within the context of Shropshire's education budget. The building is designed and purpose-built for education and it would be extremely difficult and costly to convert it for other purposes. Currently the building industry is struggling and there are very few developers wishing to invest in the building or land. There are many examples across Shrewsbury where problems and issues have arisen because of the crisis within the building industry – incomplete developments, vacant land and empty properties needing investment, including the Gay Meadow, directly adjacent to The Wakeman. The Council does not need further properties like the school and its grounds going to waste and ruin.

Transport Issues

The legacy of young people being able to walk or cycle safely to their local and loved secondary school will be lost. Some pupils will be faced with two bus journeys and intolerable expense - including those in the poorest 3 wards in the county. There will be an additional cost to many parents of children who will be expected to travel miles across the town at peak times to other schools. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to make suitable travel arrangements free of charge for children with disabilities etc even if they live less than 3 miles from their school. Despite the data provided during consultation, it was confirmed by the LA's Head of Property Services at the meeting of the 24th March, that there will be additional transport costs for the Council resulting from closure of the Wakeman. There will also be increased cross town traffic and further congestion on route to Meole Brace with the resultant negative impact on the environment.

As Meole Brace councillors are aware, residents are not happy with the traffic congestion they have currently in the school vicinity in the mornings and evenings and have written letters to the local papers raising the issue. Cars are parked dangerously and putting the lives of pupils, cyclists and pedestrians at risk. Moving pupils to Meole Brace will compound the problems and make it more even dangerous for pupils and the general public.

The Town School

The Wakeman School has a unique place in the town with a rich teaching resource on the doorstep. The town's cultural heritage is a fantastic teaching resource and there

are longstanding links to the local arts community including Belle Vue Arts Festival, the 'Shrewsbury International Cartoon Festival' and The Hive. The school has partnerships with organisations such as Wildstrawberry (a digital media company), the museum service and the Music Hall redevelopment. Pupils take part in the Young Curators scheme and are able to work alongside professional artists and curators on the research, development and display of contemporary art and heritage-related exhibitions.

In recognition of its range of curriculum activities within the arts, the school has been awarded Artsmark Gold by the Arts council of England. At the meeting on 24th March, the Director of the Hive eloquently expressed the impact of the school closure and of forcing children to be educated away from the centre of town. There is a clear danger that Shropshire's market town will become a "doughnut town" where young people and families feel discouraged from using the town centre. She said "If we lose the school it will take the heart out of the town centre."

At the same meeting town centre councillors also argued that the Wakeman should not be closed, and that the children of the school bring vibrancy and economic benefits to Shrewsbury. Many local arts groups have played tribute the contribution that the school makes to the wider arts community. The Chair of the Belle Vue Arts Festival Committee, for example, described the "considerable value" of the school's input into the Festival. Once lost the Wakeman's contribution to the town cannot be replaced.

Cost Saving Measures

Much has been made of the point that the council needs to save money. If this is the case then it is interesting that only one secondary school has been selected for proposed closure. There are a number of secondary schools where pupil numbers are very significantly down, even in areas where there is the protection of a defined catchment area, unlike in Shrewsbury.

We suggest that one reason is that closing a secondary school does not save a great deal of money. The new budget formula agreed by cabinet recently will mean that potential savings are reduced further. A school identified for closure will need significant additional funding and resources to teach the remaining pupils as it winds down and significant funding for redundancy packages for school staff. The education budget comes directly from government and is based on pupil numbers. It is a fixed sum regardless of the number of schools. The number of pupils will be the same. All that will happen is that the funding will be sliced in a different way.

We recognise that the LA has been under some pressure from other larger schools, both primary and secondary, to close "small" schools on the grounds that they are being treated 'unfairly' and that this is impacting on their ability to raise standards further. Yet many of these schools have been allowed to accumulate huge reserves that should be being spent on pupils currently in the system.

We feel that the LA should resist this pressure. Additional funding gives no guarantee that educational standards will improve. If this was the case our inner city schools

would be the highest achievers! As the LA recognise however, the real problem is the under funding of rural authorities and in particular the lack of understanding at national level of the additional cost of providing education in Shropshire. Closing the Wakeman will not fix this, even in the short term.

As raised at consultation sessions last year and in correspondence with senior LA officers the council needs to seriously consider:

- shutting down classrooms and buildings where they are at, or near, the end of their life and where they are not energy efficient;
- reducing the admissions numbers for the schools affected;
- overhauling the admissions policy for Shrewsbury.

This would mean that capacity in Shrewsbury could be reduced in the short term without the need to close a school and without the need for the major expense of a new school when numbers increase by the end of the decade.

The Council needs to make the most of the buildings available to them so that Shrewsbury's children benefit from the best we can offer them. There were a number of suggestions made during the consultation process that would have led to more efficient use of buildings without the necessity to close a school. A council officer said on 24 March "...we need to spend less money on premises". Our suggestions, outlined above, would enable the Council to make the most effective and efficient use of what it has at its disposal, supporting environmental targets and retaining schools needed for the future.

'Dual use' Opportunities

The school recognises that there are opportunities for wider education use of the building and teaching resources. The school already provides facilities and teaching expertise to the sixth form college for Food Technology at AS level. We hope that shortly this will be extended to include the A2 Food Technology course. This has been a very successful initiative and there are opportunities to extend our links with the sixth form - we are able to offer science lab facilities, art and design and music facilities.

In addition the school is actively considering joint use arrangements with other agencies which would free up facilities elsewhere and will provide revenue for the school.

For example: the school could provide accommodation for teams within the education or other LA services which would give the LA additional space and would allow the LA to relinquish other facilities thus making significant savings without the need to close the school. It is possible to set up 'self contained' sectors within the school which would allow autonomy for users completely separate from the school apart from egress and entrance. This could be achieved with minimal cost. Details of these proposals have been discussed with the corporate director of Children and Young Peoples Services.

The school is also discussing opportunities for wider use of the school with a range of others agencies (see appendix 2).

Support for the school

Since the proposal to close the school was announced the school has been overwhelmed by the amount of support that has been received. This support has come from parents and students, former students and their parents, local community organisations, local businesses, community arts groups, feeder primary schools and church groups.

The school's Parents Group have collected over 8000 signatures objecting to the closure in paper and electronic format and also have collected 'Pledges' from parents who want their young children to have the opportunity to join The Wakeman when they are old enough.

Comments on the online petition range from ex-students with comments like "I wouldn't have been able to even consider myself capable of being able to go to University if it wasn't for the amazing staff at this great school, who helped me to slowly build up the confidence in my potential", parents of current pupils who wrote for example "brilliant school, fantastic teachers. My youngest is there in Yr 7, he has come on so well", and future parents who wrote for example "I want to help save the Wakeman so that my kids can go there when they are old enough".

Parents and pupils have spent a considerable amount of their free time talking to people, businesses and local politicians about their concerns. Petitions have been signed by Charlie Brookes (Head of Corporate Communications for Nike UK and ex-pupil), Joe Hart (England's Goal Keeper and ex-pupil of Meole Brace) and Daniel Kawczynski MP. Signatures from former pupils now living overseas have signed the petition.

School pupils have created and designed a WWW website
<http://www.whywastewakeman.co.uk/>

The Save The Wakeman facebook page has attracted nearly 1400 members who object to the closure.

There have been numerous letters, articles and postings on the message boards of the local newspapers and features on local radio supporting the Wakeman. One article in the Shropshire Star from 17th March concludes "I came away feeling that this is a special place and, if it should close, its loss will be deeply felt, not just in Shrewsbury but in a much wider area"

Due Diligence

The governors of The Wakeman School are concerned with the way the proposal is being handled. In particular the school is concerned about:

- the decision being made by cabinet and not full council. Such a key decision which will impact on the lives of many of Shropshire's Children and their parents and in Shrewsbury's case on the whole town should surely be made by full council.
- data provided that has been misleading and in some cases, flawed;
- the lack of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) and Community Impact assessments for families, transport, local businesses and the environment. (Argyll and Bute Council had to halt their consultation for proposed school closures due the absence of a community impact assessment. In 2009 the then Shadow Education minister [Paul Davies](#) said **"... a community impact assessment must be carried out when deciding the fate of a school.....We must ascertain the impact on the wider community before a decision is made to close a school"**)
- the lack of a 'Cost Benefit Analysis' undertaken to demonstrate that the school closure will save money across Shrewsbury Secondary Schools in the short term or in the next 10 to 15 years.

The Governors have concerns about the consultation process, particularly the six week consultation on the specific proposals. The LA are expected to demonstrate they have taken into account the views expressed during the consultation in reaching any subsequent decisions following the publication of specific proposals. Opportunities for stake holders and members of the public to ask questions and make their views known have been limited. For example, there were many questions that people were not able to ask during the consultation sessions on 24th March because of the time allowed for the meeting. During the staff consultation meeting over 25 minutes had been spent on the presentation and there was only 30 minutes left for questions and points. The public consultation meeting was over before many people had been able to ask their questions or voice their concerns.

Supporting material contained in the OHP presentation was not provided for the school in sufficient time for the school and others to consider and discuss the data and other details in a meaningful manner (the school's initial concerns regarding this material are included as an appendix)

According to "Closing a Maintained, Mainstream School - A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies." Department for Children Schools and Families, February 2010, if the consultation is part of an area-wide reorganisation as it is in this case (Future Organisation of Shropshire Schools), all related proposals should be consulted on at the same time. The school contends that this must include the school

that is being planned for the future and a comparative and fair assessment of all Shrewsbury Secondary schools. The same document advises that alternative proposals should be considered in the consultation, that the LA must publish a Children and Young Person's Plan, and that affected pupils must be consulted (section 176 of the Education Act 2002). None of this seems to have been done.

During consultation sessions we have noted a number of contradictory statements from the LA which have a significant bearing on the validity of the proposals.

- In earlier consultation sessions it was claimed by the LA that there are too many secondary schools in Shrewsbury. In direct contradiction, on 24th March a public statement was made to say a new secondary school will be needed in the North West of the town in the early 2020s!
- On 24th March it was stated that there is no issue with the quality of education at The Wakeman. Later during the same meeting however, it was claimed that the driver for the change is to improve the quality of education in Shropshire!
- A statement from a council officer said it is 'all about money in Shropshire's schools budget and less needs to be spent on premises'. Yet it was stated in the same meeting by LA officers that some Shropshire schools have banked a total of £7.5m. Despite the provision of wide variety of other data at earlier consultation sessions there was no mention or breakdown of data concerning the money being banked by Shropshire on behalf of some schools. This must be taken into account in a consultation on the future of Shrewsbury's secondary school provision.

Conclusion

The Wakeman provides an excellent service in the community enabling young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Embedded and persistent rumours about the likely closure of the school have been extremely damaging to the school and have led directly to its current under subscription. This is now being cited as the reason for closure. The current specific proposals have further damaged the school. The LA should not be able to make this damage terminal. The school should be supported and allowed to rectify the situation.

Closing the Wakeman will not save the money needed by the Council, will remove parents' educational choice in Shrewsbury and will not increase standards. The reasons for closing the school are not valid, there will be no long term savings and they do not stand up to scrutiny. The closure will have a long term detrimental impact to the community and will be very damaging to the credibility of the council. There is no justification in closing the school.

Why Waste Wakeman!

Appendix 1.

Comments on Data provided by LA during consultation Meeting – 24th March

Following the consultation meeting on the 24th March the school requested copies of the slides used in the presentation of the LA case. These were provided to the school on 31 March at the end of Week 5 of the 6 week consultation period. We have had very little time to review the data but would like to make the following points.

Pupil Numbers – Slides 6 to 11.

In terms of future projections and unfilled places we feel that the graphs and tables are flawed and misleading. There is a working assumption that Shrewsbury Secondary schools account for 23% of pupil numbers in Shropshire. This is incorrect. It should be 28% as for primary schools. “Pupil” needs to be defined as 11 to 16 years old. Some Shropshire secondary schools have 17 and 18 year olds and this age group has incorrectly been factored into calculations.

Planned Housing Developments – Slides 12 and 13

Again we feel that these are misleading and incorrect. The map of the Sustainable Urban Extensions gives the impression that all of the planned housing in Shrewsbury will be in the far south and west areas of town. This isn't true. The Local Development Framework sets out housing developments up to 2026, and shows that only 25% of this will be in the SUEs. 60% will be on previously developed sites. Most of the new housing in the short term will be family homes, close to the Wakeman. The LDF housing developments up to 2026 – 6,500 houses are planned for Shrewsbury and these will be scattered throughout the town with many of the sites still to be identified. Only 25% will be in urban extensions (mixed developments with housing, businesses, services etc) to the south and west of the town with all housing elements within the bypass and so within 3 miles of Wakeman. The majority of this new housing, 60%, will be on previously developed sites. The bigger sites which will come forward in the shorter term are the Gay Meadow, Flax Mill, land off Ellesmere Road just beyond Coton Hill and Spring Gardens. The market is moving away from apartments and dictating that the preponderance of new housing will be family homes. In the current market it is difficult for developers to get finance for anything else. Most of the housing in the short term is within a stone's throw of Wakeman with a preponderance of family homes. There will not be massive amounts of housing in the urban extensions as the consultation suggests. But even these are within 3 miles.

Admission Number – Slides 15 and 16

We object to further increases to admission numbers at other Shrewsbury secondary schools. Admission numbers should be reduced as explained earlier. As illustrated elsewhere in this submission, pupil and parental choices will be severely impacted without The Wakeman and as Shrewsbury gets near to and exceeds Year 7 capacity levels.

Transition and Travel – Slides 18 to 20

An impact assessment will demonstrate that Year 7 and 8 pupils and their families will be disadvantaged when pupils are forced to move away from a school of their choice. The assumption that they will not be disadvantaged is unfounded.

Home to school journeys – Slide 21.

The 3 mile rule- the Wakeman is the only school in Shrewsbury within 3 miles of all of the residential areas in town.

Questions and Discussions - Slide 22.

Many people who attended the consultation meeting felt that they did not get a chance to have a say. The meeting time allowed was not sufficient and many people were unable to ask their questions or make their points. Also some questions were not addressed by Council Officers.

Education Issues - Slides 23-25

We assume these points are from the IPC report recommendations which were a review of primary and not secondary school re-organisation. Much of the information was about primary schools and rural areas, which we feel was not relevant to the Wakeman case. However the recommendation is made that the "Shropshire County Council should review its admissions policies, with a view to balancing stability with flexibility, and should begin a review of the catchment areas of its schools, to ensure that they reflect contemporary social and physical geography." With this recommendation, it doesn't make sense to consult on closing The Wakeman without a consideration of catchment areas.

We also feel that other recommendations from the IPC report have not been carried out in respect of the proposals to close The Wakeman. For example "Any future proposals for school reorganisation to be considered by Shropshire Council should include an explicit assessment of the views of the parents of all the children affected by the proposals, to be set alongside other factors." And "Shropshire Council should carry out an environmental impact assessment when considering any future reorganisation, in consultation with schools and parents". Finally, "Shropshire Council should examine the relationship between all its secondary and primary schools including the scope for reorganising individual secondary schools". If the council want to reorganise secondary provision in Shrewsbury then they must compare all schools fairly, not just pick on The Wakeman.

Appendix 2.

Outline Proposals

The consultation process for the re-organisation of schools in Shropshire has identified significant differences of opinion but what everyone has agreed on is the need to embrace the “Every Child Matters” concept and to provide the maximum support and opportunities for all the young people in Shropshire by making the best use of resources available.

Having listened carefully to the directions that the school was given during the consultation with the council the following proposals:

- Address the understanding that the significant issue is the fall in the pupil numbers entering secondary education for the period to 2017 when the trough is reached and numbers then increase again.
- understand that any contribution made to increase school income in the interim period has to be obtained from new funds
- ensure additional activities that the school wishes to pursue build on its already strong community relations, making greater use of the state of the art ICT and video conferencing facilities (better use of resources) and build on it's Arts Centre Status for the County
- significantly contributes to the ECM (Children Act 2004) by safeguarding vulnerable children in the school, preventing children from becoming vulnerable by removing choice and ensuring these groups remain in the education system, and supporting additional learners to access the system

Proposal 1 – To Provide an ICT based hub (blended learning approach) to support children currently not in mainstream education.

In Shropshire there are 100 secondary aged school children and 70 primary aged children who are known to be home schooled. There are also a number of excluded children and children although not excluded do not access classroom environments for a number of reasons. This includes children from travelling groups (e.g.10 in Oswestry, Prees and Cressage), children on the vulnerable register and children not registered as home schooled.

The County does not have any legal obligation to force individuals to register with a school, but they are responsible for ensuring curriculum needs are suitably met. A number of issues arose out of the Badman Report in 2009 including an overwhelming response from those who do home school, against a compulsory register as they felt among several reasons that this would restrict there right to educate their children in the preferred format. This proposal recognizes this desire and would offer parents the opportunity to continue home schooling but also access additional specialist support in areas such as science, languages, arts and media through a mix of blended learning techniques. Parents already make use of groups coming together to share learning opportunities and this would give them access to fantastic facilities and teaching support.

Janet Millward from Inclusion Services has also indicated there may be support from the travelling community to access specialist support. Many families have taken advantage of the Home Laptop Scheme and could be enabled to access on-line learning. Some also pay already for tutor support and the grouping of individuals may provide economies of scale.

These groups identified receive little in support of funding to meet the needs of their children's education and if sensitively handled could provide a "win-win" scenario. A scheme similar to the one outlined has been implemented at Hollinsclough Church of England primary school and the report from the BBC on 12th January 2011 is given below and we will be contacting the CfBT Education Trust charity, to identify what assistance may be available.

Proposal 2 – Response to the Wolf Review

The 14-19 agenda is changing with more emphasis being placed on the support required to get young people into sustainable work with high quality vocationally driven programmes.

The Education Secretary Michael Gove immediately accepted four recommendations from the report including

- to allow high-quality vocational qualifications that have not been accredited to be offered in schools and colleges in September 2011

The review further goes on to state that a key recommendation should be "incentivising young people to take the most valuable vocational qualifications pre-16, while removing incentives to take large numbers of vocational qualifications to the detriment of core academic study"

Wakeman School and Arts College offers a central, accessible facility that is an ideal building to support this agenda. The school already has links with the local colleges which could be developed further to explore establishing an ATA and working with local business to provide the skills that are required in the community. As government policy is being developed and rolled out in this area the Department of Education has been contacted to establish the wish of the Wakeman School to pioneer solutions to the challenge of the 14 – 19 agenda.

A number of other suggestions have also been put forward including the development of links with local International schools to make use of the superb language facilities and teaching staff and making the school into the County Media and Arts Centre developing links with places such as the Hive around the County.

These proposals are viable alternatives which should be considered as alternatives to the one proposal to close the Wakeman School and Arts College.

A rural primary school where about half of the pupils are part time has enjoyed a four-fold increase in numbers.

The head, Janette Mountford-Lees, said the system was "making the school more viable"

Hollinsclough Church of England primary started its "flexible school options" in the Staffordshire hamlet last summer.

Head Janette Mountford-Lees said it was making the school "more viable" after pupil numbers rose from five to 23.

The school, which serves a parish population of 150, has attracted pupils from Greater Manchester and Yorkshire.

'With the times'

The Diocese of Lichfield said, like many rural schools, Hollinsclough faced "a continual battle to balance the competing demands of serving the needs of local children with providing value for money for the taxpayer".

The part-time pupils attend on agreed days, with their formal school education being supplemented by home teaching.

In another option, home-schooled children can attend a "learning hub" at least once a fortnight with parents or carers for an educational workshop.

The head said she strongly believed that education provision "should move with the times".



The school said a charity has provided financial assistance related to the scheme

"[We] understand that parents are often choosing to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons.

"But many would still like support from the school system.

"Our more flexible approach to education encourages and supports those parents and children who have made this choice."

One parent, Clare Ash, from Waterhouses, Staffordshire, said her children go to the school about once a week.

She added: "This lot [her children] love it, because it's a chance to be with other children for a whole day."

We are looking at it, but we can't say it's going to be the solution for all rural education, because it's a complex issue"

Ian Parry Staffordshire County Council deputy leader

Asked about the advantages of not being educated entirely at home, another parent, Debbie Dean, said: "It's been easier to do some activities.

"We do a lot at home, but it's been easier to come to one central place and do the activities all together instead of going out to different places to do different things all the time."

The school said a new system started last summer involving the CfBT Education Trust charity, which has provided financial assistance.

Ms Mountford-Lees said: "All the children are different ages. They're all on individual education plans. They're all doing their own work.

"So it's a continuation of what we'd already started, that everybody was working at their own stage."

In terms of whether it could be a blueprint to save other rural schools, Conservative-controlled Staffordshire County Council said this was "difficult to tell at the moment".

Deputy leader and cabinet member for children and young people Councillor Ian Parry said: "It is an option and it's very much down to what parents want.

"We are looking at it, but we can't say it's going to be the solution for all rural education, because it's a complex issue at the moment."

The Diocese of Lichfield said the school was "developing an innovative approach to education which could well be a model for small schools in rural areas to achieve longer-term sustainability".

Appendix 4

Consultation on Draft Proposal to Close The Wakeman School**Introduction**

This Appendix selects and responds to the main points raised during the consultation, including at the meetings with staff, governors and the community. The notes of the meetings at each school are also attached to the report as appendices 2a and 2b. The actual responses received are available for inspection in the Members Library and will be available to Members at the Cabinet Meeting on 4 May 2011.

B. Points Raised and Response by Officers

Ref	Points Raised	Responses
.		
	Why is Wakeman the only secondary school to be mentioned in the report?	Wakeman is not the only secondary school mentioned in the report. Rhyn Park School, which has similar pupil numbers but is the only secondary school serving a wide geographic area, is also subject to statutory proposals. Wakeman was the only Shrewsbury secondary school officers felt met the criteria for closure. It was the high surplus capacity and the low numbers joining the school which was the biggest factor in the decision.
	Why have staff not been consulted on the decision and why have no letters been received from the LA detailing the proposal?	The Council believed that the best way to inform staff was for their head teacher to do so. The Council therefore arranged to brief the headteacher before the publication of the report so that this information could be passed on to staff. The Council consulted staff at their own meeting.
	Since half term 3 students have already left the school due to the threat of closure –	The Council believes that pupils should not transfer out of any school because of rumours or even proposals, and has made a briefing paper available for Wakeman and all other schools in Shrewsbury

	rumours of closure affecting atmosphere of school.	to pass on to parents to dissuade them from transferring.
	Money has been spent on fantastic equipment at the school, the five-year warranty on which will be lost if it is transferred to another school.	Schools across the county are continually investing in new equipment. If the school were to close, even equipment bought this year would be three years old before the closure took effect. Much of the equipment would be transferrable to other schools.
	If the school closes SEN provision in the area will be inadequate. In some years 48% of students had specific learning requirements.	We have acknowledged the quality of provision at Wakeman. Others schools in also Shrewsbury provide excellent support for students with specific learning needs.
	Wakeman does a fantastic job with vulnerable students, and works well with outside agencies to provide valuable support to those who really need it. Students are horrified at the thought of having to go elsewhere.	Other schools in Shrewsbury serve deprived areas and are well practiced in supporting vulnerable students.
	There were concerns expressed regarding issues around transportation and	This is acknowledged. However, there is only a small group of students who live more than three miles from Meole Brace School. These pupils, should their parent choose to transfer them to

	<p>access to Meole Brace – 3 miles is too far for a student to walk to school, and buses are more expensive.</p>	<p>Meole Brace, would be eligible for free home to school travel. There is a larger group of students who live to the north of the town centre. There are already students who walk or cycle across Shrewsbury to get to Meole Brace School, including some from that area.</p> <p>It is important to note that although there is a guarantee of a place in Meole Brace School, parents can apply for places in other schools should they wish.</p> <p>As part of the process the Council has to name a particular school where students could be accommodated. The Council has considered the walking and cycling routes to Meole Brace and consider that it is feasible.</p> <p>However, individual situations will be assessed and support will be provided where necessary. Where students live over three miles from the receiving school they will be provided with a bus pass to bring them into town.</p>
	<p>The vision for education in Shropshire captures what Wakeman is all about.</p>	<p>The quality and inclusiveness of provision at Wakeman is not disputed. However, in order to ‘maintain and continue to improve excellent education in Shropshire’ we must move towards spending less money on buildings and more money on teaching and learning.</p>
	<p>The school makes excellent use of the facilities on its doorstep – the river, the dingle, the theatre, the quarry, and the town itself – and</p>	<p>Other schools in Shrewsbury also use these resources.</p>

	shouldn't be robbed of these resources.	
	What will happen to the building if the school closes?	If the school were to close, the building would be considered for other education uses, other community or public uses and then for disposal for commercial or development use, in that order.
	Concerns were raised that the sale of the building was the motive for closing the school, and about budget cuts being a political motive behind the proposal.	The proposal to close the school was based on the fact that Wakeman meets the criteria for closure on which the Council consulted last year and then approved in November 2010. The whole of Wakeman's budget would remain within the Dedicated School Budget ringfence, none of it would be used to meet Council cuts. No consideration was given to the future use of the site until after the decision to examine the school was taken on grounds of the efficient use of resources.
	In the previous round of school organisation the proposals to close Wakeman were dropped. Will this happen again?	There were no proposals to close Wakeman in 2008, and no officer of the Council mentioned a possible closure of the school as part of the round of proposals at that time. The Council is engaged in an open consultation at this stage. The Cabinet is free to reject or amend the current proposals at any stage.
	What is meant by 'use of resources'?	At this time too much money is being spent on buildings and running costs. Funds need to be redirected so they can be spent on teaching and children.
	How can the money spent on the school be justified if the closure goes ahead?	The Council invests in all its schools as far as money allows. Schools also have their own funding called DFC and from time to time special grants become available. In 2003, the government gave a

		grant to Wakeman to replace the teaching accommodation on the lowest floor which floods from time to time. Other schools have had similar levels of investment over similar time scales. The Council wants to invest in the education of pupils currently at its schools as well as those who might come in the future.
	This proposal will hit the poorest and most vulnerable students hardest.	The timescales for the proposals mean that there would be adequate time for planning and preparation for the transition to new schools. Many pupils change schools during their school career, for example because their parents move house.
	Questions were raised over the figures in the proposals – numbers are increasing, will the LA be changing its figures?	Additional information brought forward has been considered as part of the decision making process.
	Has the economic impact of the proposal been considered?	The Council could not identify any major economic impact from the proposals, but asked specifically during the consultation for any evidence to be presented to it. No new information has been provided in responses to the consultation. There is likely to be a reduction in footfall at one or two local businesses, but this is unlikely to have a major impact on their viability.
	Why have some schools been allowed to expand?	There has been no general expansion of school capacities. There is one school in the Shrewsbury area where capacity has increased in the last five years. This happened because a sports hall was built for the school and the LA therefore had to

		reassess capacity.
	Some older buildings at certain schools will not be able to cope with increased capacity.	No school building in the Shrewsbury area is within 30 years of the end of its life. This said, the Council is constantly investing in improving buildings, and so there is also likely to be some refurbishment of buildings as time goes on.
	All the schools in Shrewsbury should be downsized to save money.	Shrewsbury has too many secondary places and sites - this level of provision is not sustainable. Parental preference means that popular schools fill up first. The only way to increase the number of pupils at The Wakeman would be to reduce the size of other popular schools, which would be likely to attract major opposition, and is against Government policy.
	Has a community impact surveyed been carried out?	See Section 4.3 above. The Council indicated its initial thoughts in the Cabinet Report and supplementary consultation document, and also advertised that it wanted to receive evidence about community impact during the consultation period. As part of the consultation we have been receiving information about the potential impact on the consultation, and this has been considered in the main report.
	The school plays a crucial role in the town. Without a town centre school families would not come to or stay in the town. Removing the school will make Shrewsbury a retirement town, and the	There is no evidence that this would be the case. Securing quality, sustainable secondary provision in Shrewsbury is what would attract families to the area. There are five other schools in the area, each of which have their own strengths, and all of which are accessible to Town residents. It is possible that the Wakeman building could be utilised for education or an alternative community use in the future.

	personality of the town will be lost.	
	Why is education not the priority?	It is; the whole process is about getting more money into education, spending more money on teaching and less on buildings.
	If we come forward with an alternative proposal will the Council listen?	The LA has listened to and considered alternative proposals brought forward.
	Extensive disruption and distress will be caused.	This has not been the case in other school organisation changes, although the fear of disruption is very real and will be addressed during the planning period. Support will be given to students and staff to minimise disruption.
	A lot of schools have money held in reserves.	Some schools are holding balances – around £7.5million in all – and the Council shares the frustration that this money cannot be freed up due to legislative constraints. Yet it remains that there is a problem in Shrewsbury and at the Wakeman in particular. In any case, using reserves to deal with the fact that government grants have been reduced by £10m per year over the last 10 years, and are still falling in line with pupil numbers, is at best only a very short term solution. The long term, viable and sustainable solution is to make sure that more money is fed up to go into front line education each year, and this involves looking at the amount of money spent on keeping open the current number of schools.
	The way forward should be to increase numbers	Pupil numbers in Shrewsbury are too low to sustain all of the secondary schools we have. If numbers

	at Wakeman.	increase in Wakeman they will decrease elsewhere and simply move the problem around. In any case, the current numbers at Wakeman are the result of the exercise of parental preference.
	Potential for amalgamation between Priory School and Meole Brace School?	The Council considered this before bringing forward its proposals and have reconsidered it in the light of the consultation. However, the issue at Wakeman is not about increasing standards or making minor adjustments to costs, it is the subsidy which every pupil pays to keep the site operating.
	A small, inclusive school like Wakeman is much better for some children.	There is no evidence to suggest that students perform better in smaller schools.
	Wakeman is chosen by children for its role in improving confidence and self-esteem, and in dealing effectively with bullying.	This point is acknowledged, but is also true of secondary schools throughout the area.
	What about the future development of Shrewsbury?	This is dealt with in more detail in Appendix 6. It is expected that in around the 2020s Shrewsbury will require more school places. As town development is most likely to be concentrated in the West of the town, that could be where an additional school is needed, and this would be funded by a mixture of resources from developers and government grants.
	Who will pay for the costs of new uniforms?	If the proposal were to go ahead there would be ample time for families to plan to change to a new uniform. In past cases the Council has been able to support those who required additional help.
	Wakeman is a highly	The LA agrees that Wakeman is a good school and

performing school in terms of the English 'Bac'.	the decision to consider closing is not based on the school's performance.
Couldn't the sixth form share some of the building space?	This was considered before the Council brought forward its proposals. Sharing the space was not seen as the best option.
The real issue is that young people leave Shrewsbury for work or study and never return.	The Council is committed to considering this issue, specifically in terms of higher education, affordable housing and graduate employment.
What guarantee is there that art and drama facilities and provision will be as good elsewhere?	The LA is making no negative judgement about provision, and other schools do provide good opportunities for the arts.
This decision is being taken by Cabinet, not Council.	The Council's constitution, agreed by full Council, states that decisions on school organisation are a matter for Cabinet. This is in line with the practice in many if not most other local authorities.
Close relationship between students and staff at the school due to its size – this cannot be replicated.	There is no reason why students can not build up close relationships in a larger school, and many do.
Could the building be used for council offices or other community uses	The public sector is undergoing a marked contraction which will continue for at least the next three years. There is no need for additional space for Council officers, or other community users, at this time.

Pupil Numbers at The Wakeman School & Shrewsbury in General

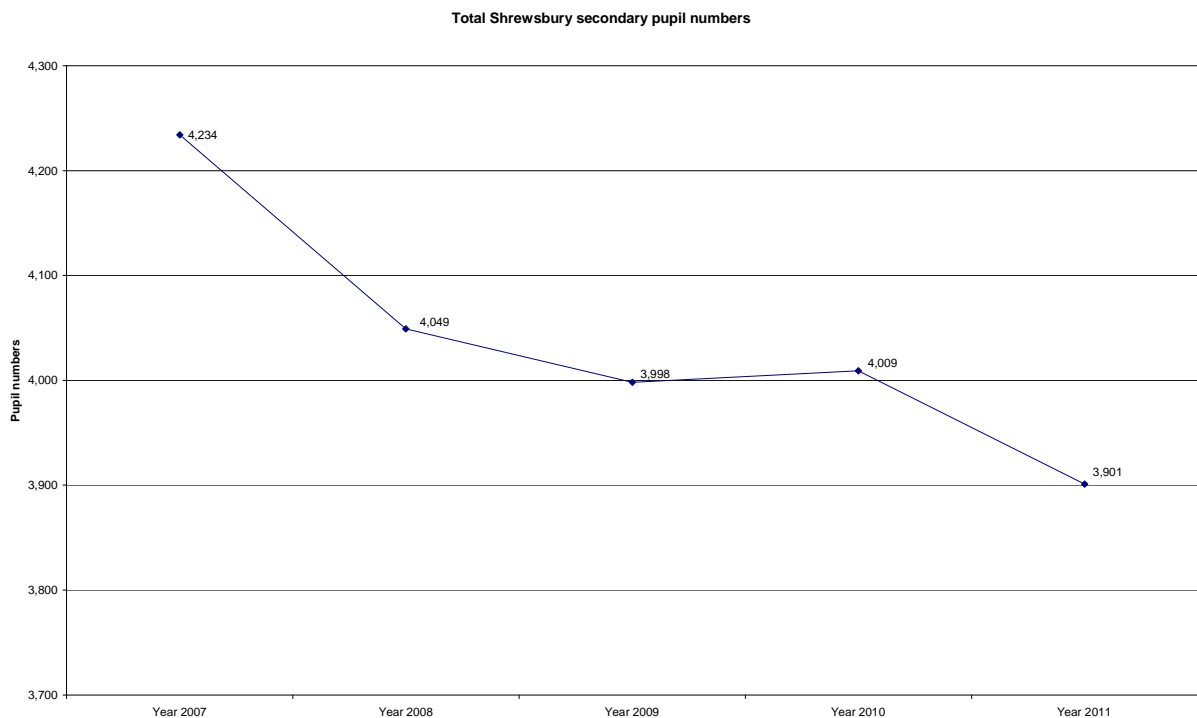
Introduction

On January 20, 2011, 3901 pupils were enrolled in secondary schools in Shrewsbury. These schools together had 4725 published places, a shortfall of 824 pupils (17.4%). Pupil numbers are currently falling further. Pupil numbers are forecast to rise again later this decade, but will not reach the levels on which the current capacity is based, other than through additional housing.

This paper explores projections of pupil numbers in Shrewsbury.

Pupil Numbers in Shrewsbury, 2006-2011

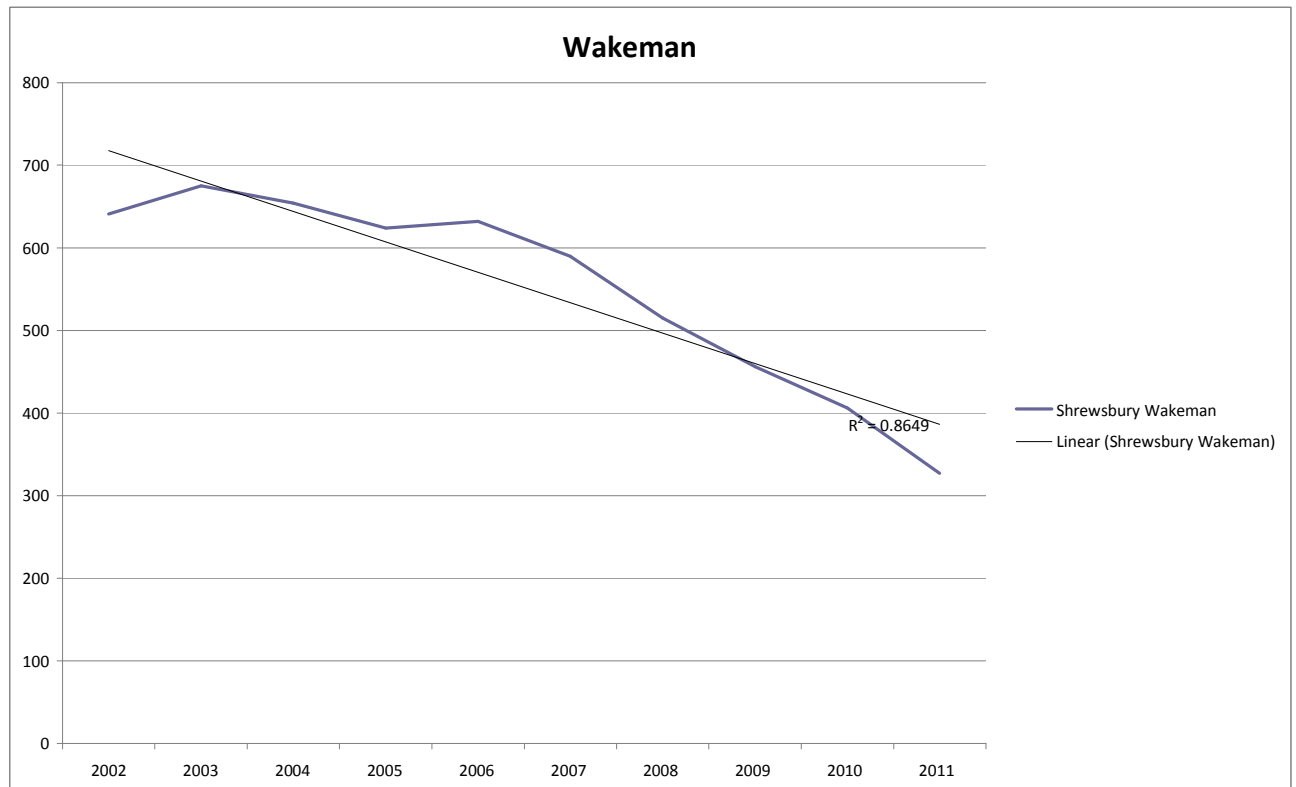
Pupil numbers in Shrewsbury have fallen sharply over the past five years, despite a significant degree of house building in the area.



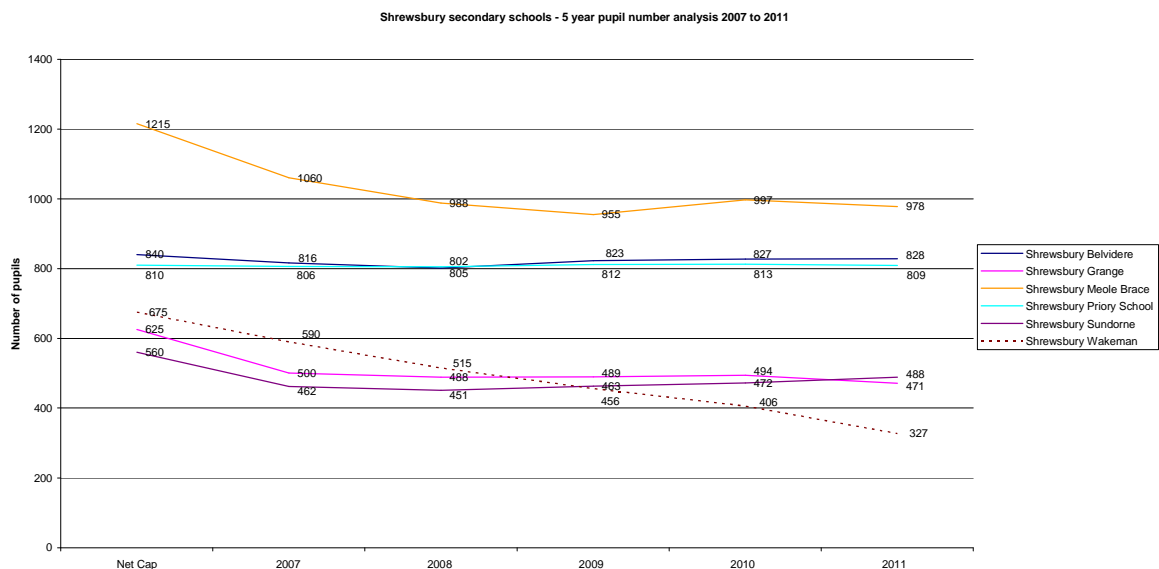
This reduction (333 pupils or 7.9%) is the equivalent in DSG funding at today's levels of £1.535m.

Pupil Numbers at The Wakeman School

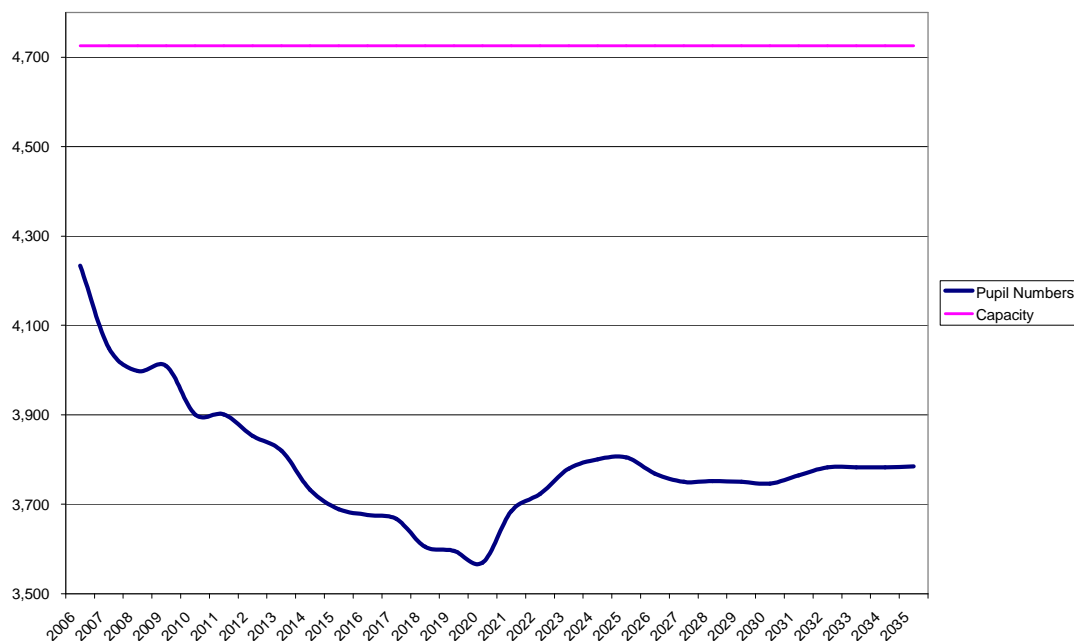
As a result of some other schools in the town being more likely to be chosen as preferences by parents the decline in pupil numbers at The Wakeman has been even sharper.



Note that this graph does not show that the primary school organisation proposals in 2008 had any effect on the general trend of pupil numbers. In contrast, many Shrewsbury schools have maintained pupil numbers over the last five years.



Pupil numbers in Shrewsbury have been around 23% of the total pupil numbers in Shropshire across a number of years. Secondary pupil numbers in Shropshire are forecast to vary as follows.



The projected further reduction of 332 pupils (£1.529m) would mean a total reduction of £3.07m per year in government grant compared with 2007.

Pupil Numbers and Housing Development

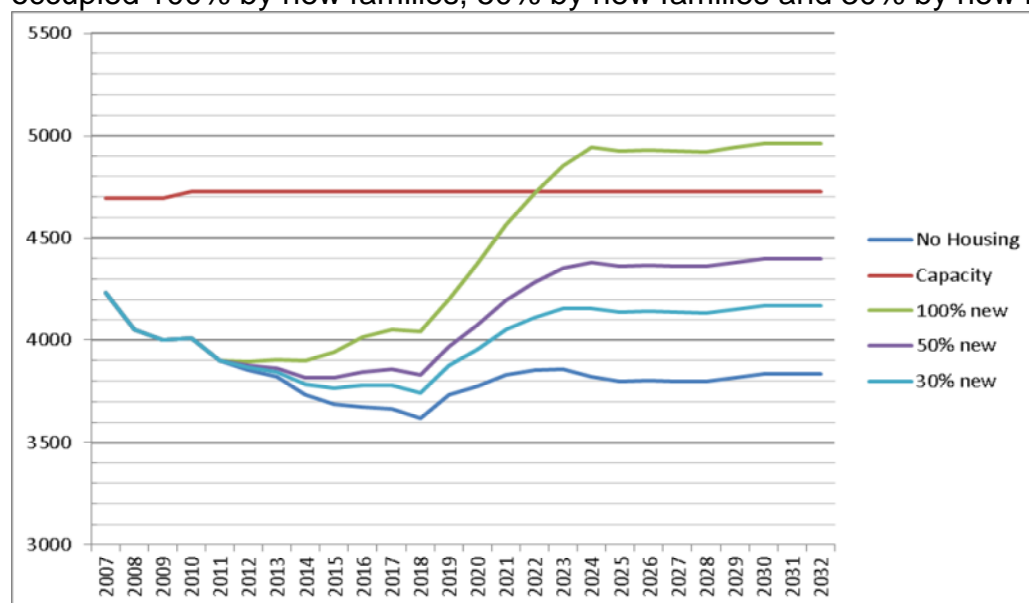
Shrewsbury has been identified as a major housing growth area. Over the next decade and a half, until 2026, it is expected that over 8,000 homes will be built in Shrewsbury. It might be expected that this will have a major impact on pupil numbers, except that over the last decade 12,000 houses have been built in Shropshire at a time when pupil numbers have reduced considerably. The reasons that pupil numbers do not increase directly with housing numbers are that the following categories of homes do not produce pupils in any great numbers:

- retirement homes;
- flats or one-bed starter homes;
- Executive homes.

In addition, there has been a growing trend for housing to be occupied by single adults as a result of family breakdown.

Finally, new housing does not of itself create new pupils. Often the effect is to move pupils from one location to another within an existing area, with the vacated homes being filled by single occupancy adults as above. The effect of these changes in housing use will be quantifiable following the release of data from the 2011 census in 2012 or 2013. However, at the moment in Shrewsbury, there is anecdotal evidence that only around 50% of new housing is occupied by families with (or intending to have) children

The graph below shows the effect should all the allocated housing be completed and occupied 100% by new families, 50% by new families and 30% by new families.



The current capacity of Shrewsbury secondary schools is 4725 places. This can be expanded by about 200 by making maximum use of existing accommodation, and would reduce again to approximately 4250 without The Wakeman (4725-675+200). The 100% housing forecast (which is unlikely to be achieved) would go through 4250 in 2019. The 50% forecast exceeds 4250 from 2022. However, this equates to 6400 additional houses. To reach this number of additional houses would involve large areas of new peripheral development, far from the current areas from which The Wakeman draws pupils, and could involve the development of a new or relocated secondary school to serve these areas.

Location of Housing and Capacity of Individual Schools

The location of two large areas for housing have been identified in Shrewsbury. These “Sustainable Urban Extensions” are to be located around the site of the Oxon Park and Ride (700 homes), and in the south of the town off Oteley Road (900 homes). The exact mix of homes on these developments will not become clear (although initial discussions are being held in early April). However, the Urban Extensions homes are built into the projections above as though they were all 2 and three bed houses, and in the long term could therefore produce respectively up to 95 and 120 secondary age pupils at any one time (a maximum 19 and 24 per year group).

Not all the houses will be built at the same time, and not all the pupils will arrive in them at the same time. Existing pupils will be unaffected. However, the effect of these houses will be to make it less likely that parents from north Shrewsbury will be able to place their children in the schools in the south west of the town (Meole Brace and Priory) and more likely that pupils starting secondary school from these areas will be allocated places at Sundorne and Grove secondary schools.

The existing pattern of admissions to the Wakeman is shown in the table below:

Shrewsbury Electoral Divisions	School										
	Shrewsbury Priory School	Shrewsbury Sundorne	Shrewsbury Belvidere	Shrewsbury Grange	Shrewsbury Meole Brace	Shrewsbury Wakeman	Bishops Castle Community College	Baschurch Corbet School	Church Stretton	Ludlow CE	Market Drayton Grove
Abbey ED	3		113		6	14		1			
Bagley ED	8	6	4	95	46	51		7			
Battlefield ED	3	140	12	22	7	15					
Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton ED	29	2	86		303	56		1	66		
Belle Vue ED	83	1	8	1	76	19					
Bowbrook ED	124	1		1	44	2		2			
Castlefields and Ditherington ED	4	48	37	61	9	55				1	
Copthome ED	187	1	3		53	1					
Harlescott ED	2	40	17	223	15	21		1			
Meole ED	98	4	5		142	9			2		
Monkmoor ED	2	6	257	1	7	7		1			
Porthill ED	77	1	3	2	51	7	1	2			
Quarry and Coton Hill ED	12	2	12	15	15	29		2			
Radbrook ED	126				36	3					
Sundorne ED	3	200	17	29	11	6		3			
Underdale ED	3	19	238	6	16	18		1			1
Grand Total	764	471	812	456	837	313	1	21	68	1	1

Travelling to School Should The Wakeman Close

Should all the current pupils at The Wakeman transfer to Meole Brace, there are potentially a small number of pupils in the Monkmoor, Harlescott and Battlefield EDs who would be beyond the three mile walking distance. (For example, Greenfields School is around 2.75miles by walking route.) Should these pupils transfer and apply for home to school transport they will be assessed on an individual basis and appropriate support given (most likely a bus pass). The vast majority of current Wakeman pupils would be able to walk, and those who live farthest away might choose to transfer to another school. As noted above, it would become less likely over time that new starters at Meole Brace (other than siblings of current Meole Brace or Wakeman pupils) would be able to access places at Meole and instead would have a journey to Sundorne or Grange secondary schools.

Why Not Reduce the Size of Other Schools and Keep The Wakeman

The places at The Wakeman School have been available throughout the period of pupil number reduction. However, the number of parents choosing The Wakeman as their first preference has been consistently low. When overall pupil numbers were higher, a number of places at The Wakeman were filled by pupils who were unable to access their first choice. However, as pupil numbers have fallen it has been easier to access a place at other schools and pupil numbers have fallen faster at The Wakeman.

To artificially limit the number of pupils admitted to other Shrewsbury schools would be against successive Government's stated policy of maximising the ability of parents to access a place at their preferred school. The process would involve a similar one of consultation followed by statutory proposals as the current process and it would be expected that there would be considerable opposition from other schools and prospective parents.