

## **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE UPAVON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **1. Purpose of this Consultation Document**

1.1 Before any major decision can be made about the future of a maintained school there has to be consultation with those people likely to be affected by the change. The purpose of this document is to consult with the Upavon Primary School community, and all others with an interest in the future provision of education for children from the Upavon area. The document gives background information and asks for views.

1.2 The document has been circulated to:

- Parents of past pupils at the school in Summer 2008.
- Parents of children not yet of school age in the designated area of the school
- Staff
- Governors
- Upavon Parish Council
- Mr A Molland, County Councillor
- Mr Michael Ancram, M.P.
- The County Secretaries of the relevant unions
- Primary Heads Forum
- Heads and Chairs of Governors of nearby primary schools
- The local community
- The Army
- Salisbury & Clifton Dioceses

### **2. Why it is proposed to close the school**

2.1 In recent years the number of pupils at the school have declined and as at January 2008 numbers were 19. There are currently no signs of future growth in numbers, with a reduction in the number of pre-school children living in the area. The Army is being consulted about the future demand for school places from Trenchard Lines.

2.2 The reducing number of pupils has resulted in significant problems for the school including:

- Budgetary issues
- Staff recruitment and retention problems

2.3 The school has also faced significant standards issues and was placed in Special Measures in January 2008.

2.4 The Governors and Local Authority have striven to meet these challenges and explored a range of possibilities, including federating with another school. However, it has not proved attractive or reasonable to another school to federate with one facing such difficulties.

2.5 Given the situation at the school, and the need to provide good quality education for the pupils, the decision to relocate the pupils to other schools was taken in June 2008. All pupils were admitted to other schools for September 2008. A decision was also taken to consult on the possible closure of the school.

2.6 It is proposed to formally close the school on 28 February 2009. A new school(s) will be identified as the designated primary school(s) to serve the area, currently being served by Upavon Primary School.

### **3. Future demand for school places from the Upavon designated area**

3.1 Information provided by the Health Authority suggests that there is an average of 16 pre-school children per age cohort born within the Upavon catchment area. This figure does not take into account any children of that age who may move into or out of the area. In recent years only 45% of these prospective pupils joined the school.

### **4. Other nearby primary schools**

4.1 Details of other nearby primary schools are given in the table below:

<b><u>School</u></b>	<b><u>Capacity of School</u></b>	<b><u>September 2008 Forecast Roll</u></b>	<b><u>September 2010 Forecast Roll</u></b>	<b><u>Distance from Upavon by Road (miles)</u></b>
Collingbourne	119	112	124	9.5 (4.3 from Everleigh)
Netheravon	203	181	176	4.7
Rushall	84	90	87	1.3
Chirton	56	40	35	4.6
Pewsey	205	151	156	4.6
Woodborough	147	145	141	4.2
Urchfont	112	103	97	7

### **5 Options for the future of the school's current catchment area**

5.1. As detailed in 3.1 above only a minority of local pupils attend Upavon Primary School. The main alternative preferences in recent years have been Netheravon, Rushall, Woodborough and Collingbourne.

5.2. An analysis of future pupil numbers and school forecasts across the area indicates that no single school can accommodate all of the future Upavon pupils without a significant expansion. There will, though, be enough school places across the area to accommodate them all.

5.3. Given the recent pattern of preferences, future pupil forecasts and the geography of the current catchment area the following options are put forward for consideration:

#### **Option A**

(i) that the area of Everleigh is added to the Collingbourne catchment area. This can be accommodated without an expansion of the school, and

- (ii) that the rest of the area is added to both the Rushall and Netheravon catchment areas ie. it becomes a joint, shared catchment area. This would be facilitated by an expansion of Rushall from a three class school to a four class school. No expansion would be necessary at Netheravon.

This option would reflect recent preference patterns.

### **Option B**

- (i) That the current Upavon catchment area is added to the Pewsey Primary School catchment area.

This option would reflect the fact that a majority of pupils attending Upavon transferred to Pewsey at the start of September 2008.

- 5.4 The governing bodies of the schools affected by this proposal have been offered a separate meeting to discuss it further before they respond to the consultation.

## **6. What happens next?**

- 6.1 You are invited to make your views known using the attached pro-forma or by sending a letter to the address shown on the pro-forma. The closing date for responses is **14<sup>th</sup> October 2008**.
- 6.2 There will be a public meeting at the school on **30<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm** at which you may wish to ask for further information or make your views known. Meetings are also being arranged with staff and governors.
- 6.3 The outcome of the consultation will be considered by the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development who will decide whether or not to publish a public notice proposing the closure of the school. There will then be a six week period for formal representations to be made. If there are objections to the public notice the matter will be considered and determined by the Cabinet of the County Council.

## **7. Other questions you may have**

- 7.1 Admissions: nominations of a future school(s) to provide places for children from Upavon does not interfere with the parents rights to express a preference for a different school. However, school transport entitlement is linked to the designated area school, unless any alternative school is closer to the child's home address. The current Transport Policy is to provide for all children who live more than 2 miles (if under 8) or 3 miles (if over 8) from the designated school by the shortest walking route, or for whom there is not a safe walking route.
- 7.2 Future of the buildings and playing field: the County Council is consulting with local community groups about possible alternative uses of the schools buildings and grounds.
- 7.3 Financial implications: if the school closes there will be additional transport costs, depending on how parents express their preferences, and some redundancy costs.

Pupil funding will follow the pupils to their new schools.

**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF UPAVON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

1. Please give your name and your interest in the future of the school (e.g. current parent, parent of pre-school child, village resident).

2. Do you agree with the proposed closure of the school?

YES  NO  Please tick appropriate box

If you wish to give your reasons for supporting the closure please do so below.

If you do not support the closure, and believe that there are other options that should be considered, please give details below.

3. Which of the options detailed in 5 do you support? Please circle preferred option.

A B

If you wish to give reasons for supporting this option then please do so below.

4. If you think there is another option we should consider please provide details of your suggestion below.

Please return this form to:  
Director, Department for Children and Education (Ref. NH/CD), Wiltshire County Council,  
County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JB by **14<sup>th</sup> October 2008**.