



Children and Young People's Services

Site Criteria (Small Schools)

Introduction

This document sets out key criteria for the selection of new sites for small schools (primary schools with less than 150 pupils). The criteria are not presented in priority order.

Criteria

Essentials

The site should:

- Be of an appropriate size and shape (see below);
- Have safe access by road and on foot (and have a safe stopping point on the site or nearby on a safe walking route for coaches for trips and visits);
- Not be steeply sloping where the buildings would sit;
- Not include springs or other issues where the buildings would sit;
- Be well drained and not on a flood plain.

Desirables

The site should:

- Include potential for a variety of habitat areas, but currently be free of streams or ponds;
- Have access to utilities, (telephones, electricity, mains water and drainage, and gas if possible) but not be crossed by fixed utilities (high pressure gas pipes, high voltage power lines, high capacity water or sewerage pipes);
- Allow pupils to access local facilities/attractions and services where these exist nearby;
- Allow pupils in schools with a religious character access on foot to a church.

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- Not take traffic up narrow lanes or roads which have not had school traffic using them before;
- Allow the community access to the school's facilities out of school hours.

Size and Shape

The required site areas for schools are:

	3 class	4 class	5 class
Minimum	5,500m ²	6,500m ²	7,600m ²
Optimum	6,500m ²	7,300m ²	8,500m ²
Maximum	7,000m ²	7,700m ²	9,000m ²

(1 Acre = 4047m²)

The minimum level areas for the building and hard playground are set out in the table with the footprint of the buildings below:

	3 class	4 class	5 class
Minimum level area	1,250m ²	1,450m ²	1,650m ²
Of which footprint	520m ²	670m ²	800m ²

The footprint is the size of the buildings. The space occupied on the site is likely to be slightly larger to allow for light wells, returns, etc. 750m² of the hard play area should form a single, flat surface which can be used for netball and other court activities such as short tennis.

The playing field area is required to have a single flat or smoothly sloping (no steps or terraces) area for a pitch. A mini-soccer pitch is 46m x 28m, so there needs to be an unobstructed area of at least this size (1290m²). This pitch will also be used for rounders and other activities. The playing field area should be large enough for a four lane 60m sprint track (an unobstructed straight line of 70m by 6m). This can be laid on top of the pitch, as athletics and soccer can be different times of year in the curriculum.

Note that the site areas above all allow good sized areas for access roads and parking, but it is assumed that access comes directly off a public road. Sites which would require substantial driveways will require the land for the driveway to be added to the figures above.

More information on site requirements and school design can be found in Building Bulletin 99, a recent Department for Children Schools and Families publication which sets out design guidance for schools (although it does tend to concentrate on larger,

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urban schools). This can be found at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=8117>

Please contact Norrie Porter (norrie.porter@shropshire.gov.uk) on 01743 254316 for more information.

Children and Young People's Services

Premises and Planning

Option Appraisal – Site Issues for an Amalgamated Clunbury and Lydbury North Primary School

Introduction

This discussion paper is intended to set out some issues about school sites as part of a formative debate on draft proposals to amalgamate Clunbury and Lydbury North Primary Schools. Nothing in this paper should be taken as suggesting that the decision to amalgamate the two schools has already been taken, and nothing in this paper fetters the discretion of elected Members to decide the outcome of the consultation. It should also be noted that no formal approach has been made to the owners of any of the sites mentioned, and that no formal advice has been received on planning matters.

A range of strategies including local authority and diocesan asset checks, advertising and seeking local knowledge of possible sites have been used to identify potential sites in each catchment area. Each governing body was also requested to identify potential sites for consideration.

Criteria for Potential Sites

Appendix 1 sets out possible criteria for potential sites for the new school. The Appraisal below uses these criteria and other issues, such as potential issues with Planning Approvals, to evaluate each of the sites identified to date. Comments on the appraisal, or any other aspect of this paper, are welcomed.

Identified Site Options

The identified sites are: the current sites of each school, the Village Hall site in Lydbury North, a field south west of the school site in Clunbury, a field south of the B4385 at the west end of Lydbury North and two fields, north and south of the B4385 at the east end of Lydbury North.

Appraisal By Site

Lydbury North School site

The current site of Lydbury North School is undersized with no contiguous playing fields, which have to be reached by walking along a footpath beside the B4385. There is no prospect of acquiring additional land. The site is relatively near the Church.

The site is in the middle of the village and provides a lively focus. However, there is no parking for staff or parents and therefore forms a congestion problem. Access to the site following development would continue to be a problem. The site is unsuitable for further development of the buildings and the current buildings are wholly unsuitable.

Clunbury School Site

The current site is constricted. However, there would be room for sufficient additional development if some additional hard play space could be constructed immediately south of the existing school buildings. The playing fields are sloping, but otherwise adequate. There is some parking on the school site, including safe drop off for minibuses. Access to Clunbury village is restricted but adequate.

Land at the Village Hall, Lydbury North

The site is undersized, unless the existing hall is demolished. As it is mainly used outside school hours, this is a possibility. It would be difficult to find a large enough level area to build the school without building close to existing houses. Both possible vehicle access routes would bring vehicles past a number of houses on narrow lanes. On the other hand, it is close to social housing in the village

Land to the North of Clunbury Village Church

The field north of St Mary's Church, Clunbury (known locally as the Maypole Field) has been suggested as a possible site. This site is large and level enough, but access would be difficult and involve bringing additional vehicle through residential areas some of which have no verges or pavements. Although no statutory enquiries have yet been undertaken, it is likely that the site has no easy access to services.

Land South West of Clunbury School

There are two fields south west of the existing school site at Clunbury, south of the Twitchen Road. They are relatively level, have good access and have similar access to the church as the existing school site. The site would be close to the Village hall. This site would have the location advantages of Clunbury, but the freedom to create a new school in line with the educational vision of the new school.

Land South of the B4385, West End of Lydbury North

This large, flat arable field has good access. It is rather farther from the church than the existing school. This end of the village is closer to Bishops Castle than to Clunbury, meaning that traffic from the south of the catchment would travel through the village to reach the school. It is understood that the south of the field floods, but it is some distance from the likely location of buildings. It indicates that there would be an issue with drainage, however.

Land South of the B4385, East End of Lydbury North

This large, flat arable field is behind the village shop. It is on the side of the village closer to Clunbury. There is access from a straight section of the B4385.

Conclusion

Out of the two current villages with schools, Lydbury North is close to other schools at Bishops Castle and Norbury. There has to be a concern that a new school in Lydbury North would impact on these schools by drawing children from parts of their catchment areas that are close to the new school. In turn, this might make it difficult for children moving into the south of the combined catchment after the initial admissions round to access places. Clunbury is further from other schools, and there is less chance of similar problems with access. As a location for a school, Clunbury makes more contribution to a wide spread network of rural schools.

The overall evaluation above suggests that the most appropriate site for a single combined school would be the current site of Clunbury School. The village has reasonable vehicle access from across the catchment area, and beyond. However, appropriately developing this site does mean accessing some additional land for hard play areas. The next most appropriate location is the field south of Twitchen Road. This would increase costs, but also increase flexibility in design of a new school.