

Question and answer sheet in relation to the consultation to reduce school places in the Shevington area

The consultation document is available at www.wigan.gov.uk / Education and Families / School Admissions / Consultations

1. Q. Will one of the schools in the Shevington Federation be closing as a result of this consultation?

A. This is not yet known. We are very concerned about the level of surplus places and the impact this is having - and will increasingly have - on the schools in the area and the quality of education for the children. Therefore this consultation is about seeking views to get people's feedback on how we can reduce surplus places. As set out in the consultation document the number of places needed in the Shevington area is falling and we need to do something about this to secure the quality and sustainability of education for children in Shevington. We have set out as part of the consultation that 2 of the 3 community schools in the area, that have federated governance arrangements, have low pupil numbers and the projected trend for this indicates this is set to continue. The options that have been put forward in the consultation document focus on resolving this issue around the 3 community federated schools.

In advance of the consultation, we have worked with the schools and the governing body for some time to address the issue of surplus places and to analyse different options for a solution. The only issue driving this consultation is securing the best education for the children of Shevington against the reality of falling pupil numbers and the financial implications this has on a school budget and therefore their ability to meet the needs of children. There are no advantages, financial or otherwise to the council, if a decision were taken at the end of the consultation to close a school. There would be no saving to the council budget as schools are funded separately by the government, based on the number of pupils in a school. Therefore, when pupil numbers become a concern, the ability to run a school effectively is challenged because of the impact on the school's budget. The ultimate decision will be made purely on the grounds of what will secure the best quality education, now and in the future, for the children of the area, with the impact of any decision fully assessed and action taken to minimise the impact.

The consultation runs up to 24th July 2016 and we want to hear everyone's view. We have asked the communities involved if they have a preferred alternative option that would be viable and sustainable. All such options put forward will be given due consideration.

2. Q. When will we know the outcome of the consultation?

A. This current consultation ends on the 24th July 2016. On 25th August Cabinet are due to meet and will consider a report which will allow them to make a decision on how to proceed having considered all the information and responses to the consultation. At this stage Cabinet will decide whether they wish to go to the next stage of consultation, such as publish a statutory notice to propose making a change. If such notice is published this will be on 8th September which will start another 4 week consultation period where there is further opportunity for representations that can be made in writing. This consultation will end on 6th October and Cabinet will consider the results of that consultation when it meets on 24th November. It is at this meeting that Cabinet will make a final decision on any proposal made.

3. Q. When Cabinet have made a decision who can appeal?

Following the final decision, the Diocesan Board of Education for any diocese of the Church of England, the Bishop of any diocese of the Roman Catholic Church and the governing body can appeal.

In terms of parents/carers they should seek their own legal advice to challenge by way of Judicial Review. Any such challenge would be against how the decision was made rather than the rights and wrongs of the decision reached.

4. Q. When was it decided that consultation should begin on reducing places in the Shevington area?

A. On 21 April 2016 Cabinet approved that local authority officers review school place provision in the Shevington area as there was a concern about surplus places in the area and that this was set to continue.

Following the review on 23rd May 2016 the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People gave permission to begin the statutory consultation process for the removal of surplus places in the Shevington area. The local authority could act on this no sooner than 2 June 2016.

5. Q. When did Shevington Community Primary School become part of the Shevington Federation?

A. The original decision to establish a federation was taken by the governing bodies of Shevington Millbrook and Shevington Vale Community Primary Schools in the summer of 2011. Prior to the decision a consultation document outlining the proposal was sent to stakeholders and, in accordance with The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007, a six week consultation period was held closing on 15th July 2011. On Monday 18th July 2011 extra-ordinary meetings were held to consider the responses to the consultation and for each governing body to

independently decide whether or not they would proceed to federation. Both governing bodies took the decision to federate with effect from 1st Sept 2011

Following an Ofsted inspection at Shevington Community Primary School in May 2014, the school was judged to “Require Improvement” the governing body approached the Millbrook – Shevington Vale Federation with a view to joining the federation. The requirements of The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 were adhered to. A consultation document was published and a six week consultation period was undertaken running between 8 September 2014 and 20 October 2014.

On Tuesday 21st October 2014 the governing body of Shevington Community Primary School voted in favour of joining the federation and the three school Federation was established with effect from 3rd November 2014.

6. Q. How are the schools funded? Will the local authority save money by reducing the number of schools in the Shevington area?

- A.** Any reduction in the number of schools in the area would not lead to any savings to the council. The spending reductions the council have to implement because of the national reductions in public spending have no bearing on school funding and therefore any changes to the number of schools makes no difference to the council’s budget. As set out in response to question 1, the impact of falling pupil numbers on the quality and sustainability of the education available in Shevington is the only reason for this consultation.

The following diagram illustrates how schools are funded and the impact of any school closure:

Government fund schools by providing each local authority with a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to fund schools in the area. This money cannot be spent on any other service area.



The value of the DSG given to each local authority is calculated by:
 Total number of pupils in LA schools
 x
 per pupil rate

£194m

In Wigan the DSG we receive from Government for schools is approx. £194 million through this calculation

DSG

The council and Wigan Schools (through a group called the Schools Forum) decide how much of the DSG to spend together on support services needed for pupils in schools and the formula for sharing the rest out to fund each school budget based on the number of pupils in each of our 122 schools

Wigan Council

* Fixed sum of £150,000 per school plus an allowance for rates

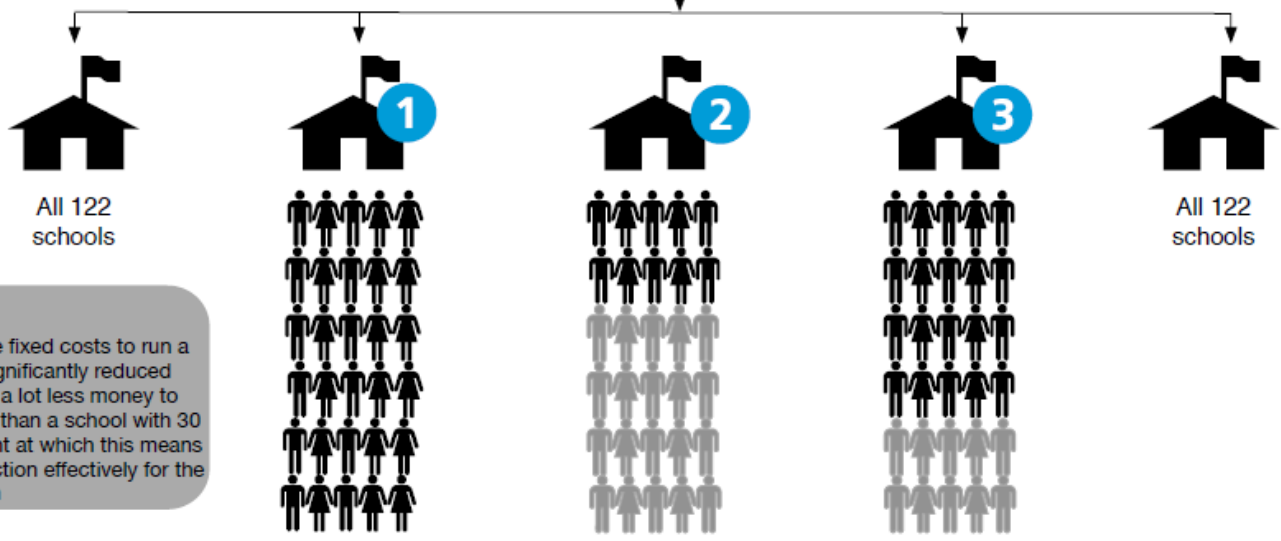


Schools budget distributed to all 122 schools based on per pupil rate (£2,899 for primary schools) multiplied by number of children on roll



Extra funding for factors such as deprivation, pupils with Special Educational Needs, Children in Care

pupil on roll
 surplus place



* If a school closed the only 'saving' would be the fixed £150,000 per school and rates allowance. This would go back into the schools funding pot and increase the per pupil rate for each school

Therefore because there are fixed costs to run a school, a school with a significantly reduced number of pupils will have a lot less money to spend to educate each child than a school with 30 in each class. There is a point at which this means the school can no longer function effectively for the children

School 1,2 and 3 are the same size. But because of the numbers of pupils on roll, school 1 would have 3 times more funding to run than school 2 and 1.5 times more than school 3.

7. Q. How has Wigan Council calculated the projected number of school places needed in the Shevington area?

A. The projections are calculated by taking into account:

- the birth rates for the Shevington School Place planning area (see map at appendix 1)
- trends in parental preferences (this takes account applications being made from out of the area)
- pupil yield from housing developments

Shevington school place planning area						
Academic year		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20
Births for the Shevington school place planning area which includes WN6-8 and WN6-9		118		130		129
Births Shevington and Appley Bridge* (included in above figure)		56		70		67
Schools in the school place planning area	Admission number	Projected 1st preferences	Admission number	Projected 1st preferences	Admission number	Projected 1st preferences
Standish Lower Ground St Anne's CE	20	14	20	16	20	16
St. Bernadette's R.C.	30	22	30	24	30	24
Shevington Community	30	8	30	9	30	9
Millbrook	30	29	30	31	30	31
Shevington Vale	30	16	30	18	30	17
Totals	140	89	140	98	140	97
Potential housing yield		1		2		2
Totals	140	90	140	100	140	99
Spare capacity		50		40		41

A map of the Shevington school place planning area is included at appendix 1 which shows:

- the school place planning area for Shevington WN6-8 and WN6-9
- the area used to capture birth data for Shevington / Appley Bridge*

The difference between the births and the projected 1st preferences takes account of children moving in and / or applying for places who live out of the area.

8. Q. How is the pupil yield from housing developments calculated?

A. We calculate pupil yield from housing developments as follows: For every 100 homes developed, this will generate a pupil yield of 3 children per year group.

In the Shevington area at 31 March full planning permission had been granted for 64 homes on two sites (the former Orica site and Heron's Wharf) and the pupil yield for these has been included in the projections above.

9. Q. There are up to 600 homes planned or are currently being built in the Standish / Almond Brook area. Has the impact of these homes been considered?

A. The developments at South of Pepper Lane and Cat l'th Window Farm Almond Brook Road, a total of 598 homes, are categorised as falling in the Standish area for which an infrastructure assessment has been undertaken: (<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Resident/Planning-and-Building-Control/StandishInfrastructureAssessmentNov2013.pdf>)

We know there is currently sufficient capacity to extend schools in the Standish area to accommodate pupil yield from these areas which are expected to be completed over the next 7 years. The rate of development for new housing is influenced by many varying factors. We continually monitor the rate of development, the pupil yield generated and parental preferences. Should there be future demand to increase provision in the Shevington area, as detailed in the consultation document, we know there is opportunity to extend provision at the current schools sites.

We have to plan for school places for future need taking into account parental preference and projected pupil numbers.

Additional places needed based on future housing in Standish will take time to materialise. Additional places would need to be based on demonstrable evidence that parents in the Standish area are asking for school places in Shevington. Trends currently show the vast majority of parents in the Standish area express a preference for their local Standish schools. If we don't address the number of surplus places in Shevington as described in the consultation document, and wait to fill this surplus with children that may come from new homes being developed in the Standish area, our projections show that the schools in Shevington will be unable to set a viable budget.

10. Q. How many preferences have been expressed for schools in the Shevington school place planning area over the last three years?

A. The following table shows on time preferences for reception intake 2014 to 2016:

School	2014						2015						2016					
	PAN	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	Allocated	PAN	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	Allocated	PAN	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	Allocated*
Standish Lower Ground St Anne's CE Primary School	18	17	9	17	43	18	20	23	9	13	45	20	20	15	14	9	38	21
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	30	30	25	15	70	30	30	26	17	9	52	30	30	28	26	10	64	29
Shevington Community Primary School	30	17	8	14	39	17	30	7	6	12	25	14	30	6	17	9	32	8
Millbrook Primary School	30	30	26	18	74	30	30	40	29	17	86	30	30	40	28	23	91	30
Shevington Vale Primary School	30	20	21	10	51	22	30	21	22	21	64	26	30	20	19	24	63	24

*additional child at Standish Lower Ground St Anne's due to last place offered to a twin

11. Q. Millbrook is consistently oversubscribed with first preferences. Where do the children who are refused a place go?

- A. Where a child cannot be offered a place at their preferred school, we look to offer a place at their 2nd or 3rd preference as expressed by their parent on their application form. For the 2016 intake data shows that 45% of the children refused places at Millbrook requested a place at one of the three remaining Shevington schools. These children were allocated a place. The remaining 55% were either offered a school of their preference out of the Shevington/Appley Bridge area or an alternative school within a reasonable distance of their home address.

12. Q. How many current pupils at Shevington schools live outside the Shevington / Appley Bridge* area?

- A. The following table shows a breakdown of pupils at each school based on their current address:

School	No. On Roll By Area		Total On Roll
	Shevington/Appley Bridge*	All Other Areas	
Standish Lower Ground St Anne's CE Primary	0	130	130
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	112	78	190
Shevington Community Primary School	80	17	97
Millbrook Primary School	139	67	206
Shevington Vale Primary School	123	14	137

13. Q. If one of the schools closes, how will all the children currently attending the 3 schools be accommodated in 2 schools?

A. Our Capital Development team has visited all 3 school sites. There is space to extend on all the school sites so that they can accommodate additional classrooms.

14. Q. What if there is a growth in the birth rate / higher demand for places in the area in the future?

A. Each school site has capacity to expand up to an extra half form of entry. This means that each school could admit up to 45 children per year group. It is the responsibility of the headteacher of a school to determine how year groups with numbers of 45 children in them will be managed. In some cases schools will create 2 classes per year group and some may vertically group year groups where this is more appropriate.