



Committee and date  
**Cabinet**  
7 September 2011

Item No

**6**

Public

## **Proposals to Close Wakeman School and Arts College – Report on DfE Stage 3 Statutory Period for Representations**

**Responsible Officer** David Taylor Corporate Director – People's Services  
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### **Summary**

This paper reports the outcomes from the Statutory Period of Representations on the proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College and offer continuing pupils places at Meole Brace School Science College. This paper follows an extensive period of consultation on school organisation in Shropshire. The recommendations brought forward follow significant efforts on the part of the Local Authority, the schools and their communities, to find alternative long term and viable solutions to the challenges faced. The report also sets out the statement of case and information for decision makers.

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- (1) note the recommendation of the Corporate Director - People's Services that Cabinet should determine to close Wakeman School and Arts College, and offer continuing pupils a place in Meole Brace School and Science College;
- (2) approve the proposal to discontinue Wakeman School and Arts College, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury on 31 August 2013 in accordance with the proposals published by a Notice of Discontinuance dated 1 July 2011.

## **1. Background**

Over the past two years Shropshire Council has worked with schools, governors, Elected Members and local communities to review education provision for Shropshire. As part of the process, Shropshire Council consulted with those groups on a new vision for Shropshire Learners and a set of principles and criteria for school organisation which had been developed by a Cross Party Task and Finish Group of Members representing the main political groups on the Council. This period of consultation included area meetings and a website consultation. The vision, principles and criteria for school organisation were adopted as Council policy by full Council on 11 November 2010.

- In December 2010 and January 2011 the council consulted with school headteachers and chairs of governors on potential changes to school organisation arising from the school organisation criteria. These meetings were held across the county on an area basis.
- The information arising from these meetings, along with a dataset that had been checked and verified by schools was considered. The outcomes were then presented to Cabinet on 15 February 2011 in the form of a report which proposed consultation on the future of a number of schools in Shropshire.
- On 15 February, Cabinet approved pre-statutory consultation on the future of Wakeman School and Arts College – ‘In Your Hands’. This was in line with the Vision for Shropshire Learners and the School Organisation Principles and Criteria.
- On 4 May 2011, Cabinet received a report on the outcomes from the pre-statutory consultation (DfE Stage 1) and agreed to proceed to publication of Statutory Notices and statutory consultation on proposals to close Wakeman School and Arts College and offer continuing pupils places at Meole Brace School Science College.

This report sets out the recommendation of the Corporate Director - People’s Services and the information to be considered by decision makers as required by the Statutory Guidance on proposals to close schools issued by the Secretary of State.

## **2. Validity of Statutory Notice**

Cabinet agreed on 4 May to proceed to publish Statutory Notices for the closure of Wakeman School and Arts College. These were published on 16 May 2011.

During the representation period, a concern was raised about a potential ambiguity in the Notices relating to the phased nature of the implementation of the proposal. In order to ensure absolute clarity, the Council took the decision to republish Notices on 1 July 2011. Both versions of the Notices were posted at the school, in Shirehall and published in the Shropshire Star.

### **3. Pre-Statutory Consultation**

The report to Cabinet on 4 May 2011 following the pre-statutory consultation stage is attached at Appendix B. The pre-statutory consultation included meetings with staff, governors, parents, students and members of the local community. The Dioceses and other relevant bodies were also consulted. The pre-statutory consultation was wide ranging and included consideration of alternatives to closure.

The report to Cabinet on 4 May (Appendix B of this report) also contains comments on responses from earlier phases of the consultation, which were made available to Cabinet Members at that time. All of the responses to the pre-statutory consultation have again been made available to Cabinet Members prior to the publication of this report.

### **4. Responses Received During the Statutory Consultation**

During the period of statutory consultation, known as representations, a total of 87 responses were received. All of these responses, including those received with regard to each of the Public Notices, have been made available to Cabinet Members and considered in the preparation of this report.

Specific commentary on points raised during the period of representations following the publication of both Public Notices is included as Appendix C.

### **5. Changes to Pupil Numbers and Government Grant**

- 5.1. Pupil numbers in Shropshire schools peaked in the academic year 2001/2 at 40,282. By January 2011, this had fallen to 36,645, a drop of 3,637. Shropshire Council is funded by the Government at a rate of £4,611.67 per pupil, to cover all aspects of educational expenditure. This grant is called the Dedicated Schools Grant or DSG. The current DSG is £16.8m per year less than it would have been if pupil numbers had remained at 2002 levels. £9.84m of this reduction has happened in the last four years.

- 5.2. As pupil numbers have reduced, much of the reduction in grant has been matched by a reduction in expenditure of the direct costs of education – fewer teachers and classroom assistants are required for fewer pupils, for example.

The Council successfully amalgamated seven pairs of schools in 2009. There have also been two closures of very small schools since 2005. However, in general, the number of schools in the schools network remains very much as it was at the peak of pupil numbers in 2002.

- 5.3. As pupil numbers have decreased and school numbers have remained the same, a greater proportion of the DSG has been spent on fixed costs such as buildings, rates, maintenance and cleaning, energy and management costs.
- 5.4. Wakeman School and Arts College has experienced a slow decline in numbers over the last ten years. Wakeman School and Arts College had 675 pupils in September 2002. By September 2007, this had fallen to 515, a reduction of 23.7%. Appendix D shows the downward trend in numbers.
- 5.5. Shrewsbury is currently served by six secondary schools. The total admissions capacity for these schools is currently set at 4,725 places. The total capacity of the schools and their buildings is 4,965. This means that without physically expanding any of the current schools, 4,965 secondary school pupils can currently be accommodated in Shrewsbury.

In January 2011, there were 3,901 pupils in Shrewsbury. The number of pupils at Wakeman School and Arts College was 327. The admissions capacity of Wakeman School and Arts College is set at 675, meaning that 51.6% of the school's allocated places were unfilled. The total capacity of the building is 715. This means that without expansion the building can accommodate up to 715 pupils.

If the proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College was agreed, there would remain space for 4,250 secondary pupils in existing Shrewsbury secondary schools. This is the total building capacity for Shrewsbury minus the building capacity of Wakeman School and Arts College (4,965 – 715). This means that there are sufficient places in other Shrewsbury secondary schools for all the current pupils at Wakeman School and Arts College. If the proposal were to go ahead, sufficient places would be available at Meole Brace School Science College to accommodate all transferring students.

- 5.6. Analysis of Year 7 data shows that fewer parents are choosing Wakeman School and Arts College as their first choice of secondary school in

Shrewsbury. Between 1991 to 2000, on average 16.1% of Shrewsbury parents accepted places at Wakeman School and Arts College each September. From 2001 to 2005 this fell to 14.2% and from 2006 to 2010 to 8.5%. First preference choices follow a similar pattern, with numbers falling from 118 in September 2005 to 53 in 2009. Utilising admissions data up to September 2009 ensures consistency with previously distributed data.

- 5.7 Whilst numbers in the secondary sector have fallen, pupil numbers in Shrewsbury primary schools have begun to rise, and housing development is planned in the town. This will have an impact on secondary pupil numbers in the future. The issue of future secondary provision is addressed in the next section of this report.

## 6. Additional Housing and Pupil Number Projections

- 6.1. Shropshire Council's projected pupil numbers are calculated using standard and validated methods. Using these methods to forecast pupil numbers in Shrewsbury (using the former Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council dataset), gives projected secondary pupil numbers of:

- **3,727** in 2016; **3,873** in 2012; **3,832** in 2026; and **3,806** in 2031.

More detail on this subject, including a graphical representation is included in Appendix D. The numbers above do not include the effect of any planned additional housing.

- 6.2. Shropshire Council adopted the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework 2006 - 2026 on 24 February 2011. The strategy states that Shrewsbury should grow by about 6,500 homes during the plan period.

For the purposes of creating new schools to serve new housing developments, it is understood that 1,000 houses will produce 27 pupils in each year group. It is possible to refine this figure on an area by area basis, and when this is done for Shrewsbury the figure is calculated as 27.32 pupils per year group per 1,000 houses.

This figure is accurate when new homes are being developed as a standalone development on a green field site, or in a tightly defined catchment area. Across such a large area as Shrewsbury it is usual to see an element of recycling of existing occupants of housing, with additional dwellings often being occupied by couples or those with grown up children. National figures support this theory; they show an increase of 1,186,000 in households without children between 2001 and 2010. The same pattern is apparent in Shropshire; in the last decade almost 10,000

houses have been built but pupil numbers have continued to decline (by approximately 3,000).

In line with the information presented above, the pupil number projections set out in section 6.4 assume that 50% of the new houses will result in families new to the Shrewsbury area moving into either the new houses or houses vacated by families moving from within the town to new homes. The rationale for using the 50% figure, along with projections based on 100%, 50% and 30% new families are included in Appendix D.

6.3. When originally investigating school organisation in Shrewsbury, a maximum figure of up to 8,300 additional houses was used as a stress test for the assumptions on school capacity for future years. Following responses to the consultation, the current projections use the most recent figures provided by the Council's Development Planning team. These projections are based on development of 6,500 homes in the period 2006 - 2026 as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. Approximately 1,150 of these homes have been completed (up to the end of 2010/11), leaving 5,350 still to be built.

6.4. The projected total secondary pupil numbers (based on 50% of the new homes resulting in families new to the area) will be:

- 3,856 in 2014\*
- 3,853 in 2016;
- 4,120 in 2021;
- 4,211 in 2026;
- 4,184 in 2031.

\* 2014 is the first schools census date after the proposals are intended to be fully implemented.

As noted previously, the maximum capacity of Shrewsbury secondary schools other than Wakeman School and Arts College is 4,250.

## **7. Analysis of Secondary School Capacity in Shrewsbury**

7.1. The figures utilised in 6.4 demonstrate that, even with predicted housing development, there is no requirement to construct a new school as a result of the proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College. In the future, in order to maintain an overhead of places to accommodate parental preference, minor expansions to the capacity of other Shrewsbury secondary schools could be undertaken.

- 7.2. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy proposes that 15% of the new housing proposed for Shrewsbury will definitely be built on green field sites, with a further 15% possible if insufficient brown field sites are available. This means that between 975 and 1,950 houses could be built on sites peripheral to the existing town. The Council will consult on the sites to be chosen through the Site and Management of Development consultation process later this year. Depending on the location of the new sites, the Council could consider rebuilding and expanding one of the existing secondary schools on to a new site to serve a new area of development. This would be dependent on the location and scale of the development and the availability of funding from a combination of Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy and government grant sources. The Council should be able to see a clear pattern of development and a clear trajectory for pupil numbers by 2018, although some indication will be possible before then.
- 7.3. Another key figure in considering school capacities is the number of places available each year in Year 7. If Wakeman School and Arts College were to close, the building capacity of the remaining schools in Shrewsbury would be 850. This means that if the proposal went ahead, the remaining schools in the town could accommodate up to 850 Year 7 students per year. Further places could be created by re-designating accommodation within schools.

The number of Year 7 students in 2016 is forecast to be just less than 800. Depending on the impact of additional housing, from 2019 some Year 7 intakes could exceed the 850 mark. We are confident that with minor expansion or alterations, these pupils could be accommodated within existing schools in Shrewsbury. Admission numbers in individual intakes may need to be increased but this will not be problematic as numbers on roll in secondary schools across the town will still be some distance below total capacity.

- 7.4. The proposed receiving school for pupils currently at Wakeman School and Arts College is Meole Brace School Science College. In January 2011, Meole Brace School Science College had 978 pupils and an admissions capacity set at 1,215. The building capacity of the school is 1,260. This means that without expansion Meole Brace School Science College can accommodate up to 1,260 pupils.

The latest available figures show that the year group which have started Year 9 in September 2011 has 243 pupils at Meole Brace School Science College and approximately 52 at Wakeman School and Arts College. This number could be slightly higher or lower dependant on fluctuations in numbers on roll. If the proposals proceed, it is expected that the majority of the 52 pupils from Wakeman School and Arts College will join Meole

Brace School Science College in September 2012, although parents will also have the opportunity to apply for places in other schools. As such, the admissions number of Meole Brace School Science College will have to be temporarily increased to admit those pupils. This is within normal practice, as the requirements of Statutory Proposals override the Admissions Code in such situations, and no Statutory Notices have to be published. These pupils will join Year 10 in September 2012.

The latest figures that are available show that in September 2011 at Wakeman School and Arts College there will be approximately 9 pupils in Year 7 and 46 pupils in Year 8. If the proposal goes ahead these students would move schools in September 2013. Again, it is assumed that the majority of pupils will transfer to Meole Brace School Science College.

In summary, it is anticipated that, in line with the latest figures, approximately 107 students would have to move school if the proposal was agreed. As previously explained, this number could be slightly higher or lower dependant on fluctuations in numbers on roll. Approximately 52 of these would move in September 2012 and 55 in September 2013. If all pupils from Wakeman School and Arts College transfer to Meole Brace School Science College the admissions capacity for the school will be exceeded, but numbers on roll will be beneath the maximum capacity of the building. As such, the Council is able to guarantee a place at Meole Brace School Science College at the appropriate time to every student currently studying at Wakeman School and Arts College and who will be eligible for transfer. Total numbers at Meole Brace School Science College will be less if parents take up the opportunity to apply for places at other schools.

## **8. Home to School Journeys and Environmental Impact**

- 8.1. When considering home to school journeys, it is important to bear in mind that only pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 in September 2011 would transfer to other schools if the proposals proceed. Current figures show that this will be approximately 107 students, split over two years. The site of Meole Brace School Science College is 1.6 miles from the site of Wakeman School and Arts College. Many pupils live between the school sites, but there are a number of pupils who live north of the school site. A map showing the distribution of Wakeman School and Arts College pupils who would be eligible to take up places at Meole Brace School Science College is included in Appendix E.
- 8.2. The majority of the current pupils at Wakeman School and Arts College live within the statutory 3 mile travel limit of Meole Brace School Science College. Students who live beyond the 3 mile limit will qualify for free

home to school transport, likely to be in the form of a service bus pass. At present, there are a maximum of 22 pupils who could transfer who are in this situation. If all 22 pupils transfer to Meole Brace School Science College, the costs 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.

If parents and pupils opt to take up a place in a school other than Meole Brace School Science College, provision for home to school transport will be considered in line with Council policy.

- 8.3. Meole Brace School Science College is at the centre of a network of cycle and walking routes. As a result, the school has the highest number and proportion of pupils cycling to school of any secondary school in Shropshire. The Headteacher has recently agreed to increase the number of cycle rack spaces available to pupils. The proportion of pupils arriving at school by family car is less than at Wakeman School and Arts College.

Meole Brace School Science College is committed through its home to school travel policy to continuing to increase the number of pupils using sustainable home to school travel methods. The Council has recently further improved the safety of routes to the school and Meole Brace School Science College is included again in the Council's Safer Routes To School programme for 2011/12. It should be noted that Meole Brace School Science College has previously had up to 1,174 pupils, in the 2004/5 academic year, and that the total number of pupils in Meole Brace School Science College and The Priory School, a Business and Enterprise College, was 1,982 in that year, so that the addition of pupils from Wakeman School and Arts College to current numbers, making a maximum of 2,065 would be a relatively modest increase of 83 (4.2%).

There are no homes in Shrewsbury which would be more than 3 miles from an alternative school if Wakeman School and Arts College closes.

- 8.4. Wakeman School and Arts College building is solidly built and compact in form. This means that it is not prone to heat loss like some types of construction. The efficiency of the building is not central to the proposal being brought forward; however, as there is no need to expand any other school as a result of the proposal carbon emissions would be saved. The total carbon emissions which would be saved by these proposals would be approximately 263,500kg/CO<sub>2</sub>/year. Should it prove necessary in the

mid 2020's to add additional accommodation in Shrewsbury, the Council will be required to meet stringent energy efficiency targets, far in excess of what any current building in the schools' network achieves.

## **9. Educational Standards and Special Educational Needs**

- 9.1. The decision to propose the closure of Wakeman School and Arts College was taken on the basis of the School Organisation Principles and Criteria; pupil numbers, surplus places, continuing access to education and evidence of parental preference. The proposal is not based on educational standards.

During the initial consultation phase, Wakeman School and Arts College was judged by Ofsted to be 'Satisfactory'. Meole Brace School Science College was judged to be 'Good'. Wakeman School and Arts College has subsequently been re-inspected and the outcome from that inspection was a judgement of 'Good'. Both schools were judged to have some outstanding features.

- 9.2 The work of Wakeman School and Arts College staff to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) has been acknowledged throughout the process. It is reinforced that, like Wakeman School and Arts College, all Shrewsbury schools make good provision for children with SEN. All of the schools in Shrewsbury are judged by Ofsted to provide 'Satisfactory' or better support to students with SEN. Meole Brace School Science College is judged to provide 'Good' support for this group of students and Sundorne School and Sports College is considered to be 'Outstanding' in this area.
- 9.3. Consideration also needs to be given to the effect of funding surplus places on educational standards in all schools.

When funding is used to maintain surplus places the 'per pupil funding' is disproportionate. Pupils in schools with surplus places are funded more than pupils in other schools. Redirecting funding will reduce this inequality and result in fairer funding and better value for money across all schools in Shropshire.

In schools with high levels of surplus places a relatively fixed amount of the budget has to be spent on maintaining the buildings and appropriate leadership and staffing structures. As a consequence, a smaller proportion of the funding for these schools tends to be spent directly on teaching and learning.

Other schools, where the 'per pupil funding' is less, have proportionately less funding to support flexibility in terms of staffing structures, class size, the most effective use of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and professional development opportunities. It is this flexibility that allows schools to focus sharply on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress.

## **10. Information for Decision Makers**

The Department for Education's document "Closing a Maintained Mainstream School: A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies" summarises the factors which Decision Makers on School Organisation Proposals are required to take into account in reaching a decision.

The Decision Maker for this proposal is the Local Authority. Cabinet exercises this function, as the body charged with making decisions arising from policy decided by Council.

Statutory information for decision makers is summarised in Appendix F.

## **11. Financial Implications**

### **11.1. Revenue**

Wakeman School and Arts College receives a delegated budget each year. The funding from this budget comes from a total funding pot allocated to Shropshire Council by the Government, called the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is allocated to individual schools through a funding formula, which is subject to scrutiny by a group of headteachers, governors and Members called Schools Forum.

As stated throughout the report, Wakeman School and Arts College has seen a reduction in pupil numbers over the last ten years; this has placed increasing pressure on the school's budget.

Wakeman School and Arts College's budget will be placed under further pressure by the new local funding formula, implemented on 1 April 2011. The new formula, which was developed in consultation with schools and Schools Forum, is much simpler and transparent than its predecessor; it places more of an emphasis on pupil-led funding and aims to reduce the variation in the amount of funding each pupil in Shropshire receives.

On 15 February 2011, following consultation with schools and Schools Forum, Shropshire Council's Cabinet elected to phase the implementation of a new funding formula beginning 1 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 Wakeman School and Arts College 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.

The Corporate Director – People’s Services has recently met with representatives from all Shropshire secondary schools with deficit budgets. At the meeting which took place regarding the situation at Wakeman School and Arts College the Headteacher was able to confirm that, in order to maintain an effective establishment for teaching and learning, the school would need to post a deficit of approximately £164,000 in 2011/12. During the meeting, it was also agreed that as pupil numbers continue to fall, the rate of accumulation of this deficit is likely to rise. As such, it is estimated that there is potential for the deficit to increase to around £640,000 in 2012/13 based on numbers on roll of 240.

Despite exercising sound financial management, Wakeman School and Arts College faces significant challenges in relation to its budget. Efficiency savings and reductions in staffing costs that have been successfully implemented in previous years are no longer possible, if the school is to maintain the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum. Due to falling pupil numbers and the changes to the funding formula the school is no longer able to deliver quality education within in its allotted budget. As such, there is a real concern for the school’s future financial stability, regardless of the decision on the current proposals.

11.2 If the proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College went ahead, it would result in funding being redistributed to other Shropshire schools in two ways:

- Total funding redistributed

If Wakeman School and Arts College 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 pupil related funding would be used to set up new teaching groups in receiving schools, creating employment opportunities.

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 and Arts College receives £376,440 in non pupil-related funding. This will become available for redistribution through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

### 11.3 Capital

There are no significant capital implications arising from this proposal (see Pupil Number Growth, below). If the Council chose to expand one or more schools by a small number of places in the early 2020s, costs would be met from payments made through the Community Infrastructure Levy, and applicable Section 106 payments and Government grant for Basic Need additional school places.

The preferred future for the current building of Wakeman School and Arts College would be for educational purposes serving the town. As such, no capital receipt has been anticipated, although depending on the details of the future use of the building the possibility of a receipt remains, even if it used for educational purposes.

## 12. Conclusion

Wakeman School and Arts College was initially identified for further exploration and consultation following an area review with headteachers and governors in Shrewsbury. This review highlighted that there were too many secondary school places in the area. In line with the criteria, approved by Cabinet and Council, Wakeman School and Arts College was brought forward for discussion as it had a large number of surplus places, low pupil numbers and decreasing levels of first choice preferences.

During the two subsequent phases of consultation, these initial factors were confirmed. The school was found to have high fixed costs as a proportion of its budget, and to be reaching a stage where, as pupil

numbers continue to decline, it was facing major financial issues and was likely to build up a significant financial deficit.

If the school were to close, other schools would benefit both from the additional economies of scale possible with the pupil-led funding from transferring pupils, and from a share of the fixed costs which, although small when expressed in pounds per pupil, would build year on year and school by school to correct a substantial imbalance in the share of funding which is not directed towards front-line education.

In summary, it is clear that Wakeman School and Arts College is not, in its current state, financially viable and that:

- 1) there are no overriding social or financial reasons to keep Wakeman School and Arts College open;
- 2) Wakeman School and Arts College have not been able to come forward with a viable, sustainable, alternative to closure either through federation or another partnership;
- 3) Wakeman School and Arts College meets the criteria set out in the school organisation policy and criteria as a school which is no longer cost effective in the current network of Shropshire schools.

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

Report of the Independent Policy Commission on Primary School Organisation in Shropshire  
Report to Council 11 November 2011 New Shropshire Schools Vision and Organisation Policy  
Vision for Shropshire Learners (appendix to above)  
School Organisation Principles and Criteria (appendix to above)  
Data Sets for Area 8 (November 2010 and March 2011)  
Report to Cabinet 15 February 2011 Schools Organisation in Shropshire - Report on Consultations and Identification of Next Steps  
Report to Cabinet 4 May 2011 Proposals to Close Wakeman Secondary School – Report on DfE Stage 1 (Pre-Statutory) Consultation  
ONS SNPP 2008 (Published June 2010)  
ONS Statistical Bulletin Families and households in the UK, 2001 to 2010 (April 2011)  
Department for Communities and Local Government, Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England (National Statistics, November 2010)  
Comments during consultation phases (various)

**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 of a school does not, therefore, affect an individual pupil or parent's human rights.

**Environmental Appraisal**

Environmental issues are considered in the report and Appendix B

**Equalities Appraisal**

There is no disproportionate effect on minorities as a result of this proposal. All schools in Shropshire have the same duty to promote community cohesion and race relations and all are able to make appropriate provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### **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 (see also Financial Implications, Section 11). 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**

Shropshire Council has consulted widely on this proposal and the policies and principles which underpin it.

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 headteachers and governing bodies 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. Stage 1 (pre-statutory consultation) in the DfE process for school organisation changes, and was 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 staff, governors, 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 provided to the school. The school was also asked to gather the views of their pupils through their normal consultation arrangements. The Corporate Director – People's Services also met representatives of pupils from the Wakeman School and Arts College. Meetings were held at the school with school staff, governors and interested members of the community (including, particularly, parents and pupils – a number of whom spoke at the meeting).

Cabinet agreed on 4 May to proceed to publish Statutory Notices for the closure of Wakeman School and Arts College. These were published on 16 May 2011. During the consultation period, a response identified a potential ambiguity in the Notices relating to the phased nature of implementation of the proposals. As a result, the

Notices were republished on 1 July 2011. Both versions of the Notices were posted at the school and in Shirehall and published in the Shropshire Star.

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. All consultation responses received to the specific proposals regarding Wakeman School and Arts College at whatever stage, including those received in response to each of the Public Notices, have been available to Cabinet Members in the Members' Library and considered in the preparation of this report. Specific commentary on points raised during the period of representations following the publication of either version of the Public Notice is included as Appendix C.

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Cllr. Aggie Caesar-Homden

**Local Member**

All Shrewsbury Members (School is physically located in Cllr. Jo Jones' Division)

**Appendices**

- A Copy of Statutory Proposal (Statutory Notice plus Section 15 information)
- B Report to Cabinet 4 May 2011 on DfE Stage 1 Consultation
- C Comments on issues raised during the Statutory Period of Representations (original submissions are available to Members in the Members' Library)
- D Additional Information on Demographics and School Places in Shrewsbury
- E Maps of the distribution of all Wakeman and Meole Brace secondary pupils and pupils eligible for transfer to Meole Brace
- F Statement of Case



## Discontinuance of the Wakeman School and Arts College

**Please note that this Notice replaces the Notice originally published on 16 May 2011, which is being withdrawn.**

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Shropshire Council, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ intends to discontinue Wakeman School and Arts College, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AA on 31 August 2013.

No places will be offered for Years 7 or 10 at the school in September 2012. Pupils in Year 9 in July 2012, and Years 8 and 9 in July 2013 will be offered places at Meole Brace School Science College in September 2012 and September 2013 respectively.

Pupils will be offered places at Meole Brace School Science College, Longden Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DW. Expansion of this school is not necessary in order to receive the displaced pupils.

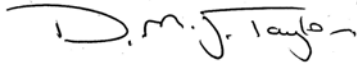
Pupils will be entitled to transport provision in line with the terms of the Shropshire Council school transport policy. Shropshire Council endeavours to minimise the use of low occupancy vehicles for home to school transport, and encourages the use of sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and school buses.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Corporate Director – People's Services (ref CB/Wakeman), Shropshire Council, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ.

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the Corporate Director – People's Services (ref CB/Wakeman), Shropshire Council, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ.

Please note that the statutory period for representations will run for six weeks from the date of this notice, however, representations made in response to the notice published on 16 May 2011 with regard to the Wakeman School and Arts College will still be considered by Shropshire Council's Cabinet.

Signed



David Taylor, Corporate Director – People's Services, Shropshire Council

Dated: 1 July 2011

**Notes:** The proposal originally published on 16 May stated August 2012 as the date of implementation, when it should have stated August 2013. Shropshire Council is therefore withdrawing the notice dated 16 May 2011 and is publishing a replacement notice to allow representations to be made during a further period of consultation. The replacement Notice makes it clear that the closure date will be August 2013, although the school will stop admitting new pupils from August 2012. The opportunity has also been taken to clarify the arrangements for the implementation of the proposals set out under Regulation 14 of the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Responses which have already been submitted to the Council in response to the original publication dated 16 May 2011 will be taken into account by Shropshire Council's Cabinet in deciding on this proposed Notice.

Pupils in the current Year 9, 10 and 11 will be able to complete their 11-16 education at the Wakeman School and Arts College. Pupils in the current Year 8 will transfer to an alternative school from September 2012, and pupils in the current Year 7 and those joining Year 7 in September 2011 will transfer to an alternative school in September 2013.

Parents should be aware that places will be available at other secondary schools in the area at the time of their children's transfer. Support will be given in matching destinations as far as possible with each pupil's curriculum interests. However, a guaranteed place will remain available at Meole Brace School Science College if an application (and/or admissions appeal) to another school is unsuccessful. Parents will be responsible for home to school travel arrangements to any alternative school other than Meole Brace School Science College.

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

### **Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):**

#### **Contact details**

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

Shropshire Council, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ.  
The Wakeman School and Arts College

#### **Implementation**

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

Shropshire Council intends to discontinue Wakeman School and Arts College, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AA on 31 August 2013.  
No places will be offered for Years 7 or 10 at the school in September 2012.  
Pupils in Year 9 in July 2012, and Years 8 and 9 in July 2013 will be offered places at Meole Brace School Science College in September 2012 and September 2013 respectively.

#### **Consultation**

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

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

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

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

Copies of consultation papers were made available on the Council's website and were also sent to the school, other schools in the county, all Governing Body members and staff for the school in question, the appropriate local Councillor for the area, the local parish/town council(s) for the school, parents with pupils already at the school including nursery pupils, the appropriate Church of England and Catholic diocesan officers and the local Member of Parliament. These either took the form of email contact or paper copies as appropriate.

A copy of the Cabinet paper is attached. This document includes copies of the consultation document, school and public meetings and the formal responses received.

### **Objectives**

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To improve standards of education by increasing the proportion of the dedicated school budget which is targeted to frontline education. This would be achieved by reducing surplus places and the number of inefficient school sites in Shropshire, through the closure of the Wakeman School and Arts College in line with the criteria adopted by Shropshire Council.

### **Standards and Diversity**

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

The Wakeman School and Arts College is a community school. It has been inspected by Ofsted and reported to be good. The named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College is a community school, which has been inspected by Ofsted and reported to be good.

Closing the Wakeman School and Arts College would enable £1,726,990 to be redistributed to other schools, with significant potential to raise standards as a result of extra resources.

### **Provision for 16-19 year olds**

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

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities, for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

### **Need for places**

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

The Wakeman School and Arts College has 327 pupils in a building with 675 places. There are 476 unfilled places in neighbouring schools including 237 at Meole Brace School Science College

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

Not applicable.

### **Current School Information**

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

The number of pupils at the school in January 2011 was 327. The school takes pupils aged 11 to 16. It is a mixed school. There were fifteen children with a statement of special educational needs.

### **Displaced Pupils**

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

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

Displaced pupils will be offered places at Meole Brace School Science College, Longden Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DW.

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

Expansion of Meole Brace School Science College is not necessary in order to receive the displaced pupils.

### **Impact on the Community**

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

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

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

The school is used to a small extent to deliver post-compulsory education and by a drama school out of hours. There are no reasons why this provision could not take place elsewhere in the area.

## Travel

### 15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

Meole Brace School Science College is 1.6 miles from the Wakeman School and Arts College. Many current pupils live between the sites of the Wakeman and Meole Brace schools and so would have a shorter journey. Others live to the north or east of the Wakeman School and Arts College and so would have a longer journey. However, many of these pupils live between the sites of the Wakeman School and Arts College and Grange, Belvidere and Sundorne schools and would have shorter journeys to one of these schools. For example, a pupil living in Ditherington may have a journey of approximately 0.8 miles to Grange School and 1.25 miles to Sundorne School. A small number of pupils live north of Grange and Sundorne schools and are closer to these schools (see 16 below). The other secondary schools in the town are Belvidere School (1.5 miles from Wakeman School and Arts College), Priory School (1.6 miles), Grange School (2.5 miles) and Sundorne School (2.5 miles). There are limited places in Belvidere and Priory schools for pupils transferring in September 2012 or 2013, but children living to the east of the Wakeman School and Arts College site would be within the area from which Belvidere School draws pupils.

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

Many current pupils of the Wakeman School and Arts College would be within walking distance of Meole Brace School. Most prospective pupils living in the area currently served by the Wakeman School and Arts College live within walking distance of one or more of the other secondary schools in the town. Shrewsbury has been awarded Cycling Town status and has a good network of safe walking and cycling routes. Meole Brace School is directly served by an off-road cycle path and the school actively promotes cycling for home to school travel. There are some pupils currently attending the Wakeman School and Arts College who live more than 3 miles from the named alternative school at Meole Brace. As there are places available at Grange and Sundorne schools, whether or not additional home to school transport would be required would depend upon parental preferences with regard to destination schools. It is currently planned that, if required, public service bus passes would be allocated to current pupils living within the Shrewsbury catchment area and more than three miles from Meole Brace School and choosing to attend this school.

## Related Proposals

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

This proposal is not related to any other proposals

### **Rural Primary Schools**

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

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
  - b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
  - c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
  - d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,
- as required by section 15(4)

Not applicable

### **Maintained nursery schools**

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

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

Not applicable

### **Special educational provision**

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

Not applicable



## **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 263,500kgCO<sub>2</sub> 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 to happen, the Council is undergoing a severe retrenchment at the moment and does not 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.

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

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**Environmental Appraisal**

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

## **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](http://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](http://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	<a href="mailto:educationforshropshire@shropshire.gov.uk">educationforshropshire@shropshire.gov.uk</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/educationforshropshire">www.shropshire.gov.uk/educationforshropshire</a>
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 6<sup>th</sup> form activities. Members would very much wish to see discussions with such organisations as the 6<sup>th</sup> 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

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

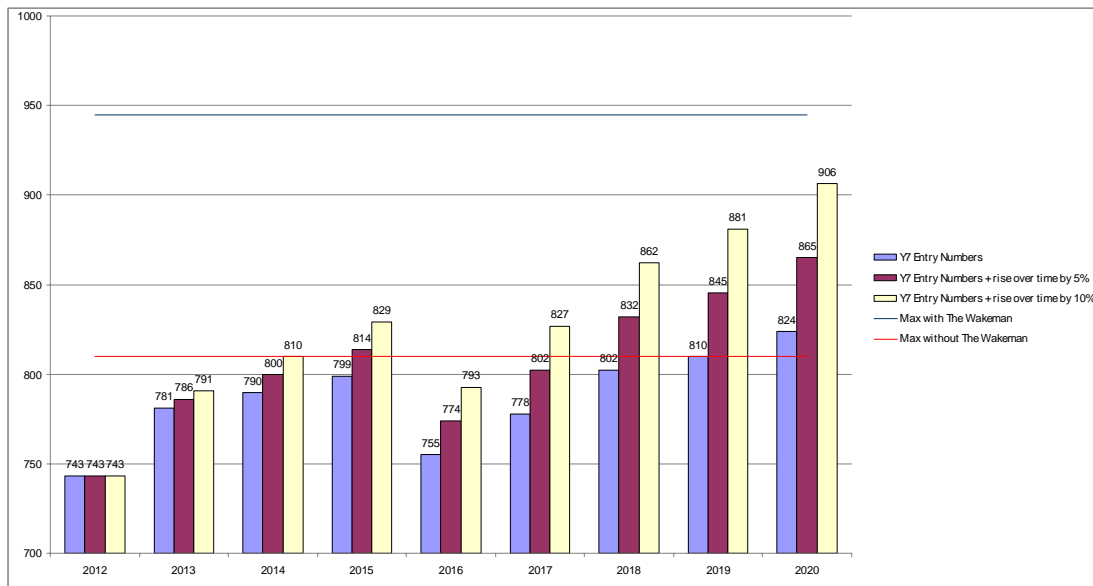
The reduction in pupil numbers has meant that the school has had to make significant staffing cuts year on year resulting in the loss of key teaching and support staff and further damage to the school. As soon as The Wakeman's future is secured parents and pupils will have confidence to choose the school 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 its 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 their 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 – rumours of closure affecting atmosphere of school.	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 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	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

	<p>will be lost if it is transferred to another school.</p>	<p>equipment would be transferrable to other schools.</p>
	<p>If the school closes SEN provision in the area will be inadequate. In some years 48% of students had specific learning requirements.</p>	<p>We have acknowledged the quality of provision at Wakeman. Others schools in also Shrewsbury provide excellent support for students with specific learning needs.</p>
	<p>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.</p>	<p>Other schools in Shrewsbury serve deprived areas and are well practiced in supporting vulnerable students.</p>
	<p>There were concerns expressed regarding issues around transportation and access to Meole Brace – 3 miles is too far for a student to walk to school, and buses are more expensive.</p>	<p>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 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</p>

		<p>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 shouldn’t be robbed of these resources.</p>	<p>Other schools in Shrewsbury also use these resources.</p>
	<p>What will happen to the building if the school closes?</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Concerns were raised that the sale of the building was the motive for closing the school, and about budget cuts being a political motive</p>	<p>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</p>

	behind the proposal.	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	Additional information brought forward has been considered as part of the decision making process.

	<p>proposals – numbers are increasing, will the LA be changing its figures?</p>	
	<p>Has the economic impact of the proposal been considered?</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Why have some schools been allowed to expand?</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Some older buildings at certain schools will not be able to cope with increased capacity.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>All the schools in Shrewsbury should be downsized to save money.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Has a community impact surveyed been</p>	<p>See Section 4.3 above. The Council indicated its initial thoughts in the Cabinet Report and</p>

	<p>carried out?</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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 personality of the town will be lost.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Why is education not the priority?</p>	<p>It is; the whole process is about getting more money into education, spending more money on teaching and less on buildings.</p>
	<p>If we come forward with an alternative proposal will the Council listen?</p>	<p>The LA has listened to and considered alternative proposals brought forward.</p>
	<p>Extensive disruption and distress will be caused.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>A lot of schools have money held in reserves.</p>	<p>Some schools are holding balances – around £7.5million in all – and the Council shares the</p>

		<p>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.</p>
	<p>The way forward should be to increase numbers at Wakeman.</p>	<p>Pupil numbers in Shrewsbury are too low to sustain all of the secondary schools we have. If numbers 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.</p>
	<p>Potential for amalgamation between Priory School and Meole Brace School?</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>A small, inclusive school like Wakeman is much better for some children.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that students perform better in smaller schools.</p>
	<p>Wakeman is chosen by children for its role in improving confidence and self-esteem, and in dealing effectively with bullying.</p>	<p>This point is acknowledged, but is also true of secondary schools throughout the area.</p>

	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 performing school in terms of the English 'Bac'.	The LA agrees that Wakeman is a good school and 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.

## Appendix 5

### Pupil Numbers at The Wakeman School & Shrewsbury in General

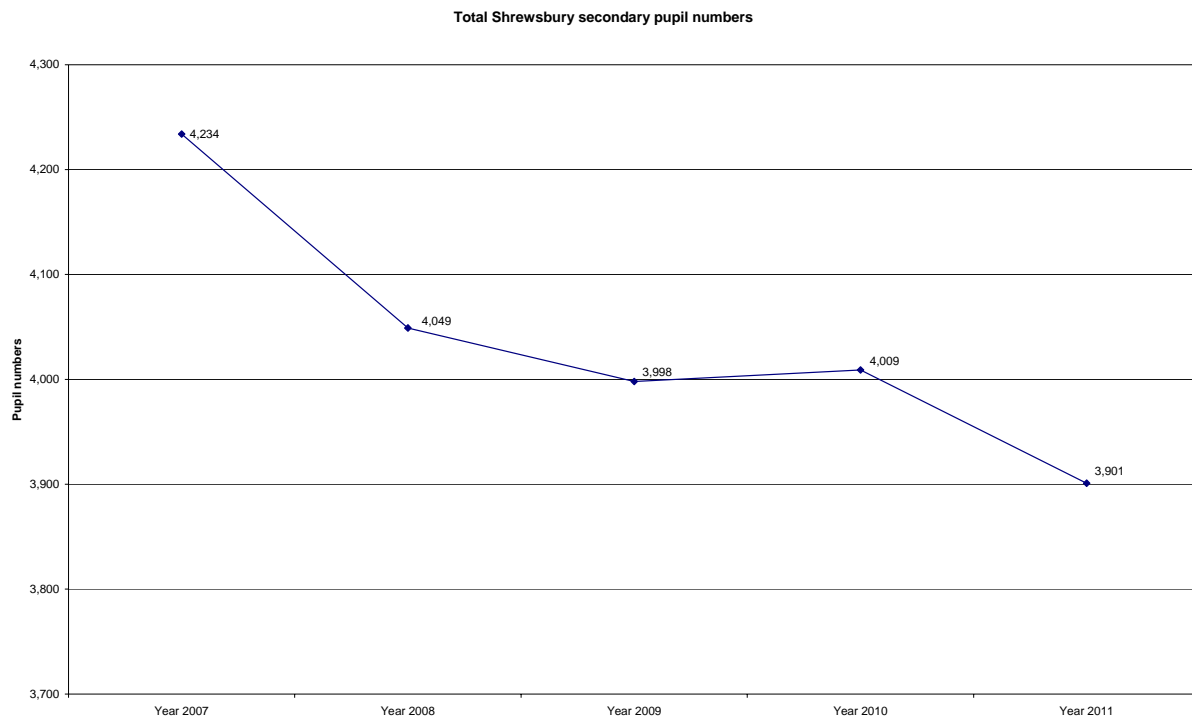
#### Introduction

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

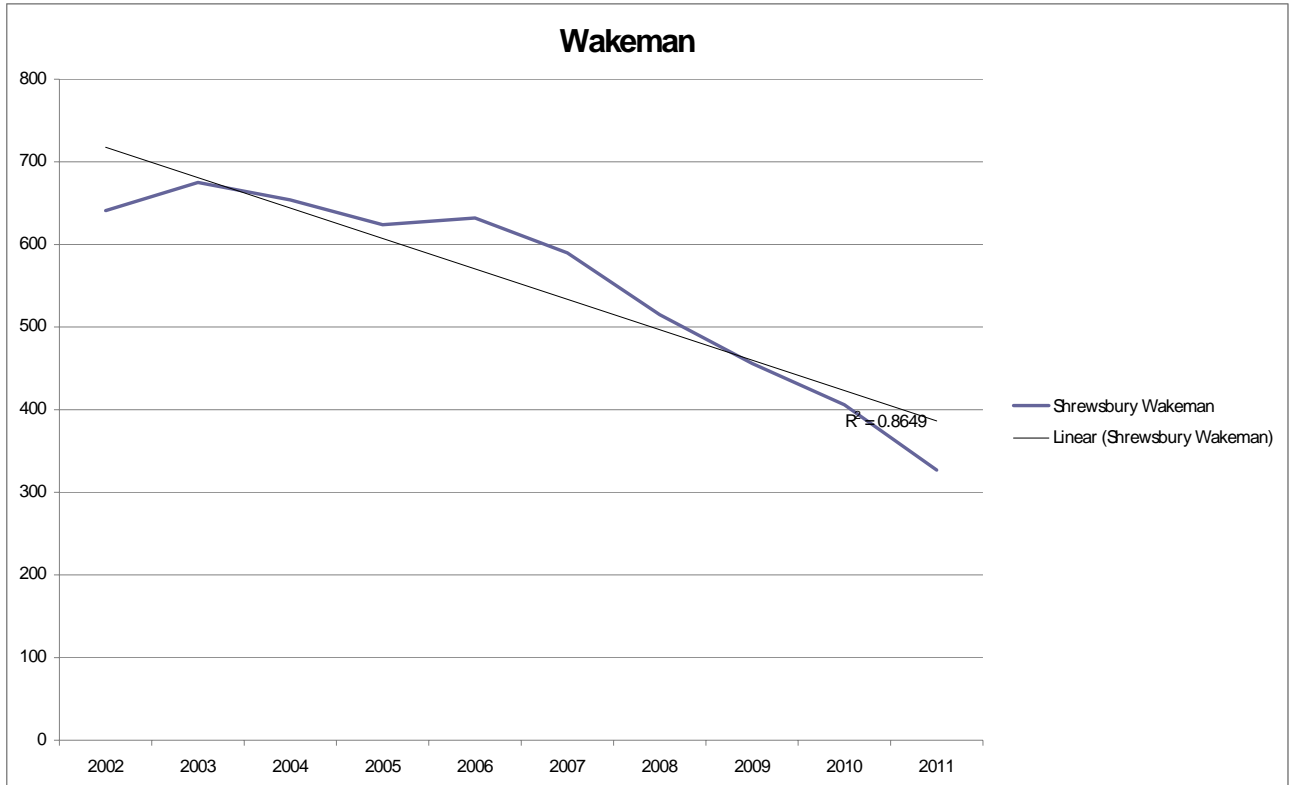
Pupil numbers in Shrewsbury have fallen sharply over the past five years, despite a significant degree of house building in the area.



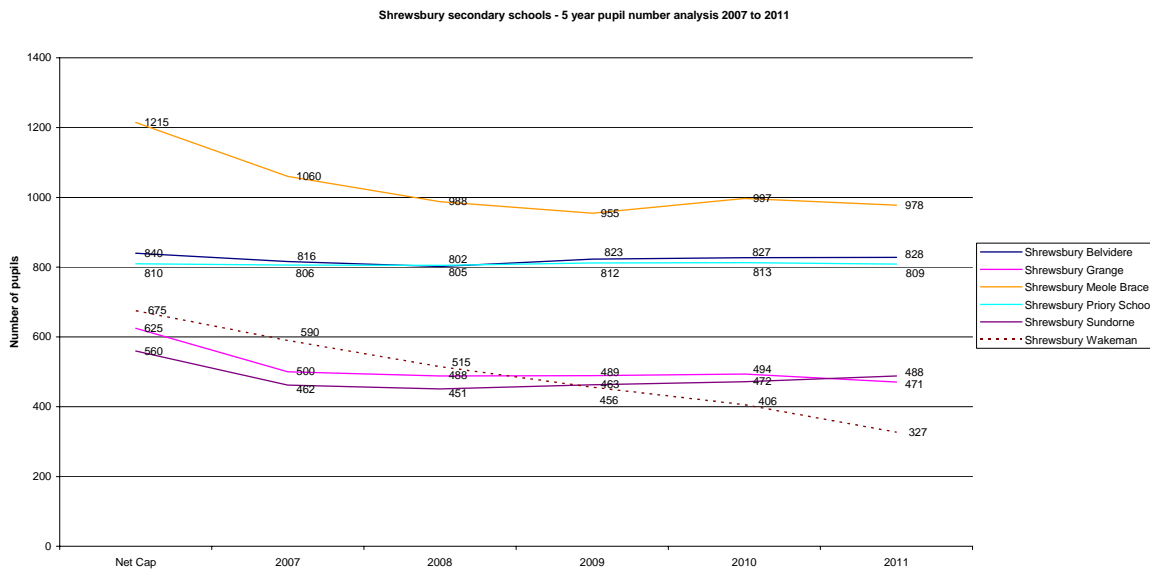
This reduction (333 pupils or 7.9%) is the equivalent in DSG funding at today's levels of £1.535m.

#### Pupil Numbers at The Wakeman School

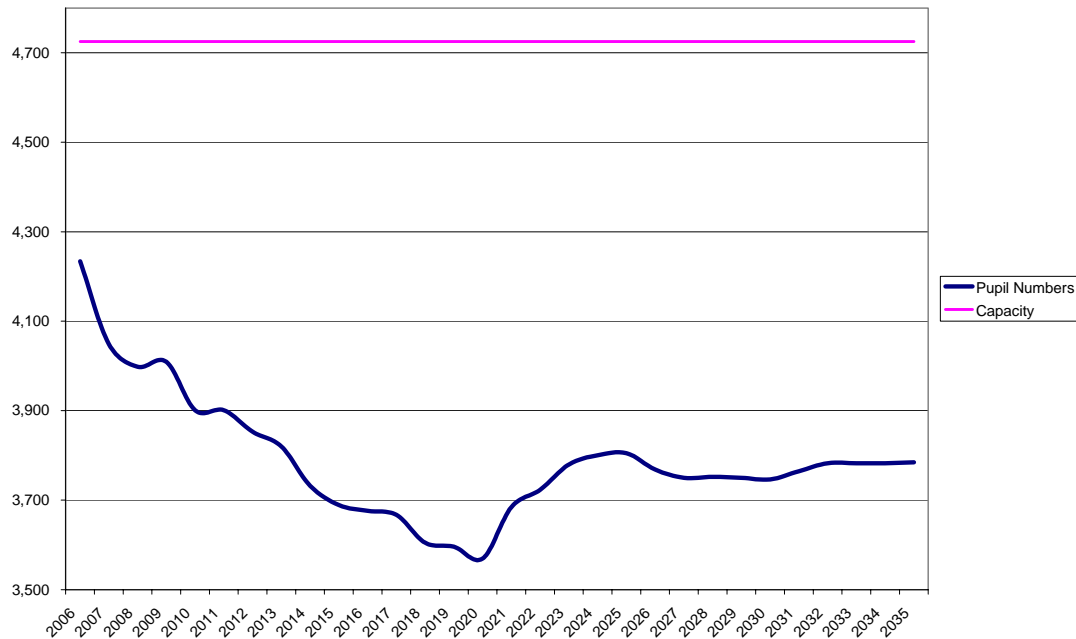
As a result of some other schools in the town being more likely to be chosen as preferences by parents the decline in pupil numbers at The Wakeman has been even sharper.



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

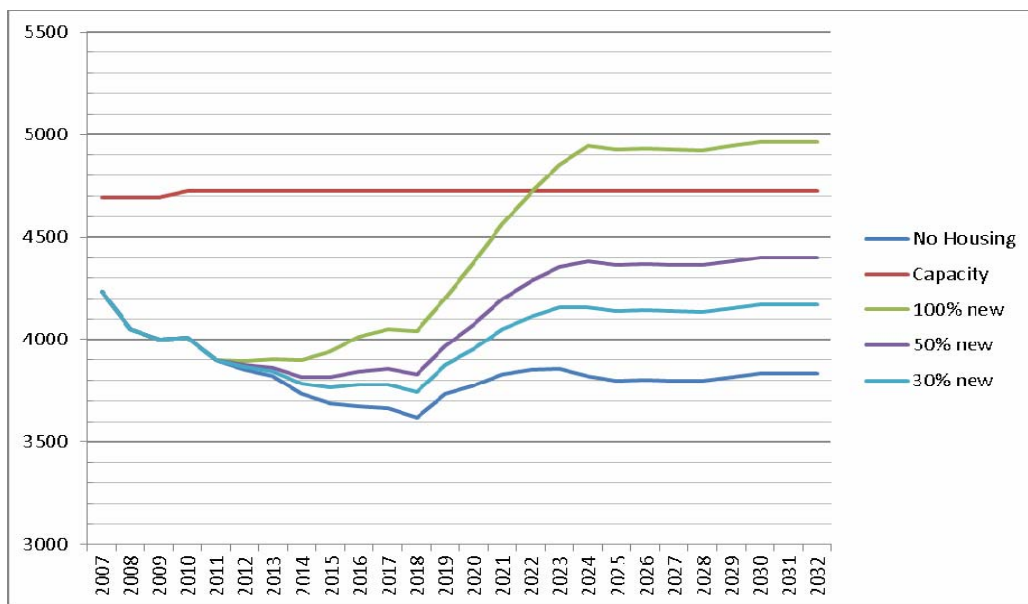
Shrewsbury has been identified as a major housing growth area. Over the next decade and a half, until 2026, it is expected that over 8,000 homes will be built in Shrewsbury. It might be expected that this will have a major impact on pupil numbers, except that over the last decade 12,000 houses have been 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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

### 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.



**Representations Received During Statutory Consultation Period**

Ref	Point Raised	Response
	<p>The White Paper makes it clear that providing enough "Good" places is more important than removing surplus places.</p>	<p>The proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College was based upon the findings of the Local Area Review Meeting and underpinned by the principles, vision and criteria of school organisation.</p> <p>The proposal is based on the need to use resources efficiently. The low pupil numbers and high surplus places are symptoms of the inefficient use of resources, and are not in themselves the reasons for the proposals. In Shrewsbury currently, other than Wakeman School and Arts College, one school is rated Outstanding, three are Good (including the named alternative school for Wakeman pupils) and one is Satisfactory.</p>
	<p>The school has tried to be active in extending partnership, with the Sixth Form for example.</p>	<p>The Council also considered federation or partnership as an alternative to closure. We acknowledge the efforts that the school has made but no formal arrangement to extend partnership with the sixth form has been agreed, and no viable alternative has been brought forward.</p>
	<p>The 'parental pledge' shows that parents will chose Wakeman School and Arts College if the threat of closure is lifted.</p>	<p>The data presented in the report shows that pupil numbers in the school have been falling for many years. Number began to fall before any discussion about school reorganisation in Shropshire took place and before any proposals for a school closure in Shrewsbury were brought forward. There was no proposal to close Wakeman School and Arts College prior to February 2011 but admissions have been falling at the school since 2002.</p> <p>The parental pledge does not solve the challenge of surplus capacity in Shrewsbury.</p>
	<p>The LA has clear evidence that our numbers have been reduced because of persistent rumours about school closures.</p>	<p>As stated above, until this year, the Council have had no plans to close Wakeman School and Arts College. As stated at the consultation meeting, where rumours have arisen they have been diligently denied.</p>
	<p>The number of first choices for schools in September 2011 has been affected by the consultation process.</p>	<p>The number of first preferences could not have been affected by the consultation process because the closing date for secondary applications was 31 October 2010 and the possibility of a proposal to close Wakeman</p>

		School and Arts College was not made public by the Council until 8 February 2011.
	If the Wakeman closes a new secondary school will be needed in the next decade.	The Council does not accept this. Information in the presentations to staff, governors and parents, and set out above and in the appendices shows that at most, a small number of classrooms would need to be added across the whole of the Shrewsbury secondary school estate to cope with the additional demand caused by new housing.
	Property Services have plans for both a new secondary school and for two new primary schools on the outskirts of town. These plans are dependant on the Wakeman being closed.	Property Services have no plans. One new primary school is being considered on a site within the town development boundary to accept children from a new area of development. This would be subject to separate consultation if the development goes ahead, but is not linked in any way to the proposals for the Wakeman School and Arts College.
	There is an inconsistency in the way that Wakeman has been dealt with compared to Rhyn Park.	<p>All schools have been considered equally on the basis of the same Vision for Learners and School Organisation Principles and Criteria. The overarching aim of both proposals is the same; the LA is seeking to redirect money that is currently being spent inefficiently into front-line teaching and learning. Both proposals (Shrewsbury and St Martins) recommend the closure of one building and the relocation of pupils to a new site in order to address the challenge of surplus places. The overarching aim to focus funds on teaching and learning rather than the management of schools and the upkeep of buildings has been reiterated throughout the process, demonstrating the consistent approach that has been taken.</p> <p>The difference is that, if a proposal was brought forward, and Rhyn Park did close the secondary age pupils in St Martins and the surrounding area would not have access to alternative secondary provision in the area where they live, while Shrewsbury pupils have access to another five secondary schools.</p>
	The new funding formula means that the issue of subsidy discussed in the report is irrelevant.	The report to Cabinet on 15 February and the Supplementary Consultation Document sent to staff, governors and parents do not mention subsidy in relation to the Wakeman School and Arts College.

		<p>The report to Cabinet on 4 May only mentioned subsidy in relation to the fact that the new funding formula would mean that the Wakeman School and Arts College would lose £157k of its budget over time.</p> <p>See also Section 11 - Financial Implications</p>
	<p>Money held in school balances should be released and used to support schools. This would be more efficient than closing schools.</p>	<p>A fundamental principle in Local Management of Schools is that schools are able to spread expenditure over more than one year by building up funding balances which can be carried forward from one year to the next. Some schools have built up large balances, and there are limited powers available to claw these balances back if they are not being held for legitimate purposes.</p> <p>The Council is only allowed to address excessive balances which are not being held with a clear purpose in mind. In many cases these reserves have been built up by governing bodies over a period of years, from funding which has been legitimately allocated to them, to undertake specific projects. In others, a small reserve is held to protect against changes in funding as a result of known future variable pupil numbers. Shropshire uses its discretionary powers to claw back excessive surpluses from schools.</p> <p>The claw back mechanism is applied annually, based on a three year school by school assessment of excessive surplus balances. Schools Forum approved the claw back of £23,000 from schools at its meeting on 19 May 2011. Although not a significant sum in itself, the actual level of school balances fell by £1.4m. (18%) from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2011, due in large part to the application of this claw back mechanism. The residual net schools' balances as at 31 March 2011 amounted to £6.2m., which individual schools validly hold, below the excessive threshold, for properly assigned and identified purposes.</p> <p>Crucially, 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 short term solution. The long term, viable and sustainable solution is to make sure that more money is available to go into front-line education</p>

		<p>each year. This solution involves looking at the amount of money spent on keeping open the current number of schools and in particular maintaining surplus places in buildings functioning well below capacity.</p>
	<p>The school is in excellent condition and has some of the best facilities in Shropshire. Money has been spent improving the site in recent years.</p>	<p>In common with other Shropshire schools, the Wakeman School and Arts College has been well maintained by a combination of judicious use of Devolved Formula Capital by governors, and investment from Shropshire Council. This process happens in all Shropshire schools. It has never been the policy of Shropshire Council to stop investing in an individual school or group of schools during consultations on school organisation, until the outcomes are known. We have acknowledged the quality of the building. All schools across Shropshire undergo constant improvement and development.</p> <p>As stated in the report, if the school were to close then the council's preferred use for the current building would be for educational purposes.</p>
	<p>The impact of the closure on young people, staff and the buildings at Meole Brace has not been considered.</p>	<p>As noted above it would not have been appropriate at this stage to hold formal, detailed consultation with Meole Brace School Science College. The school has had the opportunity to respond to the general consultation. The Council has considered the impact on Meole Brace School Science College. The additional funding which would come through both routes to Meole Brace School Science College (see financial implications, above) would strengthen the position of the school and protect the employment of the staff, with consequent benefits for the pupils. The buildings would be used more efficiently and the improved funding would also benefit maintenance levels, and thus both staff and pupils.</p>
	<p>Pupils from Wakeman School and Arts College have not been consulted.</p>	<p>Throughout the process the Council has been keen to receive the comments of students from The Wakeman School and Arts College and have had responses from a number of young people from the school. Those who have responded during the consultation have had their opinions shared with officers and members of the Cabinet. In addition to this we were interested to listen to the comments of students at the consultation meeting that was held at the school on Thursday 24 March 2011. Students actively took part in this consultation meeting. During the process the Corporate Director – People's Services also met</p>

		with the Head Girl and Boy of Wakeman School and Arts College to discuss the proposal.
<p>What will provision for SEN students be like at alternative schools?</p> <p>Could the site be used to provide SEN support for the whole of Shropshire?</p>	<p>The effectiveness of The Wakeman School in supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs has been noted in the consultation papers and the LA is well aware of this. The quality of education for pupils with SEN and their progress was judged “Good” in their most recent inspection. The same judgement was also made about the quality of provision at Meole Brace School Science College.</p> <p>The council maintain that other Shrewsbury secondary schools also provide well for students with SEN.</p> <p>As noted in the main report, the Council would promote the use of the site for other educational purposes. However, it should be noted that the main secondary SEN provision for Shropshire is already located in Shrewsbury at Severndale Special School on the Monkmoor Campus.</p>	
<p>How will the future of vulnerable students be safeguarded?</p>	<p>Every student would be considered individually in the transfer process. This will include looking at future curriculum choices and additional needs. Where pupils have special educational needs, this consideration will be more specialist and will involve SENCOs and other professionals as required. Statemented pupils would have a statement review before transfer.</p>	
<p>The links with the community are unique. It would be a devastating loss to lose the school.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges the links which the Wakeman School and Arts College has with the local community. Indeed, the school was judged Outstanding in this regard by Ofsted in the recent inspection, as was Meole Brace School Science College at its last inspection.</p>	
<p>Friendship groups will be lost if the closure goes ahead.</p>	<p>All pupils are guaranteed a place at Meole Brace School Science College, so there is no need for friendship groups to be lost.</p>	
<p>The Wakeman School could become a shared site with other services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shrewsbury Sixth Form</li> <li>- SCAT</li> <li>- Private accommodation for</li> </ul>	<p>The Council considered potential shared use of the site when it considered alternatives to closure.</p> <p>Only some uses are compatible with a school on a dual-use basis. In addition, the site is limited by its almost total lack of on-site parking or even drop-off facilities. This means that almost all public services are not suitable for co-location with the school, despite the proximity of the Old</p>	

	<p>social services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Looked After Children Team</li> <li>- Adult Education</li> <li>- Council Offices</li> <li>- Shropshire Council Training and Development Centre</li> <li>- Community Arts Centre</li> </ul>	<p>Potts Way car park within walking distance.</p> <p>The Council is facing severe constraints on its expenditure, and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. This means that the opportunity for publicly subsidised services to share the site is also strictly limited. Another consequence of the constraints on public expenditure is that the Council is reviewing its accommodation and there is much less demand for office space outside the main administrative centres.</p> <p>The Council was not able to identify any suitable partner for a shared site prior to bringing forward proposals, and this remains the case. The school have also not been able to identify a suitable partner.</p>
	<p>Children will no longer be able to walk to school.</p>	<p>All the children currently attending the Wakeman School and Arts College live within the statutory three mile walking distance of at least one of the other schools. All future pupils will be able to express a preference for one of these schools. With specific reference to current pupils and the named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College, it is accepted that there are a small number of pupils who live outside the statutory walking distance, and these pupils ( a maximum of 22), should their parents choose to take up the guaranteed place, will be provided with bus passes.</p>
	<p>The cost of new uniforms, PE kits and transport to and from school will put pressure on families.</p>	<p>The cost of uniforms and sports kit, which have to be replaced several times during a pupil's school career is always a burden on families. Shrewsbury secondary schools are careful not to specify items which cannot be sourced in mainstream retailers, except for sweatshirts and ties, which schools sell themselves or through partner retailers at reasonable cost. Families of children in the three years which would transfer would have at least one, and in most cases two years to plan uniform changes for their children. This means that it is likely that purchases can be timed to coincide with the transfer. The Council will also consider requests for financial support in the case of hardship.</p>
	<p>Wakeman is one of the most energy efficient schools in Shropshire – you have manipulated the</p>	<p>As stated in the report, energy efficiency was not central to the proposal being brought forward. The intention of the CO2 per pupil figure was to indicate the efficiency of buildings as they are</p>

	<p>figures to emphasise the low numbers on roll.</p>	<p>currently being operated. To that extent, it is true that the figures do reinforce the fact that at 51.6% surplus capacity The Wakeman School and Arts College is a building that it is being used inefficiently. It is accepted that if the school were full then it the figure would be lower, and would compare with other fully utilised buildings in Shropshire's Learning and Skills estate. Continuing to operate the Wakeman School and Arts College contributes 263,500kg/CO2/year to carbon emissions.</p>
	<p>The Consultation Process is invalid because the town Council Submission was accepted after the close of the consultation period.</p>	<p>As discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 20 July, the late submission date was agreed with the Town Council before the end of the consultation. It was deemed appropriate to accept a late submission as the Town Council is a statutory consultee but was unable to meet earlier. Representatives from the school were invited to make submissions at the Cabinet meeting, and took the opportunity to do so.</p> <p>The Town Council have reinforced their views in the period of Statutory Representations.</p>
	<p>The Cabinet decision should have been delayed to allow for the Ofsted report to be taken into consideration.</p>	<p>Cabinet members had access to the latest Ofsted prior to the meeting on 4 May and were fully briefed as to its content. The minutes of that meeting demonstrate that the Ofsted report was discussed in full.</p>
	<p>Wakeman is the most accessible school in Shrewsbury</p>	<p>All homes in Shrewsbury are within three miles of one or more secondary schools. Wakeman School and Arts College is neither more nor less accessible than other school sites in the town.</p> <p>Application levels demonstrate that for some time before the current consultation parents and children have been choosing to access education at other secondary schools in Shrewsbury and the Council has taken this expression of parental preference into consideration.</p> <p>In respect of accessibility in terms of the ability of a disabled pupil to access the curriculum. It is acknowledged that Wakeman School and Arts College has access for wheelchair users to all its main teaching floors. However, other Shrewsbury schools can provide access to all areas of the curriculum for wheelchair users. The Priory School, a Business and Enterprise College, was previously designated as a school which was able to accept children with mobility issues and has</p>

		appropriate facilities.
	Concerns over traffic congestion around Meole Brace	<p>600 children walk and 380 cycle safely to and from Meole Brace and Priory schools each day. (262 and 214 of these from Meole.) There are good walking and cycling links from the town centre. The school is committed to reducing the number of parents who use cars to bring their children to school, but ultimately this is a decision for parents.</p> <p>Section 8 in the main body of the report contains further information on this subject.</p>
	6,500 homes will be built not 8,300 as stated in the May 4 report to Cabinet. 60% of these developments will be within Wakeman's catchment area.	<p>Wakeman School and Arts College does not have a discrete catchment area. 100% of all homes in Shrewsbury are in the catchment area of all Shrewsbury secondary schools. It is likely that at least 60% of the new homes will be within the three mile statutory walking distance of the Wakeman School and Arts College, but this statement is true of all the Shrewsbury schools.</p> <p>In the discussion in advance of the report to Cabinet in February, through the consultation and into the May report, the figure of 8,300 new homes was used as this was the theoretical maximum number of houses which could be built during the planning period. This also "stress tested" the proposals to ensure that sufficient places would be available into the future if the proposals were adopted.</p> <p>As requested in responses to the consultation, the current projections use figures provided by the Council's Development Planning team have been used which are based on development of 6500 homes in the period 2006-2026. The 6,500 figure can now be taken to apply to the total planned housing development between 2006 and 2026. Since the start of the Statutory Consultation, Shropshire Council's Strategy and Development team have provided further advice on year by year likely housing completions. The pupil number projections in the main report are based on these new figures. More detail is provided in Appendix D</p>
	No community impact assessment has been carried out.	Shropshire Council originally considered an initial community impact assessment as part of the report to Cabinet on 15 February. The second

		<p>phase of the consultation asked specifically for consultees to respond with information on community impact. We have received information regarding community impact throughout the consultation period, and this was built into the 4 May report. Any further representations detailing community impact have been included in the information provided to Cabinet Members in advance of this meeting.</p>
	<p>Parental choice will be compromised if the school is closed.</p>	<p>If these proposals proceed, there would be one less school in Shrewsbury for which parents could express a preference. However, historical data shows that there has been steadily reducing parent preference for the Wakeman School and Arts College since 2002. There are a number of Shrewsbury schools which are consistently oversubscribed through parental preference. This would be taken into account in the future were any additional school places required.</p>
	<p>Meole Brace is considered to have a bullying problem.</p>	<p>This is not the opinion of the local authority or the school, and no evidence has been presented to support this claim. The Ofsted judgment for Meole Brace is that support, guidance and care is Outstanding and that the school provides a secure and safe environment for students. All Shropshire schools have effective anti-bullying policies and strategies. Isolated incidents of bullying are possible in any school and are dealt with by school management when they are brought to their attention.</p>
	<p>Some schools in Shrewsbury have no interest in securing resources for students who do not fit their 'high achieving' model.</p>	<p>All schools in Shrewsbury provide for students of all abilities. One way of assessing the progress of pupils is through Contextualised Value Added (CVA) which is measured as the progress made from when pupils enter the school to when they take post-16 external exams (usually GCSE or equivalents). This measure also takes into account other indicators of likely pupil achievement, such as poverty.</p> <p>In 2010 (the latest figures to be published) the Wakeman School and Arts College's CVA score was 958.8. Meole Brace School Science College's score was 1000.9.</p>
	<p>All houses within Shrewsbury are within three miles of Wakeman School and Arts College.</p>	<p>This is incorrect, although, like other Shrewsbury schools, a large proportion of the town is contained within a three mile circle of the site. For home to school travel purposes, distances are measured as the walking route which would be safe if the pupil was accompanied by an adult. This definition puts a number of existing houses</p>

		more than three miles from the Wakeman School and Arts College, and future development is likely to increase this number.
	Surplus Places are the only reason to close Wakeman School and Arts College.	This is not correct, although surplus places are a symptom of the actual cause, which is the reduction in pupil numbers, and hence resources available to, all Shropshire schools. This reduction in turn means that a larger proportion of the available resources are used to keep schools and their buildings open in costs of management and maintenance. The Wakeman School and Arts College receives £376,440 for the costs of managing and maintaining the institution, which would be available for redistribution if the school were to close.
	Businesses such as Stagecoach and The Hive will be affected by the closure.	It is accepted that Stagecoach makes extensive use of the buildings currently. As noted elsewhere in this report, the Council is committed to exploring other educational uses of the building before considering any others. It is possible that Stagecoach will be able to use the building in conjunction with a new tenant, or to use other school premises.  The Council is aware of the links which have been developed between the Wakeman School and Arts College and The Hive, and applauds this initiative. There is no reason why similar links cannot be built with other Shrewsbury schools.
	This is a short term solution.	The information in the main report and Appendix D shows that this solution to excess places in Shrewsbury is viable at least into the mid 2020s.
	The Wakeman is the only inclusive, integrated school in Shrewsbury	All Shrewsbury schools are fully inclusive and integrate pupils with SEN into the entirety of school activities.
	Money should be saved by merging the resources of Meole Brace and Priory.	Priory and Meole Brace schools are both popular schools with a high level of first preferences from parents. “Merging” them would result in a major reduction in the ability of parents to access their first preference school.  Whilst such a merger could make efficiencies, it would not solve the problem of reducing resources leading to the concentration of resources on management, administration and maintenance, as shown by the high level of surplus places in Shrewsbury.
	Children with disabilities will be disadvantaged by the proposal.	The Council does not accept this view. All Shrewsbury secondary schools are fully inclusive and offer the full curriculum to pupils with

		<p>disabilities. While the Council readily acknowledges that the Wakeman School and Arts College makes very good provision for students with disabilities, so do other schools in the town.</p>
	<p>Most of Wakeman's money will follow its pupils to their new schools – the money left over equates to £9.50 per pupil in Shropshire.</p>	<p>All of the current £1,726,990 budget of the Wakeman School and Arts College would be recycled within the Dedicated Schools Grant.</p> <p>£1,350,550 would transfer with pupils, so that the receiving schools would be able to target this funding to front-line education and make economies of scale, using their existing accommodation more efficiently.</p> <p>£367,440, which represents the money allocated to the Wakeman School and Arts College to manage, administer and maintain the school buildings and the school as an administrative entity, would be redistributed.</p> <p>These proposals form part of a series of steps which Shropshire Council is taking to refocus expenditure on front-line teaching and learning, and build upon the successful amalgamation of seven pairs of schools in 2009 which led to significant financial savings, from which the Wakeman School and Arts College has benefited in the last three annual budgets.</p>
	<p>Bad publicity has been responsible for the proposal</p>	<p>The Council is not aware of any bad publicity surrounding the Wakeman School and Arts College. However, it is acknowledged that there is a general awareness that the school has experienced a reduction in pupil numbers.</p>
	<p>Why was the decision to close Wakeman not deferred – like Onny, Lydbury North, Rhyn Park and Ifton Heath?</p>	<p>At the meeting on 4 May, the Council deferred consideration of three sets of proposals. These were:</p> <p>(i) Consideration of the site for the consolidated primary school in Shawbury (although the Notices to close Shawbury Primary were taken forward);</p> <p>(ii) Proposals for the creation of an all-through school in St Martin's to allow time to undertake a more detailed feasibility study and to visit all-through schools elsewhere;</p> <p>Proposals to close Lydbury North and Onny schools. These schools had come forward with draft proposals which, if they could be realised,</p>

		<p>would have addressed the issue of rebalancing funding towards front-line teaching and learning. Time was allocated to allow the schools to develop their proposals and confirm that there was potential for a long-term viable solution.</p> <p>None of these situations applied to the Wakeman School and Arts College. No potential plans for viable and sustainable alternatives were brought forward from the community. The Council has already made its own appraisal of the alternatives it could identify. Therefore, it was held that there were no viable alternatives to closure and the Cabinet agreed to proceed to the next stage. Cabinet will consider any further proposals to decide whether they are viable or sustainable at its meeting on 7 September.</p>
	<p>No details have been published showing how funds would be utilised to improve outcomes for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When funding is used to maintain surplus places the per pupil funding is disproportionate. Pupils in schools with surplus places are funded more than pupils in other schools. Redirecting funding will reduce this inequality and result in fairer funding and better value for money across all schools in Shropshire</li> <li>• A relatively fixed amount of the budget in schools with surplus places has to be spent on maintaining:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an appropriate leadership structure</li> <li>- a staffing structure to support delivery of a curriculum which is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and provides a good springboard for future learning and employment</li> <li>- the buildings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>A smaller proportion of the funding in these schools is spent directly on teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other schools, where the per pupil funding is less, are disadvantaged. They have proportionately less funding to support flexibility in terms of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- staffing structures - including both teaching staff and teaching assistants, who support pupils with Special Educational Needs</li> <li>- class size, so that a lower pupil: teacher ratio can allow for a sharper focus on individuals in a class</li> <li>- the most effective use of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and professional development opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is this flexibility that allows schools to</li> </ul>

		<p>focus sharply on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress. It allows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- senior and middle leaders to develop systems that focus sharply on teaching, learning and progress</li> <li>- teachers to focus on progress in their lessons, making good use of assessment information in their day-to-day teaching</li> <li>- the widest range of curriculum and extra-curricular experiences to be offered to pupils.</li> </ul>
	You suggest that funding for a new school would come from CIL – in the current climate this seems optimistic.	As noted above, there is no requirement for a new school resulting from these proposals. However, if the Council chose to relocate one of the remaining schools then CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) would be one of a range of funding sources which would contribute to that project.
	The proposal will lead to an increased attainment gap in the town.	There is no evidence that this would be the case. The Wakeman School and Arts College does provide well for pupils with special needs, but so do other schools, and the CVA scores of other schools were higher in the most recently published data.
	Wakeman is one of the only schools in Shropshire able to accommodate wheelchairs.	The Wakeman School and Arts College has wheelchair access to all its main teaching floors. However, other Shrewsbury schools can provide the full curriculum in areas accessible to wheelchairs.
	The Wakeman is excellent at providing extra curricular activities that many other secondary schools do not.	The Wakeman School and Arts College provides a strong extra curricular offer, but is no means alone amongst the Shrewsbury secondary schools in doing so.
	Wakeman School is an Arts College; Meole Brace is a Science School.	All schools teach the same basic curriculum. If Arts College status is a major factor in determining the preference of an individual family, there is Grange School – A Visual and Performing Arts College in north Shrewsbury. Meole Brace is a Science College, the full title is Meole Brace School Science College
	Wakeman School provides exemplary support to primary schools.	The Wakeman School and Arts College provides good support to primary, as do all specialist schools and colleges, which includes all Shrewsbury secondary schools.
	Meole is already struggling to cope with increased numbers.	The Council does not agree with this judgement.

	<p>Children are feeling vulnerable and uncertain about their future.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that this is a difficult situation. We would hope school staff and parents can offer reassurance to young people.</p>
	<p>Wakeman no longer meets the criteria for closure – It is a ‘good’ school. There is no justification for closing the school.</p>	<p>The criteria states that 'particular attention will be given to schools where surplus capacity exceeds 35% of agreed net capacity.</p> <p><i>In January 2011 Wakeman School and Arts College had 51.6% surplus capacity. 2010-2014 average surplus capacity is set to be 63%.</i></p> <p>The criteria states that particular attention will be given to any school with numbers on roll less than 600.</p> <p><i>In January 2011 Wakeman School and Arts College had 327 students on roll.</i></p>
	<p>Wakeman should be allowed to become an Academy.</p>	<p>This path is outside of Local Authority control.</p>
	<p>Primary School pupils have written in to explain that they would like to attend Wakeman in the future.</p>	<p>All responses received by the Council have been considered by Members.</p>
	<p>Pushing through the proposal will damage the reputation of Shropshire Council.</p>	<p>There is no doubt that this is a difficult decision, however, Shropshire Council maintains that no change is not an option, given the reduction in pupil numbers and the financial situation of the school. The council has been open and transparent in its decision making processes, and has shown elsewhere that where a viable and sustainable alternative can be demonstrated the Council is prepared to change its mind. No such alternative was apparent to the Council, nor has one been forthcoming during the consultation.</p>
	<p>Diversity of the education offer in Shrewsbury will be reduced.</p>	<p>The current offer is unsustainable. We need to act to secure a model of provision that is viable.</p>
	<p>Why has the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) not been referred to as part of the process?</p>	<p>There is no longer a requirement for Local Authorities to have a CYPP. However, in Shropshire the Children's Trust Board led by the Director of People have published a Children and Young People's Strategy for 2011. The overarching aims of this strategy concur with the aims of the school organisation process.</p>

	Employers of ex-Wakeman students have noted positive comments about their employees.	The Council acknowledges this information.
	Pupil predictions held by the council are incorrect	Shropshire Council's pupil number projections were assessed and praised by the Independent Policy Commission (see paragraphs 109-111 and the associated recommendation that "Those debating primary school organisation in Shropshire should accept that the Council's methodology and use of data provide a good and sound basis for forecasting pupil numbers and estimating the need for primary school places."). This issue is addressed further in Appendix D.
	The notice for Wakeman contained inaccuracies	The Council republished the notice and largely repeated the statutory consultation process for Wakeman School and Arts College after it was raised during consultation that some of the dates and terms in the Notice as to when any plans could be implemented from, and when the school would close, could be considered ambiguous.
	The September 7 date does not give the required two years notice to close the school. This is a transgression of the statutory requirements	This is incorrect. There is no need for two years between the decision to close and the closure date. However, the Council would like to reach a determination of the proposals as soon as possible to reduce uncertainty, and, should the decision be to proceed with closure, to begin to plan with the schools and support pupils and staff in to the next phase.
	Half of the current consultation period falls within the holidays	There is no legislative requirement to have the consultation during school term time. Statutory Guidance explicitly states that the Statutory Notice period cannot be delayed or lengthened to take account of school holidays. In any case, the original notices, which differed only in that the date of implementation was given as the start rather than the end of the closure period, making them ambiguous, were consulted upon during term time.

## **Secondary Pupil Numbers and Places In Shrewsbury**

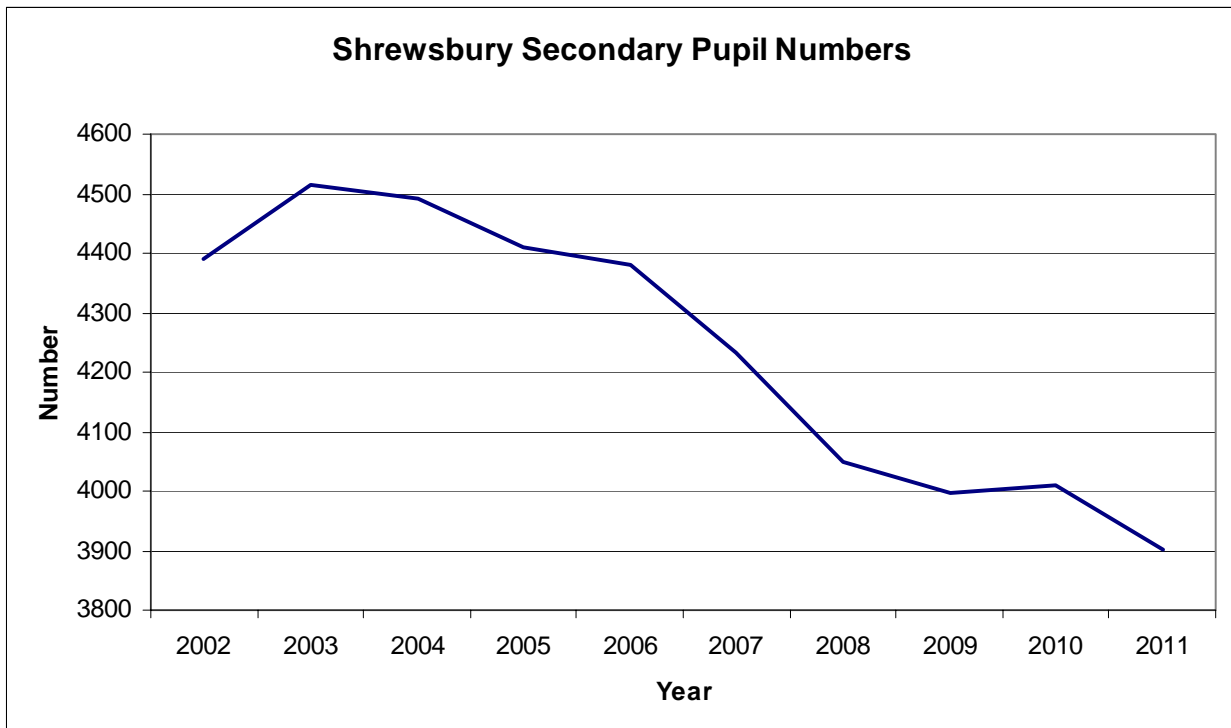
### **1 Introduction**

Pupil numbers in Shropshire have been reducing since a peak in 2002. Secondary numbers in Shrewsbury have followed that trend. Pupil numbers in primary schools, which have also fallen, are now beginning to rise. However, the rise will not return pupil numbers to close to their 2002/3 levels. As the capacity of the buildings of Shrewsbury secondary schools remains close to the 2002/3 level, this means that, even by the time that pupil numbers reach their maximum recovery level and all the planned houses are built, there will still be a significant number of unfilled places in Shrewsbury secondary schools. These unfilled places are in real classrooms being used at less than maximum efficiency, and being heated, lit, cleaned and maintained. This means a greater proportion of funding is being withdrawn from front-line teaching and learning as pupil numbers decrease. This appendix provides detail on the population, pupil number and housing projections which are used in the main report.

### **2 Historic Pupil Numbers**

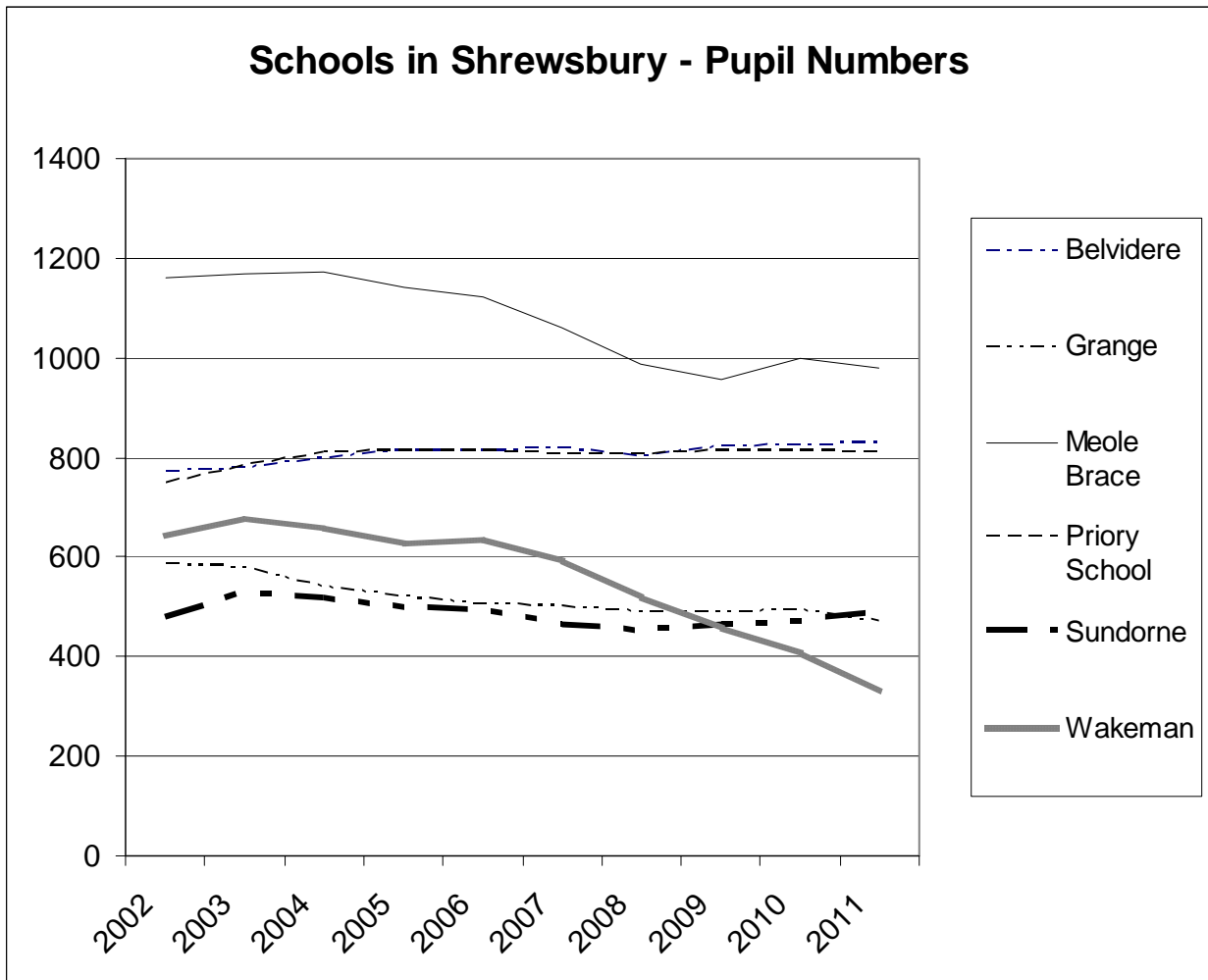
Secondary pupil numbers in Shrewsbury have been reducing since the 2002/3 academic year, as shown in the graph below.

Chart 1



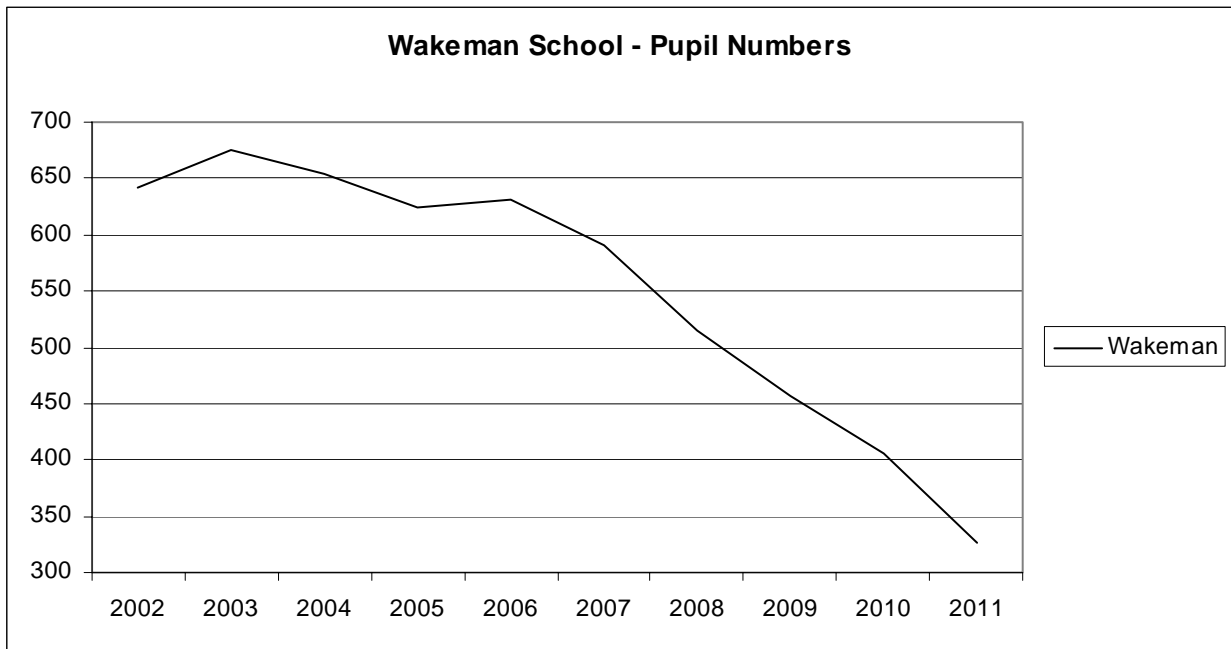
However, the reduction in pupil numbers has not equally spread across schools, as shown below.

Chart 2



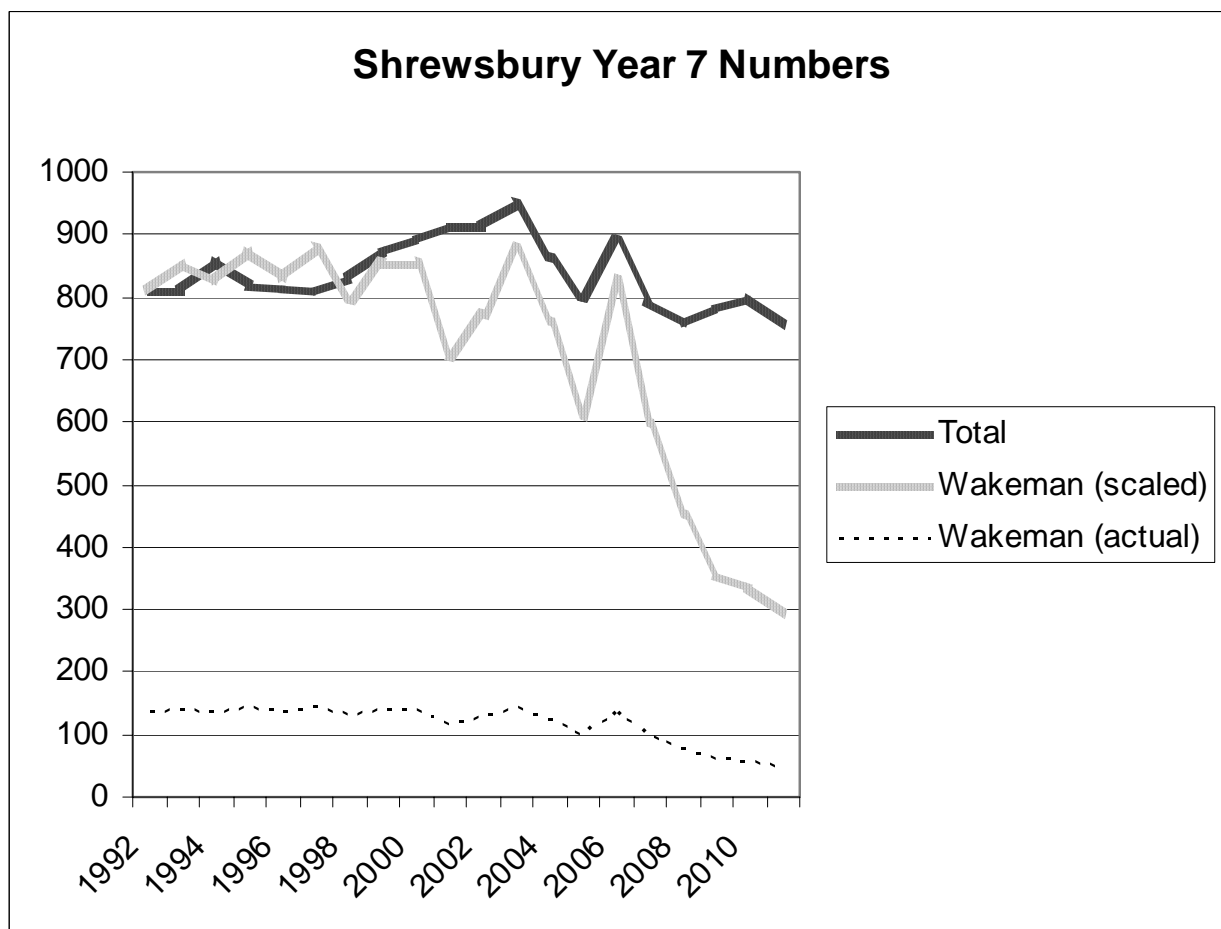
Pupil numbers in the Wakeman School and Arts College have dropped faster than in any other school, and have been dropping since well before any rumours of closure could have been circulating in the town.

Chart 3



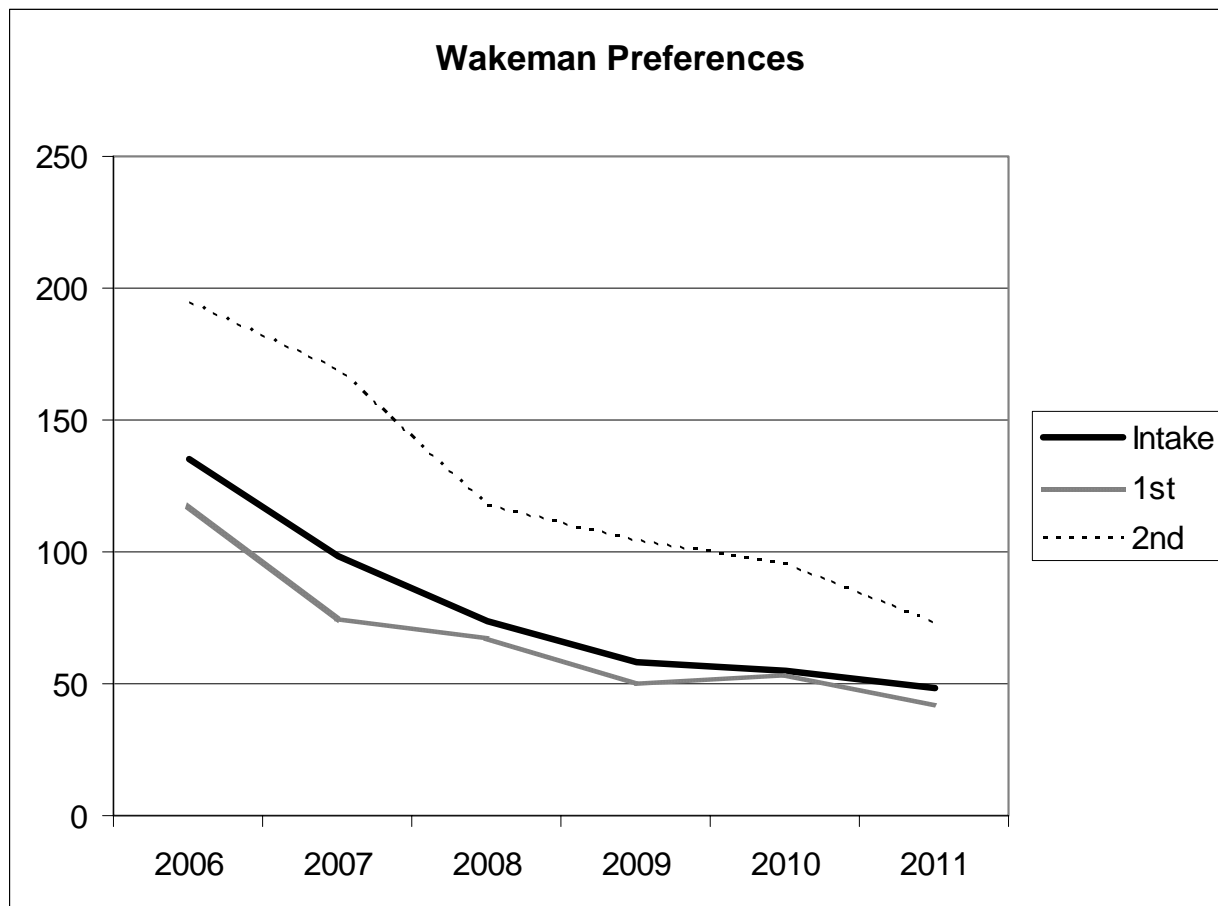
The reason for this reduction is that parents have expressed a preference for other schools in the town more often than for the Wakeman School and Arts College. This can be seen when looking at Year 7 numbers across the town.

Chart 4



In Chart 4, the thick dark line represents the total number of Year 7 in Shrewsbury pupils each year. The dashed line is the actual number of Year 7 pupils at the Wakeman School and Arts College. In order to make comparison easier, a lighter grey line has been added. This shows the proportion (not number) of Year 7 pupils which the Wakeman School and Arts College has taken in each year, with 1992 as the base year. It can be seen that the proportion has been declining since the late 1990s with the exception of 2003 and 2006, when pupil numbers were exceptionally high in the town. The same effect can be seen in 1<sup>st</sup> preference applications, although data is only available over a shorter period of time.

Chart 5



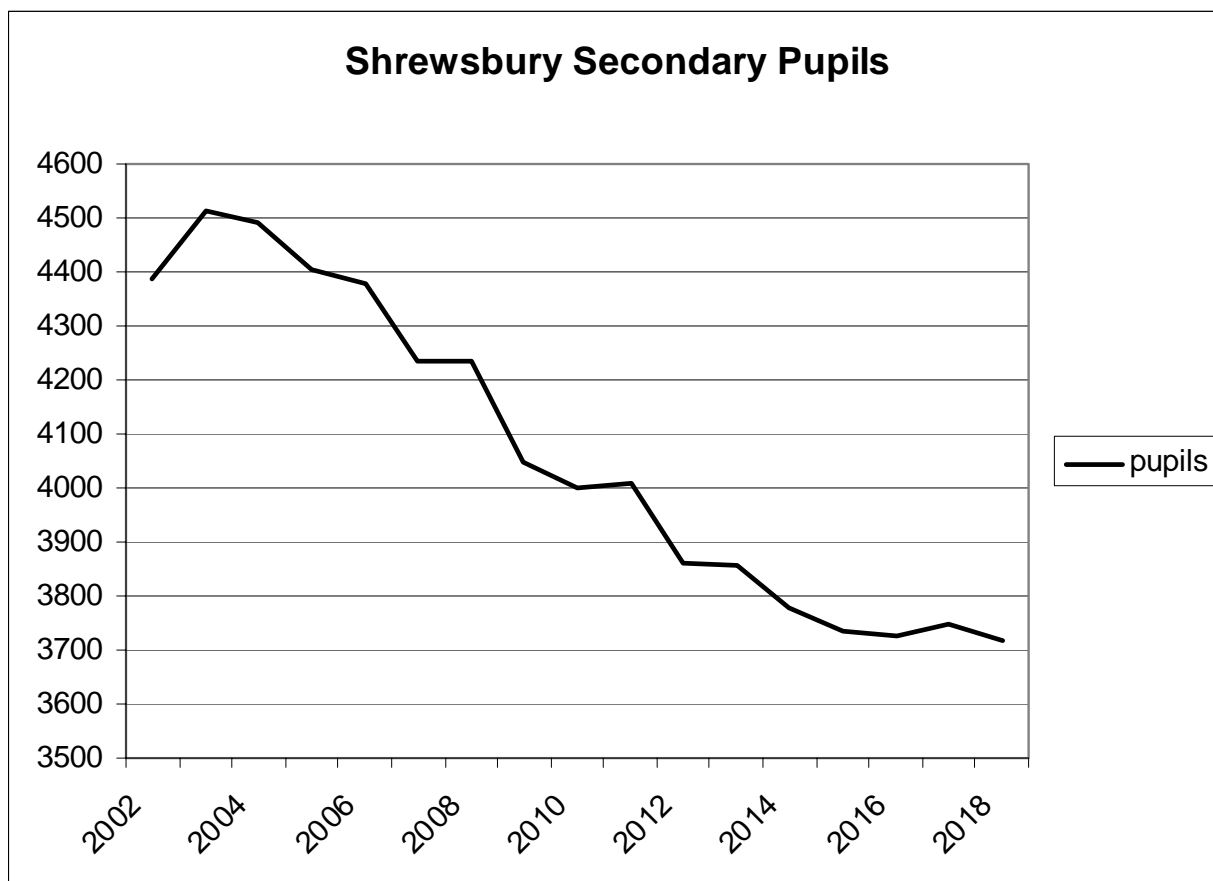
### 3 Pupil Number Projections

#### Pupil Number Forecasts to 2018

Pupil numbers can be forecast to give estimated numbers for planning purposes. Shropshire Council pupil number forecasts are based on three elements. Forecasts for pupils joining primary schools are based on information on pre-school children living in the area, provided by health authorities. Forecasts of pupils in schools are based on the numbers in each year group the previous year, adjusted for the average change to that group as it moves from one National Curriculum Year Group to another (known as a cohort survival methodology). This is refined by adding the likely number of pupils from any new housing development. From Year 6 to Year 7 the information is further refined by historical data about the number of pupils moving to or coming from the independent sector, moving in or out of county and data about parental preference.

Secondary pupil numbers can be forecast to 2018 using this methodology. For Shrewsbury, forecast pupils numbers, based on existing housing and pupils, total 3,717 by 2018. Chart 6 shows historic and forecast pupil number from 2002. The chart gives the impression that pupil numbers are on a continuing downward trend. This is not the case – pupil numbers in the lower years of primary school are already increasing. However, to go beyond 2018, another projection methodology is required, which is explained following the chart.

Chart 6



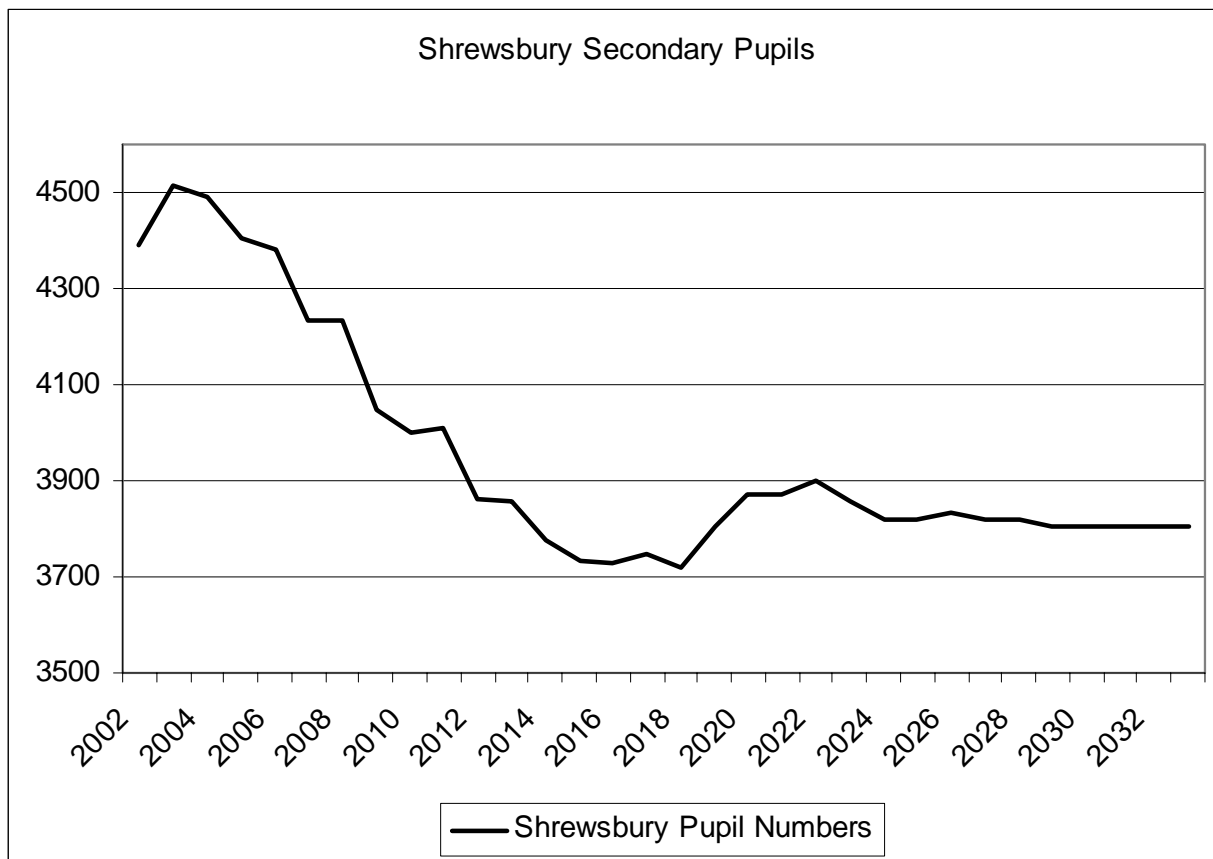
### Pupil Number Projection Beyond 2018

Beyond 2018, a different methodology must be used to arrive at pupil number planning projections. This is based on the Office for National Statistics Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP). SNPP are published for each of the former District or Borough councils which make up Shropshire Council. The projections are given for each year for a 25-year period from the base year. The latest SNPP were published in 2010, with a base year of 2008, meaning that the projections run to 2033. Figures are given for each quintile (five year span) of age.

The step is to convert the five year span age figures into a secondary school age population. This is accomplished by taking four fifths (80%) of the 10-14 age range figure and adding one fifth (20%) of the 15-19 age range figure. This methodology tends to reduce turbulence in population numbers, but does not change the high and low figures. Shrewsbury, of course, is part of the former Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council area. The figures then need to be adjusted to reflect the proportion of

the secondary age population which attend Shrewsbury secondary schools. Over the four years 2008 to 2011, when actuals can be compared to the SNPP data, the average proportion of the SNPP secondary school age population attending Shrewsbury secondary schools has been 66.3%. For the purposes of current forecasts, a figure of 67% has been used, in order not to underestimate the demand for school places. Using this methodology, the pupil number graph can be extended to 2033.

Chart 7



The chart shows that pupil numbers will reach a minimum in 2018, although there is only minor change between 2015 and 2018), there will then be a relatively rapid rise until a maximum in 2022, following by a gentle reduction to a steady state by about 2029. However, the maximum projected for January 2022 is only 3958 – pupil numbers in January 2011 were 3901.

#### 4 Additional Housing and Pupil Numbers

##### Additional Housing

When originally investigating school organisation in Shrewsbury, a figure of up to 8,300 additional houses was used. This was based on the maximum possible figure for additional development, and provided a useful stress test for the assumptions on school capacity in future years. For the current projections, figures provided by the Council's Development Planning team have been used which are based on development of 6,500 homes in the period 2006-2026. These are likely to be close to the actual number of homes built in the period. However, the timing of house completions will be dependent on the economic conditions prevailing at the time. For the purposes of these

projections, the most optimistic reasonable estimate of house completions has been used. Note that house completions are not applied to pupil number forecasts until the following year, to allow time for occupation following completion.

The 6,500 house completions in the period 2006-2026 are forecast to be split year by year. 1147 have already been completed and another 252 are being built or are due to start this year. In 2012 and 2013, 290 homes are planned each year, with 325 planned in 2014 and 350 in 2015, when the new sites begin to come on line. From 2016 – 2020, 360 homes a year is the target, rising to 389 per year by 2026.

## **Effects of housing on Pupil Numbers**

**The projected pupil numbers above do not include the effects, if any, of additional housing.** On a national basis, the construction of additional housing is assumed not to increase the population. However, on a purely local basis, the building of an entirely new suburb, or a substantial development in a small village, will inevitably increase the demand for school places. On a wider area basis, the effect can be a combination of both – some of the new housing attracts new families to the area while other new homes are occupied by existing families from the area. This effect can be seen in the fact that almost 10,000 additional homes have been built in the last decade in Shropshire, at a time when pupil numbers have decreased considerably. This, in turn, is borne out by a recent ONS publication, “Families and households in the UK, 2001 to 2010”, which shows that there has been an increase of 674,000 in the number of families without children in the same period of time, accounting for 71% of the rise in all families.

Another ONS publication, “Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England”, projects this trend forward to show that by 2033 there will have been an increase of 5,037,000 in households with no children and an increase of 769,000 in households with one or more dependent children. That is, households with no dependent children will account for 87% of all additional households. The major drivers for this change will be the aging population and the number of middle-aged people living alone as a result of never having been married or being divorced.

In the analysis below (Chart 8) four scenarios have been prepared. The first, no rise in the number of families with dependent children, is effectively the same as the “no housing” pupil number projection set out above. This is the situation which ONS use as their base projection for the former Shrewsbury and Atcham area, as they project that the number of families with no dependent children will rise from 30 to 38,000 between 2008 and 2033, while the number of families with dependent children will not show a significant change.

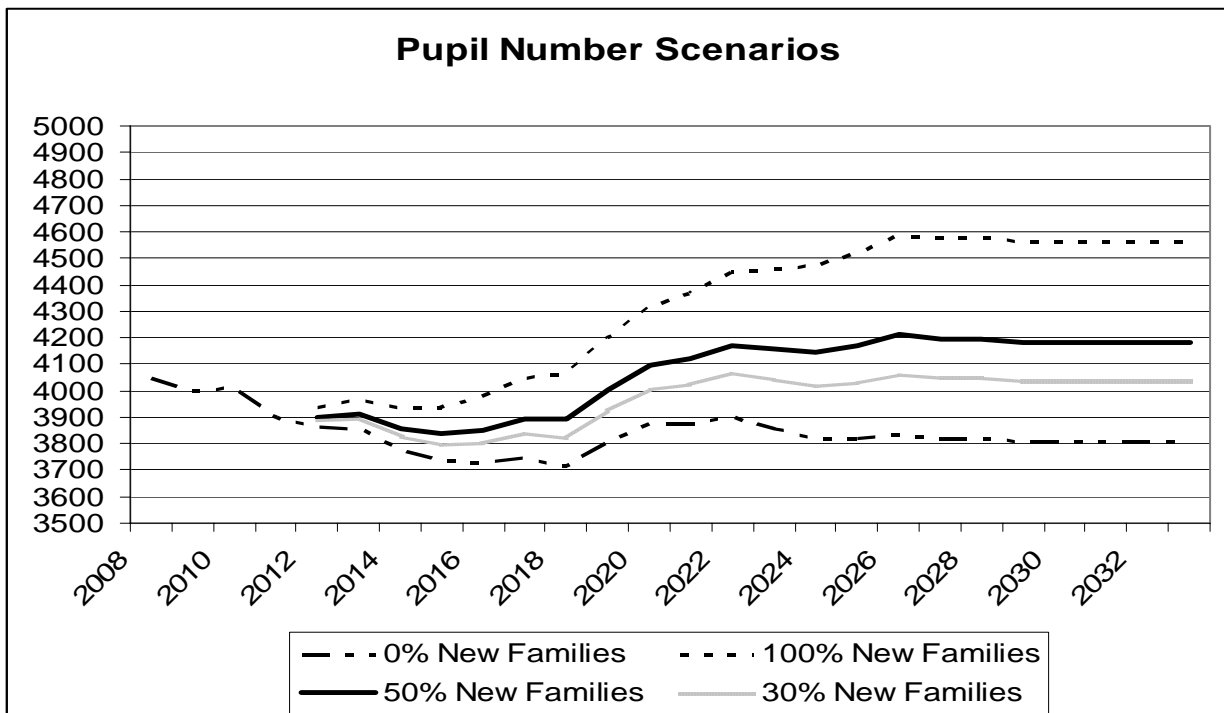
The second scenario, 30% of new housing occupied by families new to the area with the normal proportion having dependent children, corresponds with a continuation of the trend from 2001-10. The third scenario is that 50% of the new housing is occupied by families new to the area, with the normal proportion of families with dependent children, is not supported by the ONS projections, but takes account of Shrewsbury as a major employment centre in Shropshire, and the relative attraction of new housing and good facilities for families with children. The fourth scenario is that all the new housing is occupied by families new to the area with the normal proportion of families with dependent children. This last scenario is normally only true for special situations, and

over a small area. For example, the creation of a new suburb would result in such a situation and, if there are five hundred homes or more, might well require a new primary school. However, the families occupying the homes in the suburb will have vacated homes elsewhere in the wider area and these might well be filled by families with no dependent children. This scenario also holds where a relatively small development of family homes is added to a distinct community such as village. However, it is extremely unlikely to hold true when considered over a community as large as Shrewsbury, as borne out by experience over the last decade.

In the fourth scenario, each house is considered to have a “pupil product”, the number of children which, on average, it is likely to produce at any one time. This is calculated by looking at the average of all households in an area. Shropshire Council currently differentiates pupil product on the basis of the old borough and district council areas. The pupil product for Shrewsbury and Atcham is 0.1366 for secondary age children, meaning that each 1,000 houses will, on average produce 136.6 children of secondary age, or 27.32 children in each secondary year group if all the houses are occupied by families new to the area with the normal proportion of families with dependent children. Scenarios 2 and 3 have been calculated by scaling the pupil product to 50% and 30% of its basic value.

As an example, 100 additional houses would produce 13.66 pupils of secondary school age. In Scenario 4, 13.66 pupils are added to the secondary total for each 100 houses built, in scenario 1, this is reduced to 0 because in effect all additional housing is taken up by the increase in families without dependent children. In Scenario 2, the pupil product figure is reduced to 30% of the base (Scenario 1) figure, that is, 4.55 extra pupils, because 70% of the increase in housing is taken up by families with non-dependent children (which is reflected in experience over the last 10 years). In scenario 3, the reduction is 50%, to 6.83, reflecting the fact that Shrewsbury is attractive to young families because of employment opportunities and additional facilities.

Chart 8



## 5 School Buildings and Admissions Capacities

### School Buildings Capacities

Clearly, there are only so many pupils who will fit into a building safely and still allowing space for effective teaching and learning. The government has given guidance on this topic, and school capacities are calculated using a spreadsheet produced by the Department which looks at the size and planned use of each space. The output from the spreadsheet is a range of figures, the highest of which is the optimum capacity for the building, and the lowest of which is an artificial limit below which the Department would say that the Council was trying to artificially restrict parental preference and require the Council to publish annual Notices allowing parents' the opportunity to challenge the Council's position.

Following consultation with the Governing Body, the Council is allowed to set a figure for the number of pupils admitted each year to the school (the Admissions Number) which, when multiplied by 5 (the number of year groups in an 11-16 school), falls between the maximum and minimum figures produced by the spreadsheet for that school. This is the Admissions Capacity of the school.

Thus, the Admissions Capacity of a school can be a little below its Buildings Capacity. The Council is only allowed to exceed the Admissions Number of a given year in exceptional circumstances. The publication of Statutory Notices naming a given school as a receiving school is an exceptional circumstance.

At present, the total Admissions Capacity of Shrewsbury Schools is 4,725. If the Wakeman School and Arts College were to close, this would reduce to 4,050. However, the total Buildings Capacity of the remaining schools is 4,250, as Admissions Capacities have been set a little below Buildings Capacities while there has been a significant number of unfilled places in the town. It is recommended that the increase happens from September 2016, in order to make more Year 7 places available (see below).

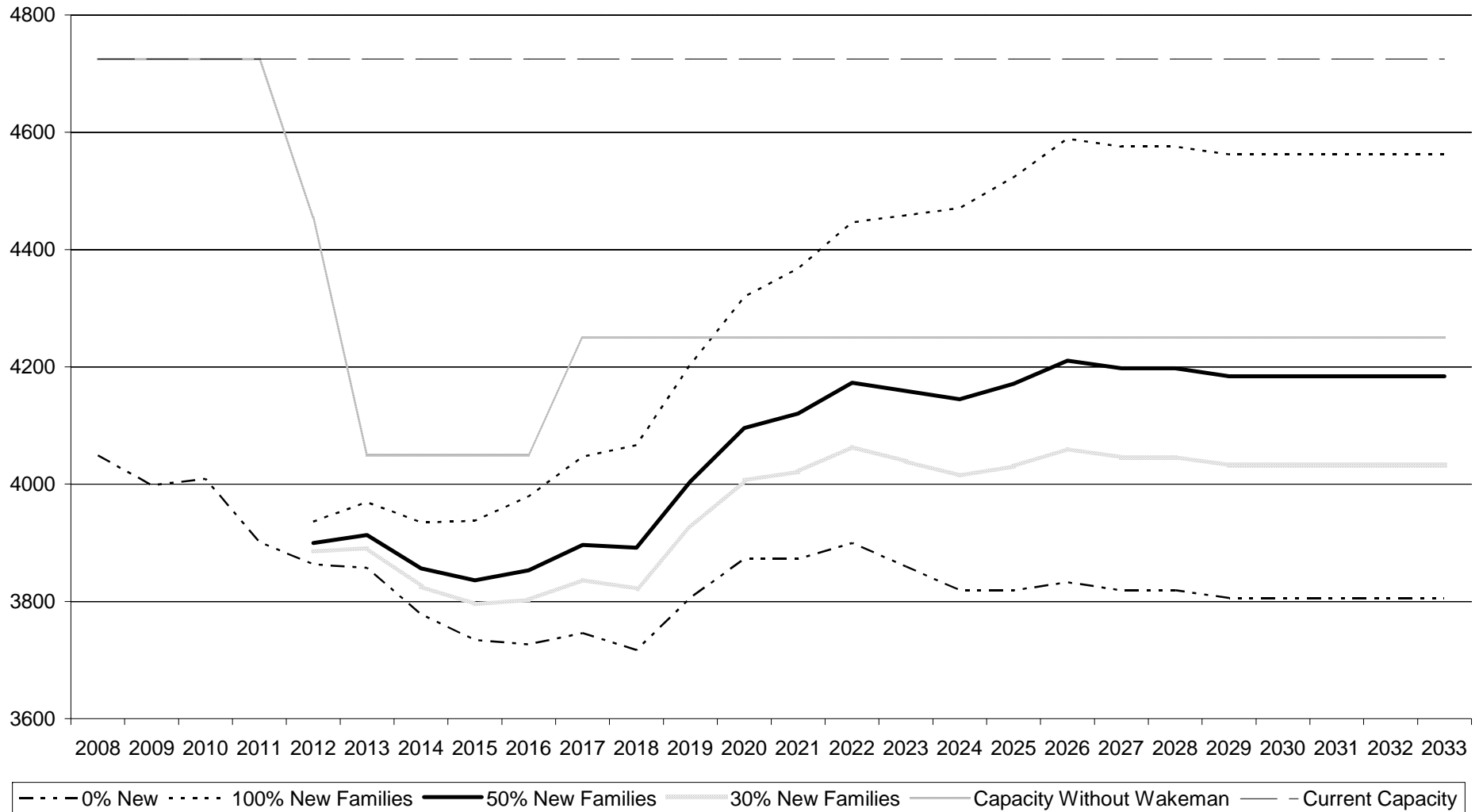
Chart 9 takes the four scenarios for pupil number projections and superimposes current Admissions Capacity and the Buildings Capacity of the remaining schools (from the year following the complete closure of the Wakeman School and Arts College). As this is a key chart, it is set out on a full page overleaf.

Chart 9 shows that there is sufficient capacity in the Shrewsbury secondary schools without the Wakeman School and Arts College to accept all the forecast pupils for the foreseeable future in scenarios 1, 2 and 3. However, the maximum forecast pupil number in Scenario 3 (50% of housing occupied by families new to the area with the normal proportion of families with dependent children) is close to the maximum capacity of the remaining schools by 2026. By this stage, however, it will be clear which of the possible scenarios is closest to the actual position, whether it is the Scenario 3 (50%), the scenario recommended by officers, Scenario 2 (30%), the one which follows the pattern of the last 10 years, or Scenario 1 (0%), the one suggested by the Office for National Statistics predictions on household numbers. This will allow the Council to plan accordingly. Only in Scenario 4, which is the least likely, would the Council be required to take action before 2020. Pupil number projections are kept under review on an

annual basis. It is recommended that a more formal review takes place at the start of the next two comprehensive spending review periods (2015 and either 2018 or 2019).

Should Scenario 3 be closest to the actual position, as is thought likely, the Council would have four options for the situation close to 2026. Each added classroom would add 27 workplaces to the capacity of the school. The first is to seek to bring back into use for teaching and learning (possible on a temporary basis) spaces in schools which are currently being used for other purposes to increase the buildings capacity of schools. The second is to make minor extensions to one or more schools. The third is to work with schools to increase the utilisation rate of their existing accommodation. At present, each teaching space is only assumed to be in use for 70% of the teaching week. Increasing the utilisation rate of all spaces by 5% would add 300 additional places. However, it would make it much more difficult to timetable the use of accommodation, so is not a no-cost solution. The fourth is to relocate and extend one school into new accommodation. This would be dependent on the development of a significant new area of housing on the periphery of the town, and on government support with funding. While this was a distinct possibility under the BSF regime, it is now much less likely and is perhaps for consideration when 2026 – 2046 Local Development Framework has been agreed.

### Pupil Numbers and Capacities



## Admissions Capacity

As noted above, the Admissions Number for each year group is linked to the Admissions Capacity of a school. It is therefore important to consider whether sufficient Year 7 places are available each year to cope with children moving through from primary school.

The total Admissions Number for Shrewsbury schools without the Wakeman School and Arts College is 850 pupils per year. The number of Year 6 numbers can be predicted accurately through to 2018 using the methodology set out above. Year 7 numbers are historically 96-97%% of Year 6 in the same year as the result of a small net loss to the private sector and the net effect of movement into and out of the county. For the current projections, a figure of 97.5% has been used.

Chart 10

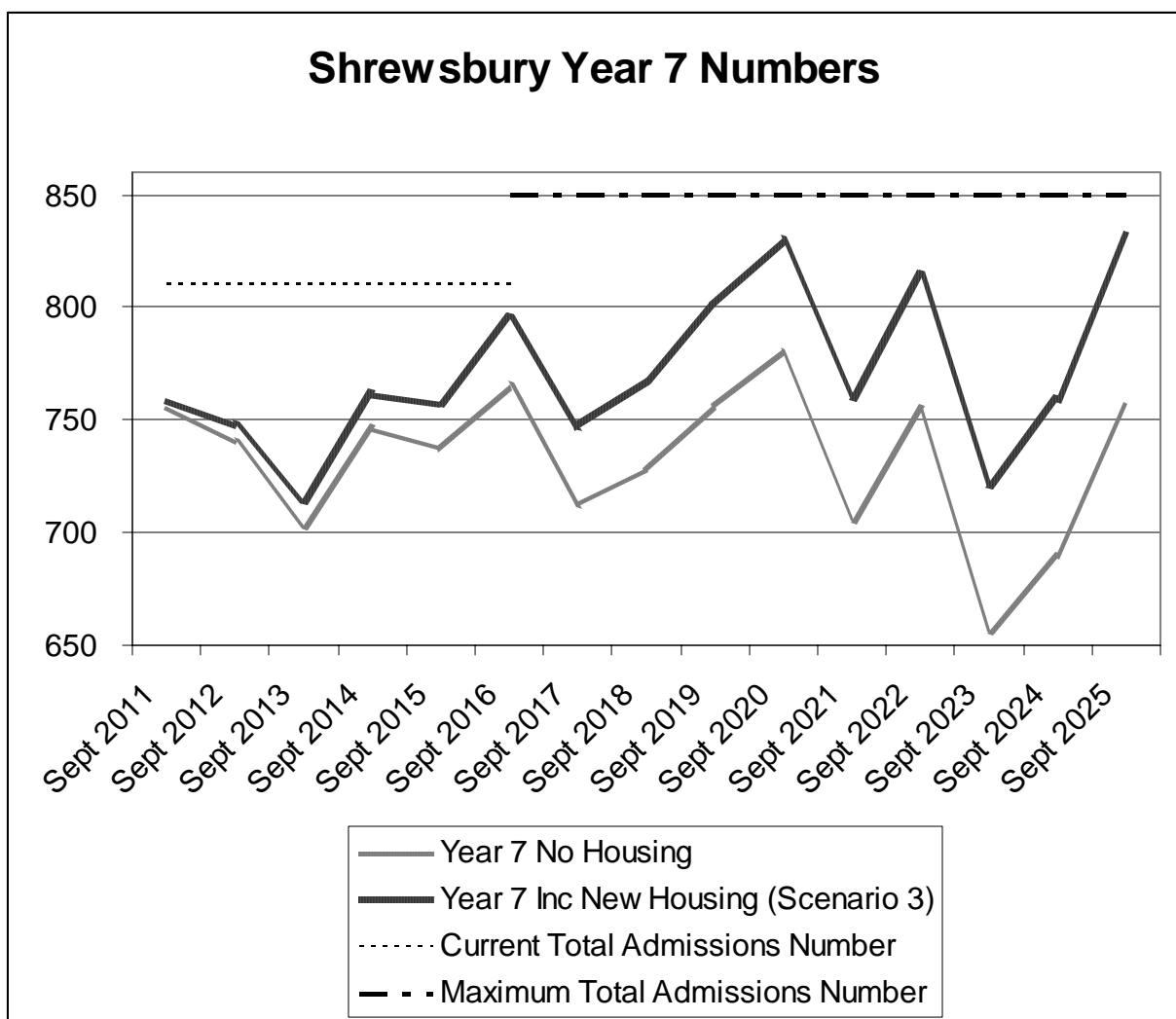


Chart 10 shows that Year 7 pupil numbers will remain within the maximum Admissions Number for Shrewsbury schools without the Wakeman School and Arts College during the current planning period. As forecast Year 7 pupil number will approach the 810 current total Admissions Number, in September 2016, it is recommended that Admissions Numbers are raised to their maximum of 850 from that year.

The pupils forecast to enter Year 7 in 2022 and beyond have not yet been born, although the forecast is based on Office for National Statistics figures which are in turn based on current trends in birth rates, total fertility and completed family size. Chart 10 also uses a recursive methodology which might tend to exaggerate peaks and troughs in Year 7 numbers. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that Year 7 numbers in 2022 and beyond could exceed the extended total Admissions Number for the town. This could also happen if, for some unforeseen reason, a higher than expected proportion of pupils from the new housing were of upper primary age. If this were to be the case, then the Council could temporarily increase the Admissions Number of one or more schools to create a “bulge” year group. This is acceptable under the School Admissions Code. If the Council chooses to expand one or more schools (see School Buildings Capacities above), then the Year 7 capacity will automatically increase (by four pupils for each additional classroom built or brought back into use for teaching and learning).

## **6 Conclusion**

The data above show that there is sufficient capacity in Shrewsbury secondary schools to cope with pupil numbers as projected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), plus the most likely scenarios of additional pupils from new housing. Only the unlikely event of immigration of families into new housing in Shrewsbury along the lines of a new town development would there be a need to expand the secondary provision slightly from the capacity numbers net of the Wakeman School and Arts College. Indeed, the ONS figures suggest that the Council’s model of extra pupils from additional housing is optimistic in terms of pupil numbers.

There is a greater, but still unlikely, possibility that the Council will have to cope with a “bulge” year in the early part of the next decade. This can be accommodated within the total buildings capacities of the schools, but would mean a temporary expansion of the Admissions Numbers for one or more schools.

Annexe to Appendix D – Data Tables for Charts

Table 1 – Shrewsbury Secondary Pupil Numbers

Year	Pupil Numbers	Year	Pupil Numbers
2002	4389	2007	4234
2003	4514	2008	4049
2004	4492	2009	3998
2005	4409	2010	4009
2006	4380	2011	3901

Table 2 – Schools in Shrewsbury – Pupil Numbers

School	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Belvidere	772	779	799	815	813	816	802	823	827	828
Grange	586	578	541	519	505	500	488	489	494	471
Meole Brace	1160	1170	1174	1141	1123	1060	988	955	997	978
Priory School	750	783	808	813	812	806	805	812	813	809
Sundorne	480	529	516	497	495	462	451	463	472	488
Wakeman	641	675	654	624	632	590	515	456	406	327
Shrewsbury Secondary	4389	4514	4492	4409	4380	4234	4049	3998	4009	3901

Table 3 – Wakeman School – Pupil Numbers

See Table 2

Table 4 – Shrewsbury Year 7 Numbers

Year	Total Y7	Wakeman	Year	Total Y7	Wakeman
1992	812	133	2002	912	126
1993	812	140	2003	950	144
1994	859	135	2004	861	124
1995	817	143	2005	798	100
1996	816	136	2006	890	135
1997	809	144	2007	794	98
1998	829	130	2008	759	74
1999	872	140	2009	784	58
2000	893	140	2010	800	55
2001	912	115	2011	755	48

Table 5 – Wakeman Preferences

Year	Intake	1st	2nd	3rd
2006	135	118	194	265
2007	98	75	169	186
2008	74	67	117	193
2009	58	50	104	144
2010	55	53	95	119
2011	48	42	73	91

Table 6 – Shrewsbury Secondary Pupils to 2018

See Table 7 below

Table 7 – Shrewsbury Secondary Pupils to 2033

Year	Pupils	Year	Pupils	Year	Pupils
2002	4509	2013	3857	2024	3819
2003	4514	2014	3778	2025	3819
2004	4492	2015	3734	2026	3832
2005	4403	2016	3727	2027	3819
2006	4380	2017	3746	2028	3819
2007	4234	2018	3717	2029	3806
2008	4049	2019	3806	2030	3806
2009	3998	2020	3873	2031	3806
2010	4009	2021	3873	2032	3806
2011	3901	2022	3899	2033	3806
2012	3863	2023	3859		

Table 8 – Pupil Number Scenarios

Year	Base Projection	100% New	50% New	30% New	Capacity
2008	4049				4725
2009	3998				4725
2010	4009				4725
2011	3901				4725
2012	3863	3936	3900	3885	4455
2013	3857	3969	3913	3891	4050
2014	3778	3934	3856	3825	4250
2015	3734	3937	3836	3795	4250
2016	3727	3979	3853	3803	4250
2017	3746	4047	3896	3836	4250
2018	3717	4066	3892	3822	4250
2019	3806	4203	4005	3925	4250
2020	3873	4319	4096	4007	4250
2021	3873	4368	4120	4021	4250
2022	3899	4446	4173	4064	4250
2023	3859	4458	4159	4039	4250
2024	3819	4471	4145	4014	4250
2025	3819	4523	4171	4030	4250
2026	3832	4589	4211	4059	4250
2027	3819	4576	4197	4046	4250
2028	3819	4576	4197	4046	4250
2029	3806	4562	4184	4033	4250
2030	3806	4562	4184	4033	4250
2031	3806	4562	4184	4033	4250
2032	3806	4562	4184	4033	4250
2033	3806	4562	4184	4033	4250

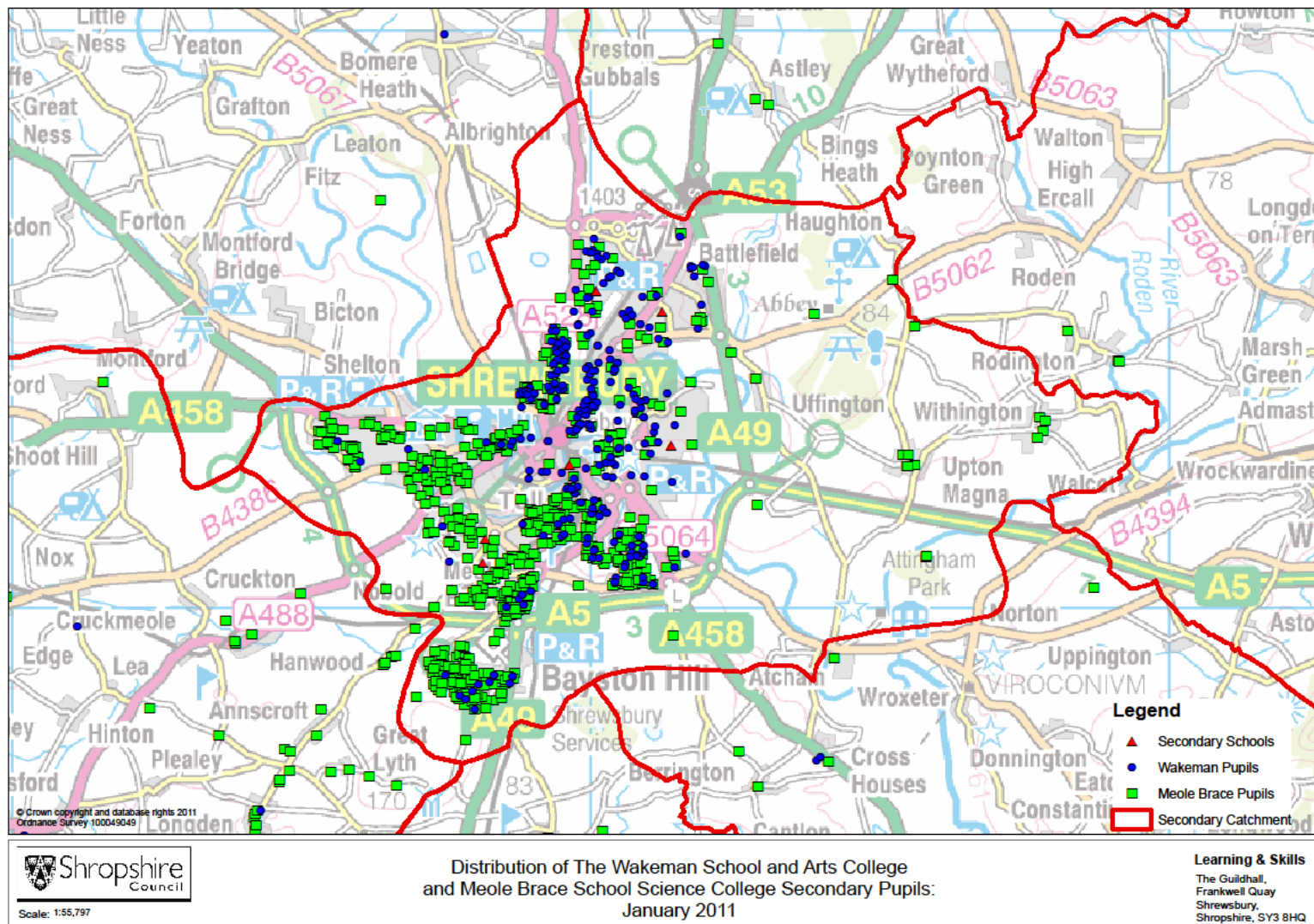
Table 9 – Pupil Numbers and Capacities

See Table 8

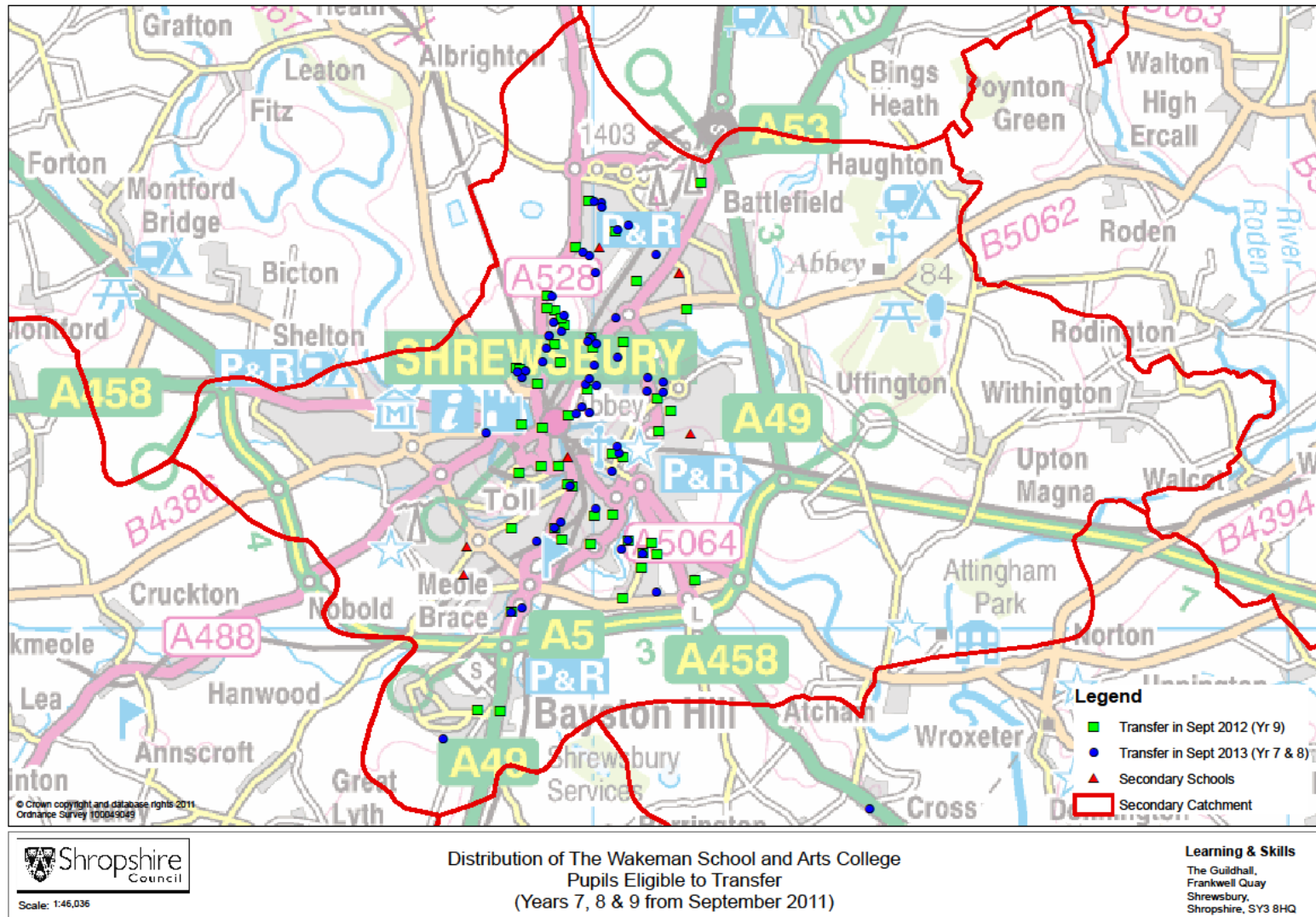
Table 10 – Shrewsbury Year 7 Numbers

Year	Number in Year 6	Year 7 No Housing	Additional Y6 Pupils	Year 7 Inc New Housing (Scenario 3)	Current Total Admissions Number	Maximum Total Admissions Number
Sept 2011	785	755	3	759	810	
Sept 2012	769	740	7	747	810	
Sept 2013	730	702	11	714	810	
Sept 2014	775	746	16	761	810	
Sept 2015	766	737	20	757	810	
Sept 2016	795	765	30	795	810	850
Sept 2017	740	712	35	747		850
Sept 2018	756	727	40	767		850
Sept 2019	786	756	45	801		850
Sept 2020	811	780	50	830		850
Sept 2021	733	705	55	760		850
Sept 2022	784	754	60	814		850
Sept 2023	682	656	65	721		850
Sept 2024	716	689	70	759		850
Sept 2025	786	756	76	832		850

Pupil distribution Map – All Wakeman School and Arts College and Meole Brace School Science College pupils



### Pupil Distribution Map – Pupils from the Wakeman School and Arts College Eligible to Transfer to Meole Brace School Science College



## Statement of Case

### Introduction

Shropshire Council's Cabinet agreed on 4 May 2011 to publish statutory proposals to close Wakeman School and Arts College. Notices were originally published on 16 May 2011. During the representation period, a concern was raised about a potential ambiguity in the Notices relating to the phased nature of the implementation of the proposal. In order to ensure absolute clarity, the Council took the decision to republish Notices on 1 July 2011.

The Statement of Case, in the form specified by Department for Education guidance, is set out below.

The Statement of Case should be read along with the Report to Cabinet on 4 May, the Statutory Notice and the Section 15 or 19 information, which accompanies the Notice. The Statement of Case consists of a number of factors to be considered by decision makers in coming to their decision. These are reproduced in full along with comments by officers on each paragraph. Comments by Shropshire Council are in **bold type**.

### D1

#### **Statutory Guidance – Factors to be Considered by Decision Makers**

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

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

#### EFFECT ON STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## A System Shaped by Parents

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

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

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

## Standards

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

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

narrowing achievement gaps.

**The Wakeman School and Arts College was judged to be “Good” following its last Ofsted inspection. The named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College, was also judged to be “Good”.**

**The Wakeman School and Arts College has a number of unfilled places. This, combined with its small total capacity, makes it expensive to maintain. Closing the school will release pupil-related funding of £1,350,550 which will increase the resources available to schools which receive displaced pupils. In addition, the closure will release £376,440 in allocations for fixed costs, which will be reallocated through the dedicated schools budget to increase the funding available to raise standards in all Shropshire schools. Note that, depending on parental preferences for destination schools, a small proportion of the fixed cost allocation might need to be top-sliced to provide home to school transport for a small number of pupils who meet specific criteria. This will amount to no more than £21,000 spread across the first four years following the initial implementation date.**

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

**The named alternative school is known to provide effectively for pupils with special education needs. The school will be in a position to improve their provision using reallocated funding (see above).**

Paragraphs 4.22 to 4.27 are not applicable to these proposals.

## **Diversity**

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

mission and a centre of excellence or specialist provision.

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

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

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

**The Wakeman School and Arts College is a community secondary school with no religious character. The school has 348 surplus places (52%). The named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College has no religious character.**

4.32 The Decision Maker should consider how the proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with Every Child Matters' principles which are: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution to the community and society and achieve economic well-being. This should include considering how displaced pupils will continue to have access to extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and vocational training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

**The named alternative school also offers extended services. The named**

**alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College, was judged “Good” at its last Ofsted inspection. The school is known to provide effective services to Looked After pupils and pupils with Special Educational Needs.**

### **NEED FOR PLACES**

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

**Sufficient unfilled places exist currently in the named alternative school and are forecast to be available at the date of implementation of the proposal.**

**Shropshire Council has considered future development in the Shrewsbury area and is convinced that there is sufficient capacity in the remaining schools to cope with the levels of development currently envisaged up to at least 2020.**

**Beyond this date, there might be a need to provide additional secondary school places.**

### **Surplus Places**

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

4.35 The Decision Maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places, and where standards are low

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

**The Wakeman School and Arts College has 348 surplus places (52%). The named alternative school, Meole Brace School Science College, has the same Ofsted rating (Good) as The Wakeman School and Arts College. Both absolute attainment and CVA are higher at Meole Brace School Science College. The Wakeman School and Arts College works with a pupil population with a higher level of deprivation and with a higher proportion of special education needs than Meole Brace School Science College, which could contribute to these results.**

#### **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL**

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

**Both The Wakeman School and Arts College and Meole Brace School Science College serve the town of Shrewsbury. Most pupils are within 3 miles of all the Shrewsbury schools, and all pupils are within 3 miles of at least one of the schools which would remain if The Wakeman School and Arts College closes. All Shrewsbury secondary schools provide extended services.**

4.37 The information presented by those bringing forward proposals to close such schools, particularly when they are in receipt of funding as part of regeneration activity, should therefore include evidence that options for maintaining access to extended services in the area have been addressed. The views of other relevant agencies and

partnerships with responsibility for community and family services should be taken into account, alongside those of the local police, Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies having responsibility for the New Deal for Communities.

**Not applicable.**

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

**Community cohesion was considered during the pre-statutory consultation period (see report on pre-statutory consultation). It was considered that there would be no effect on community cohesion.**

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

**The site of the named alternative secondary school is 1.6 miles from the site of The Wakeman School and Arts College. 47.4% of pupils walk to The Wakeman School and Arts College at present. There is no reason why the overwhelming majority of pupils should not continue to walk to an alternative school. There would be no disproportionate effect on disadvantaged groups.**

4.40 In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker should bear in mind that proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. The EIA

2006 provides extended free transport rights for low income groups – see Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance ref 00373 – 2007BKT-EN at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications). Proposals should also be considered on the basis of how they will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

**47.4% of pupils currently walk to The Wakeman School and Arts College, and as noted above there is no reason why the majority of these should not continue to do so. A small proportion of the displaced pupils would be eligible for free transport in line with current Shropshire Council policies. As part of the proposals Meole Brace School Science College, which currently has the highest number of pupils in the town cycling to school, will develop an updated Home to School travel policy.**

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

**There are no sex, race or disability issues that arise from the proposal.**

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

- a. Alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another

local school to increase the school's viability; the scope for an extended school or children's centre to provide local community services and facilities e.g. child care facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc;

- b. The transport implications as mentioned in paragraphs 4.39 to 4.40; and
- c. The overall and long term impact on local people and the community of closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility.

**Shropshire Council have carefully considered alternatives to closure, as set out in the report to Cabinet on 4 May 2011.**

**Sections 4.42 to 4.45 are not relevant to this proposal.**

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

**Not applicable**

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

**Not applicable**

**Section 4.48 is not relevant to this proposal, as the school is not a nursery school. The issue of access to nursery provision is considered in section 4.46. Sections 4.49 to 4.56 are not relevant to this proposal.**

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION**

### Initial Considerations

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

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

opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community;

- vii. ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year-olds, taking account of the role of local LSC funded institutions and their admissions policies; and
- viii. ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements of special educational needs will require amendment and all parental rights must be ensured. Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority should be involved.

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

**There are no separately funded SEN places at the existing school.**

**Paragraphs 4.57 to 4.61 are only relevant to the reduction of places in special schools and units.**

### **OTHER ISSUES**

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

those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

**Shropshire Council has actively sought and carefully considered the views of individuals and groups with an interest in the proposal. This has included the use of widespread local publicity to advertise the opportunity to respond directly to the Council, in writing, electronically and by telephone. The consultation process and contact details have also been publicised through the school. There has also been the opportunity for interested parties to respond to the Council through a series of meetings held with staff, governors and the local community. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services was present at each of the public meetings in order to listen to the views of attendees. All responses received during the non statutory phase of consultation were made available to Cabinet Members, and key points were included in the report to Cabinet considered on 4 May 2011. Before considering that report, members of the Cabinet visited the school to see it in operation.**

**All responses received during the non statutory consultation were reconsidered in the preparation of the current report and were available to members of Cabinet.**