

Updated projected pupil numbers for Shelton Lower School (23 July 2018)

1 Background

1.1 Central Bedfordshire council commenced an informal consultation on the future of the school on 23 April 2018. The consultation contained a table showing projected pupil numbers, and a budget and expenditure table based on this.

1.2 Several individuals and bodies have asked whether pupil numbers have changed since the informal consultation, and whether any changes affect council officers' view that the school is not financially viable. Accordingly, this update shows the original pupil number forecasts and the projected budget, expenditure, and in year and cumulative deficits between March 2019 and March 2022.

2 The original pupil number forecasts and projected budget and expenditure

2.1 The pupil numbers presented originally are shown below. The complaint that the 2019 total was incorrect was because of a transcription error in the year 4 number that year. The overall pupil total on which the budget and expenditure forecasts were based, was correct.

Year group	Oct-18	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21
Reception	5	4	4	4
Year 1	8	5	4	4
Year 2	9	8	5	4
Year 3	5	9	8	5
Year 4	8	5	9	8
Total	35	31	30	25
% capacity	47%	41%	40%	33%

2.2 The table setting out financial projections based on the above pupil numbers is set out below. Each year, the in-year deficit is projected to increase, so that the cumulative deficit reaches £110,609 by 2022.

Forecast school budget, March 2018 to March 2021				
	31.3.2019	31.3.2020	31.3.2021	31.3.2022
Income	£338,712	£285,680	£268,078	£252,702
Expenditure	£348,680	£303,822	£301,939	£292,554
In year revenue deficit	(£9,968)	(£18,142)	(£33,861)	(£39,852)
Deficit brought forward	(£8,786)	(£18,754)	(£36,896)	(£70,757)
Cumulative revenue deficit	(£18,754)	(£36,896)	(£70,757)	(£110,609)

3 Updated pupil forecasts and projected budget and expenditure

3.1 Since April, the numbers of pupils whose parents have been offered a reception place for September 2018, and accepted it, and the pupils in year groups 1-4, have changed. The table below shows the changes, and the amended pupil number projections. The projected roll for October 2018 is likely to be fairly accurate, unless more pupils in years 1-4 leave, and year R parents for whom Shelton was not a first preference do not get an offer of a place at their preferred school.

Year group	Oct-18	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21
Reception	10	4	4	4
Year 1	7	10	4	4
Year 2	4	7	10	4
Year 3	2	4	7	10
Year 4	6	2	4	7
Total	29	27	29	29
% capacity	39%	36%	39%	39%

3.2 The table above shows a significant (projected) drop in pupil numbers in the October pupil count – from 39 to 29 (26 per cent fewer pupils). This is despite the increased projected year R roll increasing from 5 to 10. The key issue is whether this number of pupils might be expected in future years, and should be included in pupil number forecasts. This year, there were only 2 ‘on-time’ first preferences, 5 late first preferences, 2 late second preferences and one late third preference. Of the 10 pupils, three are Central Bedfordshire first preferences (one of which was a late application), six are from Bedford Borough and one is from Hertfordshire.

3.3 Bedford Borough officers have advised that:

- both Broadmead Lower (Stewartby) and Wootton Lower are at capacity for September 2018. As a result of applicants who have now moved into the catchment area or late catchment applications both schools have catchment children on their waiting list;
- the next nearest school with vacancies is in Kempston but some parents have asked for and been offered a place at Shelton;
- there are plans to expand Wootton in 2019; and
- it is likely that section 106 resources will be available to expand Broadmead lower school by September 2019.

3.4 The table below shows the likely financial implications of the revised pupil projections.

Forecast school budget, March 2018 to March 2021				
	31.3.2019	31.3.2020	31.3.2021	31.3.2022
Income	£338,712	£255,680	£247,078	£258,702
Expenditure	£348,680	£303,822	£301,939	£292,554
In year revenue deficit	(£9,968)	(£48,142)	(£54,861)	(£33,852)
Deficit brought forward	(£8,786)	(£18,754)	(£66,896)	(£121,757)
Cumulative revenue deficit	(£18,754)	(£66,896)	(£121,757)	(£155,609)

3.5 In summary, on the latest pupil projections, the overall deficit increases by £35,000 to £155,609 by March 2022, principally because the numbers in years 1-4 now have reduced from 34 to 19, and the effects of these numbers going forward for three years.

3.6 Even if there is an assumption that pupil numbers in year R between 2019 and 2021 are between 5 and 10 – say, between 7 and 8, this would be four more pupils in 2019 and 7 more in 2020. However, overall pupil numbers are three fewer than the original forecast in 2019, and only 5 more in 2020. While this reduces the projected deficit by over £20,000 by the end of March 2022 compared with the table above (£155,609), it is still £134,609, which is £24,000 more than the original forecast of £110,609.