



# Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 15 January 2009</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.15 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

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## AGENDA

### 1. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting have been printed and published. Any matters called in will be reported at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Cabinet are invited to consider whether they have a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

### FINANCE AND BEST VALUE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

### 3. TRANSFORMING WIRRAL - STRATEGIC ASSET REVIEW (To Follow)

Report to follow.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

### 4. OUTCOME OF PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ARROWE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL (Pages 1 - 138)

### 5. MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT (Pages 139 - 146)

6. **PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY AT BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS (Pages 147 - 200)**

#### **FINANCE AND BEST VALUE**

7. **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT (Pages 201 - 204)**
8. **COLLECTION FUND 2008/9 (Pages 205 - 208)**
9. **PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011 (Pages 209 - 216)**
10. **COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) - USE OF RESOURCES (Pages 217 - 232)**

#### **REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY**

11. **WORKING WIRRAL - WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND (Pages 233 - 236)**

#### **HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

12. **REVIEW OF WIRRAL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND REGENERATION ASSISTANCE POLICY (Pages 237 - 244)**

#### **STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES**

13. **TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 (Pages 245 - 252)**

#### **CORPORATE RESOURCES**

14. **DISPOSAL OF LAND AT THE WARRENS - MAIN DEPOT SITE (To Follow)**

To follow after conclusion of period for submission of Objections.

#### **SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION**

15. **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES - EARLY VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT AND VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE UPDATE (To Follow)**

Report to follow.

16. **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

#### **CORPORATE RESOURCES**

- 17. UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PAY REVIEW AND THE MANAGEMENT OF WORKFORCE CHANGE (Pages 253 - 258)**

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

- 18. PROVISION OF GARDEN WASTE COMPOSTING FACILITIES SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE - AWARD OF CONTRACT (Pages 259 - 266)**

#### **CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE**

- 19. WEST KIRBY MARINE LAKE RECONSTRUCTION - AWARD OF CONTRACT (Pages 267 - 272)**

#### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

- 20. BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE, ONE SCHOOL PATHFINDER, ICT CONTRACT (Pages 273 - 276)**
- 21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 15th JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## OUTCOME OF PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF ARROWE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Cabinet decided that following consultation with governing bodies, staff, parents and other stakeholders, statutory notices should be published regarding the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School. Notices were published on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008. This report describes the outcome of the subsequent representation period and recommends that the proposal be approved, and that authorisation be given for the proposal to close the school to be implemented.

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The outcome of the consultation was described in the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008 report to Cabinet, in section 4. The Cabinet report and minute are attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 A consultation meeting was held at the school on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008, and was attended by 65 persons. 38% of pupils on roll at that time were represented at the meeting by at least one parent/carer. In total, 98 written responses to the whole Phase 4 consultation were received, of which 6 were from persons directly related to Arrowe Hill Primary School.
- 1.3 In January 2008 Arrowe Hill Primary School had 115 pupils on roll, and at 45% and 95 surplus places had significantly exceeded the criterion of 25% and 30 surplus places. Respondents were concerned about the fate of closed buildings and sites, the impact on traffic and travel to alternative schools, potential loss of extended school and community facilities, disruption to pupils education and standards, class sizes and the future of staff.
- 1.4 Cabinet determined that proposals should be published in respect of the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010.
- 1.5 In the report to Cabinet of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008, an alteration to Cabinet's original decision was recommended. This arose from discussions with stakeholders at Arrowe Hill Primary School which suggested that the original date for the proposed implementation of the closure of the school in Summer 2010, which was intended to allow any necessary building works to be carried out ahead of the transfer of pupils to their destination schools, could produce more disadvantages than advantages. The governing body of Arrowe Hill Primary School confirmed this view to the Authority in writing, attached as Appendix B. Consequently, Cabinet approved an amendment to its earlier decision, so that date for implementation in the statutory notice was given as 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009. The minute is attached as Appendix C.

#### 2.0 Proposal publication

- 2.1 On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008, proposal notices for the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School were widely published, including the local press (Wirral Globe and Daily Post), entrances to the school, as well as at Fender Primary School, Overchurch Infant School and Overchurch Junior School. In addition, the notices were posted at Ganneys

Meadow Early Years Centre, Woodchurch community library, Little Robins' Pre-school (Upton), and at Woodchurch post office on Hoole Road, Woodchurch. The notices were also published on-line at the Council's consultation website, [www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Woodchurch.asp](http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Woodchurch.asp)

- 2.2 Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, in addition to the statutory proposal notice, a more detailed "complete proposal" must be produced. Copies of the notice and complete proposal were provided to the school, the Secretary of State, the Anglican and Catholic Diocesan bodies and all relevant persons and groups named in the guidance. The documentation was also made available on the Council's Primary Places Review website. The notice and complete proposal are attached as Appendix D.
- 2.3 Following the publication of notices, there is a statutory six week representation period during which objections or comments on any proposal can be sent to the Director of Children's Services. This was clearly stated on the notices. Any person can request a copy of the full proposal, however no requests were received.

### **3.0 Outcome of the representation period**

- 3.1 The statutory representation period ended on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008. During this time, the Director of Children's Services received via e-mail and post, written comments from one individual, the parent of a pupil at Arrowe Hill Primary School. These comments are attached as Appendix E.
- 3.2 On that basis, under paragraph 8 of Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), the decision on the proposal for the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School rests with the Council's decision making body, which is Council's Cabinet. The DCSF Decision Makers Guidance is attached as Appendix F.

### **4.0 Comments on the proposal**

A summary of the points raised by the single respondent is as follows:

#### Review Process

- Query regarding criticism of Council for acting to reduce surplus places
- Parents not properly notified of proposal for closure
- Notice published during half-term
- Allocation of places in alternative schools
- Authority treatment of respondents

#### Financial

- Availability of funding for new uniforms, bags etc

#### Travel and Transport

- Arrangements for travel to alternative primary schools

## Commentary on the points raised

### 4.1 Review Process

i) This reference is to criticism of Wirral Council in 2004 by the Audit Commission and again in 2005 by Ofsted's Children's Services Inspection for maintaining too many surplus places in primary schools, and for acting too slowly to reduce primary surplus places. The Primary Places Review was established by the Council in 2004 as a rolling programme to manage surplus places, and the 2005 Children's Services Inspection stated that "Progress in reducing surplus primary school places has been slow, but a clear strategy is now being implemented which is likely to involve some school closures."

ii) The decision to publish notices proposing the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School followed extensive consultation with staff, governors, parents, carers and other stakeholders regarding the future of primary school provision in the Woodchurch area, including leaflets for every parent/carers as well as consultation meetings at both community primary schools and at Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre. Parents/carers will have been aware of the potential proposal for the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School for quite some time.

The legal notices have been published properly in accordance with statutory requirements. This includes the front gate and main entrances to Arrowe Hill Primary School. As schools named in the full proposal, the notices were also published at Fender Primary School, Overchurch Infant School and Overchurch Junior School. In addition, the notices were posted at Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre, Woodchurch community library, Little Robins' Pre-school (Upton), and at Woodchurch post office on Hoole Road, Woodchurch. The notices were published in the Wirral Globe, the Daily Post and on-line at the Council's consultation website. It is not part of the statutory guidance, or Council policy, to contact individual parents directly regarding statutory notices.

iii) The respondent states that the statutory notice was posted during half-term. Autumn half-term in 2008 ran from Monday 27th October to Friday 31st October. The notices regarding the proposed closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School were posted before half-term on Wednesday 22nd October 2008. The six week representation period ran until Wednesday 3rd December, allowing plenty of time for respondents to comment on the proposal if they wished to do so.

iv) Guarantees of places cannot be made prior to Cabinet's decision on the proposal. If the final decision is that Arrowe Hill Primary School should close, parents/carers would be asked to express a preference, and the Authority would try its utmost to fulfil those preferences. Places would then be allocated using the admissions criteria, which include "in-zone" status, and keeping brothers and sisters together at the same school wherever possible, subject to the Infant Class size limit. Pupils who have experienced difficulties at a particular school are not usually expected to return to that school.

v) The utmost respect and sensitivity to the views of parents/carers and all those affected by school reorganisation is intrinsic to the Primary Places Review process. All respondents are dealt with professionally, politely and sensitively, endeavouring to answer enquiries as best as possible. Understandably, school re-organisation is a difficult and upsetting time for all concerned and sometimes people receive answers that are not what they want to hear. In some cases, an enquiry cannot be given a definitive answer, for example with regard to pupil admissions, when guarantees for a particular child cannot be given at that time.

The review has been carried out properly. These objections do not constitute grounds to reject the proposal.

## 4.2 Financial

Not all primary schools operate a school uniform policy, and the Authority does not make a grant towards buying primary school clothing. The governing body of the school to which a child transfers may make their own arrangements to assist with purchasing uniforms, bags and so on, but this is a decision for the individual governing body to take. In previous school closures, governing bodies have sometimes made transitional arrangements whereby children can continue to wear their existing uniform until it is replaced in the usual course of events. This comment does not constitute grounds to reject the proposal.

## 4.3 Travel and Transport

The Authority will pay for travel to school if the nearest appropriate school is more than 2 miles away for children under 8, and for children aged 8 to 11 whose families are entitled to a free school meal or receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. For children aged 8 or over, the Authority will pay if the nearest appropriate school is more than 3 miles travel. The Local Authority's Information booklet for parents provides further information on travel to school arrangements. It is available on-line at [www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/Admissions/](http://www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/Admissions/) or by telephoning the Pupil Services section on 0151 606 2000 during office hours. The impact of closure of the school on travel and transport is expected to be minimal. This is not a ground to reject the proposal.

## 5.0 **Other factors to be considered**

Arrowe Hill Primary had 115 pupils on roll in January 2008, about a third of the number on roll 12 years ago (343). This is largely the result of the falling population, although 73% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Woodchurch CE Primary School (37%, 101 pupils), Overchurch Infant and Junior (13%, 34 pupils) and Fender Primary School (11%, 30 pupils). There were a large number of surplus places in January 2008 (45%, 95 places), and this situation is not predicted to improve over the next five years.

### 5.1 Small schools

Small schools inevitably cost more to maintain than larger schools. Wirral policy says that schools become increasingly more difficult to maintain as they fall below 180 pupils on roll. DCSF guidance says that "Schools with fewer than 150 pupils may be educationally and financially sustainable only through substantial subsidies via their local authorities funding formula". Financially, the total sum available for spending on all our children does not increase if we choose as an Authority to organise our children in more schools than is necessary for the efficient and effective delivery of education. It follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children. In 2006-2007, expenditure per pupil at Arrowe Hill was £5,171 compared with the Wirral average of £3,249.

In September 2008, the number on roll at Arrowe Hill had fallen from 115 pupils to 63 pupils, about a third of the viable size indicated by Wirral policy.

### 5.2 Surplus places

The school's buildings have already been substantially rationalised by "mothballing" the former Infant building, now used by the Council for storage. Modifications to the former Junior building were made, including an improved entrance and office facilities, bringing disabled access up to legal requirements, improving energy efficiency, installing a new fire and intruder alarm system and make necessary changes to accommodate the full age range of pupils within a building formerly occupied solely by Key Stage 2 pupils.

This project has cost £360,500. It was funded via a combination of the Council's capital programme, Arrowe Hill's formula capital budget and other external funding sources including the Schools Access Initiative and Extended Schools grant.

The Net Capacity of the two buildings before the modifications in 2004/2005 was 325 places. On the September 2008 number on roll, this would equate to 262 surplus places, with the school being 81% empty. Despite the rationalisation to a Net Capacity of 210 places, in September 2008, surplus places at Arrowe Hill Primary School have now reached 70% and 147 places, well above the 25% and 30 places criterion set out by the DCSF.

- 5.3 The DCSF guidance for Decision Makers at paragraph 4.35 says that they “*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*”.

Members will be aware of significant problems at a national level in delivering this year's national curriculum test results. As a result, 2008 Key Stage 2 data for Wirral primary schools is not yet available. The 2007 contextual value added measure (CVA) of 102.1 at Arrowe Hill Primary School indicates that pupils made above the expected rate of progress, and standards are therefore not low in Wirral terms. The Decision Makers guidance suggests that in this situation, the following factors should be considered:

- standards at alternative schools (5.4)
- geographical issues such as travel distance to alternative schools (5.5)
- impact on community use of the building (5.6).

#### 5.4 Standards

With regard to standards, Key Stage 2 CVA scores in 2007 at schools within a 2 mile radius of Arrowe Hill Primary School in 2007 indicate that all pupils made the expected rate of progress or above.

School	CVA 2007	3 Year Average
Arrowe Hill Primary	102.1	100.8
Brookdale Primary	100.2	100.7
Christchurch CE (Moreton) Primary	99.4	99.7
Fender Primary	99.5	99.7
Greasby Junior	100.0	100.3
Hillside Primary	99.2	98.7
Irby Primary	99.5	100.2
Manor Primary	102.2	100.6
Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary	101.0	101.1
Overchurch Junior	100.0	100.3
Prenton Primary	99.3	99.9
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary	100.3	100.8
St Joseph's Catholic Primary (Upton)	100.5	100.0
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary	100.1	100.6
St Paul's Catholic Primary	99.1	99.4
St Peter's Catholic Primary	99.9	99.5
Sandbrook Primary	100.1	100.2
Thingwall Primary	100.6	100.8

Townfield Primary	100.7	100.0
Woodchurch CE Primary	99.3	100.0

A three year average of the overall CVA score (2005 to 2007) shows that pupils at Arrowse Hill, Fender, Woodchurch CE and Overchurch Junior are making the expected rate of progress (100.8, 99.7, 100.0 and 100.3 respectively) with no significant difference in performance. Averaged over this time period, at all bar one of the alternative primary schools, standards were similar to or better than are currently achieved at Arrowse Hill Primary School. Accordingly, closure of the school would not be expected to reduce standards, and this is not a ground to reject the proposal.

## 5.5 Travel

With regard to travel, the proposal to close the school indicates that the catchment zone of Arrowse Hill Primary School would be combined with that of Fender Primary school to produce a single community catchment zone for Woodchurch. Some adjustments would be made at the upper end of the boundary to designate a small number of streets to Overchurch Infant and Overchurch Junior schools. 41 of the 50 pupils expected to be on roll at September 2009 would be in-zone for Fender Primary School. Three pupils would be potentially be entitled to an in-zone place at Overchurch Infant or Overchurch Junior School, should parents decide to apply.

An anonymised table showing individual distances is given in Section 15 of the complete proposal document in Appendix B. The number on roll at January 2008 at Arrowse Hill Primary was 115 pupils, and in September 2008 had fallen to 63 pupils. Excluding those pupils in Year 6 who will have moved onto secondary school in September 2009, there are expected to be 50 pupils to transfer to an alternative local primary school. Of the 50 pupils expected to be on roll at September 2009, four would travel more than 2 miles to both Fender or Overchurch Infant/Junior, but all four already travel more than 2 miles to Arrowse Hill Primary, so can be expected to use whichever means of transport they are already utilising. For just one pupil, the distance to Fender Primary is significantly further than the distance to Arrowse Hill Primary School.

The impact of closure of the school on travel and transport is expected to be minimal. This is not a ground to reject the proposal.

## 5.6 Impact on community use

The school offers various out of school clubs including football, badminton and cricket, art, choir, ICT and French. A breakfast club operates from Arrowse Hill Primary School, with a joint afterschool club being held in collaboration with Woodchurch CE Primary School at the Woodchurch CE site. The school has also operated Family Learning courses in literacy, numeracy, ICT and parenting skills.

The afterschool club based at Woodchurch CE Primary School would not be affected by the closure of Arrowse Hill. Similar out of school activities are held at other primary schools in the area, and would be expected to continue. For example, Fender Primary offers out of school clubs for football, baseball, netball, rugby, golf, athletics, yoga, dance, boxercise, choir, ICT, recorders, reading and study, art, sewing and cooking. The school participates in the Children's University. Various Family Learning courses are also operated, including parenting skills. A breakfast or afterschool club is not offered at present, with parents being directed to the facility at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, however, Fender Primary School is currently undertaking a survey of parents to establish whether there is sufficient demand for before/afterschool care at the school itself. If Arrowse Hill were to close, funding for the breakfast club could be transferred to Fender Primary School. This is not a ground to reject the proposal.

5.7 The Council must consider whether a small school is being maintained when it is not necessary to do so. Surplus places at this school are high and projected to continue to be high. Travel to alternative school provision with equivalent standards is not difficult, and community use of the building would not be significantly impacted upon by closure. These factors are not a ground to reject the proposal.

## **6.0 Financial Implications and Value for Money**

6.1 The closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School, excluding those pupil led elements which follow pupils to their destination schools, will release approximately £134,631 annually (on 2006/2007 figures) into the individual Schools Budget as a whole.

6.2 In the interim period prior to Cabinet's decision, Arrowe Hill Primary School has been allocated a 5/12ths budget for 2009/2010. The remaining 7/12ths budget would then be redistributed through the Budget formula to Wirral schools.

6.3 There has been no intention signalled to change the Green Belt in the near future and the Council's policy for new housing development in the west of the Borough now includes the extension of the Interim Planning Policy for new Housing into the east of the Borough. Woodchurch is no longer an area favoured for new housing development, except within the constraints of the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing. Should the site be declared surplus to requirements as a school, it could be considered for other departmental or Council purposes. The former Infant building is in use by the Council for storage purposes.

6.4 The recommended closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School has capital implications in respect of the re-location of current pupils and the re-allocation of future pupils to schools. The level of capital required will depend upon the final, approved proposals and will require further, detailed development work. An amount of £50,000 is included in the 2008/09 Schools Capital Programme for "scheme development resulting from primary reviews" which was approved at the Cabinet meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008. This will allow schemes to be drawn up, costed and tendered, with any balance contributing to build costs. The balance of the capital build costs would need to be drawn from the following sources: DCSF Modernisation Grant, council capital including capital receipts from the disposal of surplus assets, Prudential Borrowing and capital forming part of other national initiatives.

## **7.0 Staffing Implications**

7.1 When a school closes, all staff at the school are made redundant.

7.2 The Authority has a long and successful track record in assisting redundant teaching and non-teaching staff into new positions. Wirral does not have a redeployment scheme in place for teaching staff at present, and the present arrangement relies on the co-operation of governing bodies when making appointments.

## **8.0 Equal Opportunities Implications**

8.1 It is essential to plan school provision across the Authority so that it is both efficient and effective in the interests of all pupils.

## **9.0 Community Safety Implications**

9.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

## **10.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement**

10.1 The provision of efficient and effective education is a vital part of serving local communities; inefficient use of resources is wasteful both in educational and physical resource terms.

## **11.0 Planning Implications**

11.1 The site would be subject to the usual planning permissions.

## **12.0 Anti-Poverty Implications**

12.1 The redistribution of funding released by school reorganisation, in combination with the Authority's intention to realign the schools budget to give higher levels of funding to schools with high levels of deprivation, as well as improved accommodation, goes towards raising aspirations and narrowing the attainment gap for vulnerable groups.

## **13.0 Social Inclusion Implications**

13.1 Woodchurch Library occupies the same site as Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre and Fender Primary School. The Cabinet report of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008, "Transforming Wirral – Delivering the Strategic Asset Review", in paragraph 7.9, recommends that Woodchurch Library is retained and "forms the nucleus of a multi-purpose complex".

13.2 School re-organisation and transforming accommodation through the Primary Capital Programme and other schemes, provides opportunities to promote joint agency work to promote co-ordinated solutions for pupils and their families.

## **14.0 Local Member Support Implications**

14.1 The schools specifically mentioned and the Upton ward.

## **15.0 Background Papers**

15.1 Previous Cabinet reports

Responses to Consultation.

## **16.0 Recommendations**

That the proposal for the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School be approved, and that the Director of Children's Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including proposals for the re-zoning of schools, in furtherance of the proposal, with closure of the school on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

**Howard Cooper**

**Director of Children's Services**



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### REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR THE PHASE 4 PLANNING AREAS

#### Executive Summary

- 1.0 This report advises the Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation process which has taken place in the Woodchurch planning area, in respect of the options for consultation agreed at Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007. This report describes the responses to the various options put forward for discussion, including additional suggestions put forward during the consultation process, and makes recommendations with regard to statutory proposals in this area.

#### Background

##### 2.0 Context Of The School Organisation Plan

Until March 2005, School Organisation Committees (SOC) were required by law to have regard to the School Organisation Plan (SOP) when considering statutory proposals for changes to schools' provision. The plan itself was approved on a regular basis by the SOC. However the SOP was one of seven statutory plans repealed by the Children Act 2004. The SOC itself has now been abolished by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 with effect from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Nevertheless the policies and principles set out in the SOP remain an important context in which the Wirral Primary Review was set, and continue to be key guidance for the consideration of statutory proposals.

##### 2.1. DCSF guidance on the School Organisation Plan states that

"The key purpose of the School Organisation Plan is to set out clearly how the Local Education Authority (LEA) plans to meet its statutory responsibility to secure sufficient education provision within its area in order to promote higher standards of attainment. It should be designed to help the key stakeholders – LEA, schools, promoters, parents and local communities, understand what school places are needed at present and in future, and how they are provided. Importantly it will be the starting point... in considering statutory proposals for changes to schools".

- 2.2 As indicated above, the plan contains the policies and principles proposed by the LA and agreed by the former SOC for the planning of school provision. These policies and principles are set out at Appendix 1 to the report. It will be seen that the intention (prior to the abolition of the requirement to consider the plan) was that any proposal should be considered within the context of the principles set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the Policies and Principles. There is an over-riding requirement that overall provision is effective and efficient, i.e. that there should be an appropriate balance between school places and the following principles/criteria:

- parental preference
- delivering the curriculum
- meeting statutory and desirable goals on class sizes
- maintaining or promoting diversity
- SEN
- standards
- accessibility
- (secondary schools only) post 16 provision

- contribution to the community.

Paragraph 4 of the Policies and Principles adds the issue of overall school size within the primary sector and paragraph 5 deals specifically with the objectives of the Diocesan authorities.

### 2.3 View of the Wirral Schools Forum

Members should note that in June 2005 the Schools Forum passed the following resolution:

“Resolved - That Wirral Schools Forum recognises that the local education authority has a duty to maintain and fund schools in an efficient and effective manner. This implies that the number of schools should reflect the pupil population and the needs of Wirral communities, which could mean the amalgamation or closure of schools for the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.”

2.4 Following the presentation of the Primary School Place Provision report on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006, Cabinet instructed that five Area Reviews be carried out within Phase 4 of the Primary Places Review : West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols, Woodchurch, Noctorum and Moreton. These areas equate to the small planning areas in the Authority’s School Organisation Plan. The outcomes of these area reviews were reported to Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and a copy of this report is attached as Appendix 2.

2.5 Following consideration of that report, Cabinet agreed that no options would be brought forward for the West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols, Noctorum or Moreton small planning areas at this time, although numbers and place provision would be kept under review. A number of options for consultation were proposed in respect of the Woodchurch area.

2.6 The options were:

- A Closure of Arrowse Hill Primary School
- B Closure of Fender Primary School
- C Amalgamation of Arrowse Hill Primary School and Fender Primary School at either the Arrowse Hill site (C1) or the Fender site (C2).

These options were approved for consultation.

2.7 The options were within the context set out by the Director of Children’s Services, of the need to reduce the growing number of primary school surplus places and took account of Audit Commission guidance on surplus places against a continuing fall in the number of primary age pupils, and issues identified in the recent Joint Area Review. In addition to removing unnecessary surplus places, the options were intended to make more effective use of resources, take account of patterns of parental preference, reflect the additional challenges of maintaining small schools in an urban area and contribute to the wider standards agenda through the more efficient use of resources.

2.8 In order for all stakeholders to have access to relevant background information and have the opportunity to comment and respond, the following methods of consultation have been employed :

- a) A range of documentation has been produced and distributed. This comprised:
  - (i) the full consultation document sent to all schools in the Woodchurch area; local One-Stop shops, Woodchurch library and the Central Libraries; Wallasey Town Hall and relevant community centres;
  - (ii) a review pack comprising all the relevant background information sent to all the locations in (i) above;

- (iii) parents'/carers' consultation leaflets and comments forms to all parents/carers, via all schools named in the options;
  - (iv) standard letters to all the schools in the small planning areas, one format for schools named in the options and one for other schools in the small planning area.
- b) A dedicated web-site on the Wirral Learning Grid was established and advertised on the council web-site, the council Intranet, and in the parents' consultation leaflets and the standard letters to schools. This site provided access to all the information produced in paper form and allowed e-mail responses to a dedicated e-mail address.
  - c) Meetings were arranged for all interested stakeholders at each of the schools named in options for closure or amalgamation. These meetings followed the same format, with a presentation on the overall position and the school specific position followed by around ninety minutes of time for audience comments, feedback and questions. The meetings were attended by parents, carers, staff, governors, Ward members and various other interested persons and bodies, including Diocesan representatives where appropriate. Each meeting was chaired by the Cabinet member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning. The dates for the meetings were in the parents' leaflets and on the specific web-site and a general notice was published in the local press.
  - d) Opportunities have been provided for other means of response. Submissions have been received in paper and e-mail formats – all of which will be made available before and at the Cabinet meeting, in addition to the summaries contained in this report.
  - e) All of the relevant LA documentation produced for the consultation has been shared with the Diocesan Bodies.
- 2.9 The importance of eliciting the views of pupils is sometimes raised and this is an issue which is taken very seriously. We are sensitive to the fact that school re-organisation is by its nature upsetting and potentially stressful, particularly for children. Throughout the review, discussions with headteachers have taken place as to whether pupils should be formally consulted, and if so, how this could be carried out with minimum impact. The professional opinion of headteachers involved in this Phase of the Review was that any formal consultation would be unnecessarily distressing to children, nevertheless, the consultation does include responses received from individual children, or as a joint response from a School Council.
- 2.10 The consultation process and the presentation of LA, small planning area and school data to this wider audience does appear to have persuaded most people of the need to reduce the number of school places, though understandably people wish to advocate the case for their school in respect of closure or amalgamation options.
- 2.11 In addition to the detail set out below, further records of views put forward during the consultation period are attached as Appendix 3. Feedback is set out school by school. The record for each school brings together the responses from the meeting held at the school, together with any points raised in written or e-mail submissions to the Authority.

### **Outcome of the Consultation**

- 3.0 Further suggestions in relation to primary school provision in the Woodchurch area were made as part of the consultation process:
- Build a new primary school alongside rebuilt Woodchurch High School
  - Amalgamate with St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Further discussion of these suggestions is given with the related consultation options below.

3.1 There were several key themes in the combined responses from consultees:

- General understanding of the falling rolls situation
- Effect of proposed housing and demographic changes on pupil numbers
- Respect for school staff in their skills and relationships with pupils and parents
- Educational standards and quality of provision
- Concern for the fate of closed buildings and sites
- Travel distance to school and the effect on traffic and road safety
- Disruption to pupils' education and confidence
- Class sizes
- Importance of small schools
- Effect of any change on children with special educational needs
- Importance of out of hours facilities, such as adult learning and breakfast clubs
- Importance of early years provision, including day care facilities
- Relationship between school and community
- Keeping friends and siblings together
- Staff redeployment
- Continuity of school over several generations.

3.2 **Responses from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Diocese**

The Diocese of Chester and the Diocese of Shrewsbury are key partners along with the LA in making provision for the education of children in Wirral. Both Diocesan Authorities were provided with the consultation documentation with an opportunity to respond. In this area, with no direct impact on any Catholic or Church of England schools, neither Diocese provided any formal comments.

#### **Implications of the abolition of the SOC**

3.3 Until the SOC's abolition on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007, each Diocese was represented by a voting group on the SOC. Under the new guidance on school re-organisation proposals, each Diocese has the ability to object to any statutory proposal decided by the Local Authority Decision Maker, thereby referring the proposal to the School's Adjudicator. This is not a significantly different position to their former roles on the SOC. Full guidance has now issued by the DCSF and is available to read or download on-line at <http://www.DCSF.gov.uk/schoolorg/index.cfm> Key points of the guidance and a commentary in relation to Phase 4 options for Woodchurch is included within the report at Appendix 4.

#### **Commentary on small schools**

3.4 The Authority funds its schools through the operation of its local funding formula. The formula is designed so as to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to schools for the pupils they have to teach. The formula ensures that, however small a school, it will have sufficient resources. One would not therefore expect any school, simply through smallness, to become financially unviable. What does happen is that small schools draw in a greater share of the resource per pupil from the total available for distributing among all schools.

Since the total sum available for spending on all our children does not increase if we choose as an Authority to organise our children in more schools than is necessary for the efficient and effective delivery of education, it follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children.

The key questions therefore in terms of use of resources are:

- i) How small does a school need to be within the context of Wirral before it would be considered as contributing to an ineffective use of resource?
- ii) Are there reasons in specific cases why individual schools although “small” by Wirral standards should continue to be maintained even though they are relatively expensive?

3.5 With regard to Wirral’s policy on small schools, the School Organisation Plan (agreed in 2003) contained the proposal that the LA “should consider the implications of an increasing number of primary schools with less than one form of entry – 30 pupils and therefore primary schools with fewer than 210 pupils i.e. 7 x 30”. That review was carried out in great detail and with the involvement of a wide range of Headteachers, and culminated in the policy document “The Pursuit of Excellence”, extracts of which are included in Appendix 6. This policy adopted in 2004 suggests that a school should have at least 180 pupils in order to be viable. The guidance to Decision Makers (Appendix 4a) makes no mention of school size. DCSF guidance says that “Schools with fewer than 150 pupils may be educationally and financially sustainable only through substantial subsidies via their local authorities funding formula” :

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/fallingschoolrolls/schools/educational\\_decisions](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/fallingschoolrolls/schools/educational_decisions)

One problematic issue which is discussed in some detail in Appendix 6 is the potential difficulty of mixed age teaching, especially across key stages.

3.6 With regard to organisational viability there can be no question that small schools face greater challenges. This of course does not mean that at any one time a particular small school cannot produce excellence through having outstanding teachers. Furthermore it is often the case when small schools are considered nationally that many small schools enjoy a number of advantages as a result of their location and are attractive to staff. In many parts of the country it is a clear necessity to maintain small schools because the alternative would be that children be transported, perhaps for a number of miles, to the nearest school. Authorities who have such schools receive additional sparsity funding from the government which enables them to spend more on these schools without it being at the expense of others, in order for them to be organisationally viable. Wirral does not receive this element of grant.

3.7 Our experience in Wirral, has been that while overall until quite recently we have had few primary schools that have fallen into one of the Ofsted categories of concern, those that have done so have generally been among our smaller schools. We do not believe that this is coincidence: it arises because of the inevitable requirement on individual staff in small schools to take on wider burdens of responsibility and from the disproportionate impact which one weaker member of staff will have on the school as a whole.

#### 4.0 **Commentary on options**

The next section of the report comments on the agreed options, discussing individual schools separately where appropriate. Numbers on roll are from the January 2008 School Census.

##### **A Closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School**

4.1 Arrowe Hill Primary is a small school with 115 pupils on roll, about a third of the number on roll just 12 years ago (343). This is largely the result of the falling



population, although 73% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Woodchurch CE Primary School (37%, 101 pupils), Overchurch Infant and Junior (13%, 34 pupils) and Fender Primary School (11%, 30 pupils). Set against this “outflow”, 42% of pupils on roll in Summer 2007 came from outside the school’s catchment zone, however overall there was a net loss to other community/CE primary schools of 53% (145 pupils). There are a large number of surplus places (45%, 95). This is predicted to remain about the same at 47% (99 places) by 2013. In 2006-2007, expenditure per pupil was £5,171 compared with the Wirral average of £3,249.

- 4.2 The contextual value added score (102.1) for Key Stage 2 in 2007 shows that pupils at Arrowe Hill Primary School are making above the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 5).
- 4.3 All current and projected pupils from Arrowe Hill Primary could be accommodated at primary schools within a reasonable distance without requiring any new build classroom provision, dependant on a particular pattern of parental preference. As stated in 4.1 above, large numbers of parents living within Arrowe Hill’s zone choose Woodchurch CE Primary School, and there are 21 alternative primary schools (including Infant/Junior as a single school) within a 2 mile radius of the school. The catchment zone of Arrowe Hill Primary School would, in the main, be allocated to Fender Primary School, with the exception of a small area at the “top” of the zone which would be allocated to Overchurch Infant and Junior Schools. The intention would be to better match where parents live and choose to send their children to school. Parents currently in-zone for Overchurch Infant and Junior would continue to be in-zone and would be unaffected by this change.
- 4.4 Respondents from Arrowe Hill Primary raised the school’s excellent attainment record, and the quality of the relationships between parents, pupils and staff. There were concerns that children would not “fit in” at other local schools, about additional expense in purchasing new uniforms, the impact on travel and transport, and about the perceived waste of money which had recently been spent condensing the school from two buildings into one.

#### **Arrowe Hill consolidation**

- 4.5 As far back as 2001, Arrowe Hill Primary School was the subject of a Targeted Capital bid for £672,000 of central government funding for a scheme to remove surplus places at the school which were already high and rising. This bid was not successful, and consequently a less extensive surplus place removal and modernisation project was approved by the Council in 2004/2005.
- 4.6 This project involved “mothballing” the former Infant building (now used by the Council for storage) and some modifications to the former Junior building including an improved entrance and office facilities, bringing disabled access up to legal requirements, improving energy efficiency, installing a new fire and intruder alarm system and make necessary changes to accommodate the full age range of pupils within a building formerly occupied solely by Key Stage 2 pupils. This project has cost £360,500. It has been funded via a combination of the Council’s capital programme, Arrowe Hill’s formula capital budget and other external funding sources including the Schools Access Initiative and Extended Schools grant.
- 4.7 The result of these works is that the total net capacity at Arrowe Hill Primary School has been reduced from 325 places in 2004, to 210 places in 2007. Had this work not been carried out, the school would now have 62% surplus places, a third more than at present.
- 4.8 Consultees allied to Fender Primary School were in favour of the closure of Arrowe Hill either alone, or in conjunction with an amalgamation at the Fender site. They saw

the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary as the least disruptive option, since it would affect fewer pupils and maintain the highly respected SEN bases at Fender with minimum disruption.

- 4.9 New housing in the area was mentioned as a potential source of additional pupils to fill surplus places, as well as a source of additional traffic outside the Arrowe Hill site in particular. New housing either under construction or with planning approval in the area includes 17 flats on Houghton Road on the former Pelican Hotel public house site, 20 flats on the disused garage site at Eltham Green and 31 new houses on New Hey Road comprising 12 two bed bungalows, 13 two bed houses and 6 two bed houses. Outline planning permission for residential development has been granted for the former Ganneys Meadow site on Ganneys Meadow Road. A planning application for 190 flats and houses on the former St Benedict's Catholic High School site on New Hey Road was submitted in 2007, and has been recommended for approval by the Council's Planning Committee, pending a Section 106 legal agreement. 19 of the 190 units will be affordable housing, e.g. shared ownership or social housing. In total within the Woodchurch area 238 properties will be or have recently been built. Even treating flats as houses, these developments are projected to produce 67 primary age pupils, of whom 18-20 are likely to attend a Catholic primary school, with a similar number opting for a Church of England primary school such as Woodchurch CE. The New Hey Road site is within the catchment zone for Fender Primary School. Also, the additional pupils are likely to be existing Wirral residents and may already live locally, in which case they may continue to attend their existing school. Local housing changes are unlikely to make a significant impact on the issue of surplus places in this area.
- 4.10 There has been no intention signalled to change the Green Belt in the near future and the Council's policy for new housing development in the west of the Borough now includes the extension of the Interim Planning Policy for new Housing into the east of the Borough. Woodchurch is no longer an area favoured for new housing development, except within the constraints of the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing.
- 4.11 If this option were to proceed, depending on parental preferences, there may be a requirement for relatively modest capital works at the Fender Primary site, to which the majority of Arrowe Hill's catchment zone would be transferred. The current capacity of the Fender building as it is currently organised, and excluding the Annexe which is now part of Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre, is 210 pupils. In the event that the new capacity at Fender following any required building works reached 350 pupils or more, a statutory expansion notice would be required. The most vulnerable children, those in Special Needs classes, would have continuity of provision on the Fender site.
- 4.12 This option for the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School is recommended to proceed as a statutory proposal with effect from August 2010, with a proviso to guarantee all former Arrowe Hill pupils on roll at the time of the school's closure a guaranteed place at Fender Primary School. Former Arrowe Hill parents who did not wish to take up the guaranteed place at Fender Primary would be offered the opportunity to express a preference for an alternative primary school. Places at these schools would then be allocated based on the admission criteria published in the Authority's booklets for parents, within the limitations of the Infant Class Size limit. The proposed implementation date of August 2010 will allow for any works required at Fender Primary School to be carried out ahead of Arrowe Hill's closure.

## **B Closure of Fender Primary School**

- 4.13 Fender Primary has 180 pupils on roll, having last had more than 210 pupils on roll in 1992 (218). The roll has risen from a low of 134 in 1999 to stabilise at around the 180 level for 8 years, no doubt buoyed by the school's close association with the adjacent

Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre. Similarly to Arrowe Hill Primary School, 60% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Woodchurch CE Primary School (31%, 92 pupils) and Arrowe Hill Primary School (12%, 36 pupils). 31% of pupils on roll in Summer 2007 came from outside the school's catchment zone, however overall there was a net loss of 41% (122 pupils) to other community and CE primary schools.

- 4.14 The school has 14% (30) surplus places, and this is projected to rise to 19% (39 places) by 2013. While the surplus is lower than that at Arrowe Hill Primary, this is above the 5-10% surplus identified by the Audit Commission, beyond which money is being wasted, and it is right to look at ways of reducing this surplus.
- 4.15 In 2006-2007, expenditure per pupil was £4,680 compared with the Wirral average of £3,249.
- 4.16 The contextual value added score (99.5) for Key Stage 2 in 2007 shows that pupils at Fender Primary School are making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 5).
- 4.17 As identified by respondents, the school has around 180 pupils on roll, the number identified in the Authority's policy "In Pursuit of Excellence" as the point below which schools become more challenging to manage financially and organisationally. All current and projected pupils from Fender Primary could be accommodated at primary schools within a reasonable distance without requiring any new build classroom provision, although dependant on parental preference and with the agreement of the governing body and Diocese of Chester, there may be additional accommodation needs at Woodchurch CE (Aided) Primary School. While this may meet the requirement to consider the expansion of popular and successful schools, such a proposal has not been discussed with the Diocese of Chester and may not be feasible on the restricted site at Woodchurch CE Primary School. As stated in 4.1 above, large numbers of parents living within Fender's zone choose Woodchurch CE Primary School, and there are 24 alternative primary schools (including Infant/Junior as a single school) within a 2 mile radius of the school. The catchment zone of Fender Primary School would, in the main, be allocated to Arrowe Hill Primary School, with the exception of a small area at the "top" of the combined zone which could be allocated to Overchurch Infant and Junior Schools. The intention would be to better match where parents live and choose to send their children to school. Parents currently in-zone for Overchurch Infant and Junior would continue to be in-zone and would be unaffected by this change.
- 4.18 Respondents from Fender Primary raised the quality of the relationships between parents, pupils and staff, the proximity of local facilities including Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre, Woodchurch Library, Woodchurch leisure centre and local shops. The importance of maintaining stability for pupils in the school's two Education Inclusion bases was very strongly emphasised.
- 4.19 Consultees allied to Fender Primary School were not in favour of this option. Many were in favour of either the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary (Option A) with more children attending Fender Primary, or of the amalgamation of Fender and Arrowe Hill at the Fender site to maintain access to the facilities listed in 4.11 and provide a stable environment for pupils in the SEN bases. The point regarding the Special Needs Classes is important. This is one of the strengths of the school, and the Authority is anxious to maintain the quality of this provision within any outcome that may be determined.
- 4.20 If this option were to proceed, depending on parental preferences, there may be a requirement for internal alterations at the Arrowe Hill or Woodchurch CE Primary sites. Statutory expansion notices at either school might be required at a later date.
- 4.21 This option is not recommended to proceed as a statutory proposal.



## **C Amalgamation of Fender Primary School and Arrowe Hill Primary School either at Arrowe Hill site (C1) or Fender site (C2)**

- 4.22 The two schools taken together have a combined roll of 295 pupils, which is not large in Wirral terms, being around 1.5 forms of entry. The pattern of parental preference in this area indicates a high level of mobility between catchment areas and overlap between the pupil populations of the two schools, with similar numbers attending schools in the “other” catchment zone, facilitated by high levels of surplus places.
- 4.23 The CVA scores for both schools indicate that pupils are making at least the expected rate of progress or more. Good standards at Arrowe Hill were cited by some respondents as a reason not to amalgamate the two schools, on the basis that the ensuing disruption would impact upon the quality of education and threaten standards. Some parents indicated that they would not want their children to be educated with children from the other school due to a perceived difference in background; however geographical analysis of where parents live indicates that there is an overlap between the pupil populations of the two schools. Staff from both schools have strongly expressed their commitment to ensure that all pupils would be welcomed in any setting, whatever the outcome of the consultation.
- 4.24 Respondents allied to both schools were concerned that the site for any amalgamated school should be carefully chosen. Issues around parking and safe drop-off areas were raised around both sites.
- 4.25 If all pupils from both former schools attended an amalgamated school, it is estimated that the Fender site would require relatively modest capital works. Accommodating all pupils at the Arrowe Hill site would involve bringing the existing Infant building, currently mothballed, back into use. In general, consultees from both schools were in favour of an amalgamation into a new build primary school, although had differing ideas on which would be the best site for an amalgamation. Whichever site were chosen, the other building could be utilised to accommodate pupils whilst construction work was underway.

### **Foundation and Community schools**

- 4.26 In an amalgamation, both existing schools close and a new school opens. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all new primary schools, as has been the case for some time in secondary schools, are subject to a “competition” where the Authority invites bids to establish the best provider for the new school. The Authority can enter its own proposal into the competition, and in many cases, particularly in primary school competitions, is likely to be the only entrant. Other possible proposers could include faith organisations, businesses, universities, colleges or a charitable organisation. A new school would be a Foundation school, not a community school. The Secretary of State can, however, decide to grant permission for Wirral LA to propose a new community school within a competition. The criteria that would be used are given in Appendix 4b. An application could also be made to the Secretary of State for permission to establish a new school without holding a competition. While each case is different, examples in the guidance do not appear to apply if Fender and Arrowe Hill were to amalgamate. Reaching a decision under the statutory competition process is likely to take at least 6 months longer than would be the case without a competition.
- 4.27 A minority of respondents were concerned about the impact that Foundation school status might have on education, admissions or staffing of a new school. The differences between community and Foundation schools are as follows:
- In a community school, the Local Authority owns the land, buildings and all the other assets of the school, employs the staff, and decides the admission criteria for the school. The running of the school is delegated to the governing body.

- In a Foundation school, as well as running the school, the governors own the land and buildings, employ the staff, and decide the admission criteria. The governors have greater freedom to spend money on building projects, and can choose to set their own term dates.

Pupils at Foundation schools follow the same national curriculum as those in community schools, and staff are employed on the same nationally agreed terms and conditions. Funding for Foundation schools comes from the Authority in exactly the same way as for community schools. While the governing body of a Foundation school could decide to have different admission criteria, the school still has to follow the same admissions code as community schools.

Other than the land and buildings, which must be conveyed from the Authority to the Foundation governing body or Trustees, other assets in the school (books, equipment etc.) remain the Authority's property. Excellent relationships continue to be maintained with Wirral's Foundation secondary schools, and there is no reason to believe that this position would differ in the case of a Foundation primary school.

- 4.28 Option C does not fall into any of the categories that would be highly likely to receive an exemption from the Secretary of State to hold a competition, e.g. an Infant and Junior amalgamation or reorganisation of schools with the same religious nature. Holding a competition will add 6 months to the decision making process, with extended levels of uncertainty about the future of primary schools in the local area which could have a destabilising effect on primary school rolls, and a case could be made for the need for expediency to resolve community uncertainty, however, it seems unlikely that approval to establish a school without a competition would be granted in this case. Amalgamation, whilst offering an opportunity for the staff in particular, but also the pupils of both schools to start afresh in a "new school", albeit in existing buildings, may not be the most appropriate solution in this instance.
- 4.29 This option is not recommended to proceed to statutory proposals.

#### **Other suggestions raised during consultation for these schools**

- 4.30 **Variant to option C - Build a new primary school alongside the newly rebuilt Woodchurch High School**

This suggested option would produce a "campus" at the Woodchurch High School site.

The Children and Young People's Department has been awarded the sum of £25,962,900 from the DCSF Building Schools for the Future - One School Pathfinder initiative. The approved bid is for the replacement of Woodchurch High School, approved by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Design development is in progress. A partner will be contracted later this year and a completion date of September 2010 is currently planned.

The site of the existing school buildings and the surrounding open land is designated as Green Belt in the Council's Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and is also identified as an area identified for transport corridor environmental improvements. The development proposed will therefore need to be considered as a departure from the Development Plan. The intention to grant planning permission for a departure from the Development Plan must be referred to the Secretary of State before planning permission can be granted.

The One School Pathfinder budget has been entirely allocated to the rebuilding of Woodchurch High School, and there is unlikely to be any further central government funding through this route. If a new primary school in Woodchurch were considered for a future year of the Primary Capital Strategy, the site would be subject to consultation at that time, although greenbelt, flood plain and playing field restrictions bring

complexities to the remainder of the Woodchurch High school site once the new secondary school is completed.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

#### 4.31 **New option – Amalgamate Arrowe Hill Primary School with St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School**

The rationale behind this suggested option is to amalgamate the two smallest schools with the highest levels of surplus to form a new primary school, with Fender Primary School remaining as a community school. Were these two schools of the same status, that is, both community schools or both Catholic Aided schools, this would be an attractive option.

As in any amalgamation, both schools would close, and a new school then established on one of the two sites. There are benefits to amalgamation over closure for pupils and staff. Legally, however, it is not possible to combine community and Aided provision into a single school. It might be beneficial to community cohesion to relocate one of the existing schools onto the same site to form a “joint denominational campus” of separate schools, but this would be costly and unlikely to resolve surplus place issues in the area. Another alternative which would achieve the same end would be to propose closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School, linked with relocating St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School into the Arrowe Hill building, which would require a statutory alteration, not a statutory competition, however, the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury would need to approve this move, which would separate the school from the adjoining Church, albeit by a relatively short distance.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

- 4.32 In summary, Option A, Closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School is recommended to continue as a statutory proposal. A further statutory alteration proposal to officially expand the capacity at Fender Primary School may be required at a later date.

### 5.0 **Implications of the Review Process for Pupils**

#### **Admission Arrangements: present and future pupils**

- 5.1 The closure and/or amalgamation of primary schools will have implications for the Authority’s admission arrangements. The DCSF have advised that there is no requirement to consult separately on any changes to admission arrangements as long as full details are provided to parents in the statutory public notices on the proposed alterations to the school provision. This would include details on how the Authority would propose to manage the transfer of pupils to alternative schools, and also deal with applications from parents living in the areas concerned for places in Foundation 2.

#### **Re-zoning of areas**

- 5.2 In the event of any reorganisation, school catchment areas would have to be reviewed. In the case of an amalgamation it might be assumed that the catchment areas of the schools involved could simply be merged but it is likely that we would take the opportunity to consider any other necessary adjustments. In the case of a school closure, zones of neighbouring schools would have to be re-drawn. Changes would need to take into account consideration of home address in relation to nearest appropriate schools, the new capacity of schools in the area, and other factors such as planned housing development.

In relation to the potential transfer of existing pupils to alternative schools, the Authority would invite parents to indicate a preference. If their preference was for a placement in a community or controlled school, then the Authority would seek to meet

that preference, within the admission criteria set out in the Authority's booklets for parents.

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

- 5.3 If any pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs then the Statement will be amended to reflect the new school, and the provision specified in the Statement will be delivered appropriately. Any pupils who are currently placed in designated special provision such as a Special Needs Class would be transferred to an alternative placement according to parental preference. For all those pupils on the SEN register who are affected, the Authority would deploy an element of any savings to provide enhanced support at their new school. Details of how such a scheme may operate would need to be developed.

## **6.0 Staffing Implications**

### **6.1 Closure of Schools**

If a school closes, staff would technically be redundant. However, the neighbouring schools to which pupils relocate will require additional staff, and these schools would be requested to give prior and preferential treatment to redundant staff.

### **6.2 Redeployment**

In previous years, Wirral has had an excellent record of finding alternative employment for school staff. When posts are advertised in Wirral, schools are requested to give redundant staff who meet the advertised criteria, either a prior and preferential interview or an interview in competition with other candidates.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The recommendations contained in this report have capital implications in respect of the re-location of current pupils and the re-allocation of future pupils to schools. The level of capital required will depend upon the final, approved proposals and will require further, detailed development work. An amount of £500,000 is included in the 2008/09 Schools Capital Programme for "scheme development resulting from primary reviews" which was approved at the Cabinet meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008. This will allow schemes to be drawn up, costed and tendered, with any balance contributing to build costs. The balance of the capital build costs would need to be drawn from the following sources: DCSF Modernisation Grant, council capital including capital receipts from the disposal of surplus assets, Prudential Borrowing and capital forming part of other national initiatives. It is a requirement that funding is clearly identified when proposals are submitted to the decision maker for approval.

- 7.2 The recommendations contained in this report include the closure and amalgamation of schools, which in turn will produce revenue savings, to the benefit of other schools as the funding is re-distributed. In the short term the Authority could be required to fund any staff severance costs following closures and amalgamation but they may be partly or entirely offset by savings.

## **8.0 Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 8.1 There are none arising out of this report.

## **9.0 Human Rights Implications**

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **10.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement**

- 10.1 The removal of old, inefficient accommodation contributes to Council principles and targets in respect of Agenda 21.

## **11.0 Community Safety Implications**

11.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

## **12.0 Planning Implications**

12.1 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal.

12.2 Construction of any new classroom provision would be subject to the usual planning permissions.

## **13.0 Local Member Support Implications**

13.1 Primary place planning and potential surplus place removal have relevance to all Wards.

13.2 The current options affect the Upton Ward directly.

## **14.0 Background Papers**

Audit Commission Report: Planning School Places in Wirral September 2004.

School Organisation Plan.

LA document "Pursuit of Excellence: Primary Education in Wirral".

School pupil number returns, January 2008 (Annual Census return to DCSF).

School Net Capacity Calculation, July 2007, to DCSF requirements.

Consultation Documents

Other data held in Department including that provided by Wirral Health Authority.

## **15.0 Appendices**

See list attached.

## **16.0 Summary**

16.1 No one closes schools lightly. However, there is general agreement amongst all stakeholders that action must be taken to address the issue of surplus capacity. Officers are required to offer clear advice as to appropriate action in order to spend public money wisely and ensure all Wirral's children benefit equitably from the funding available. The recommendations below I believe will ensure best value for the future generations of children in the review areas, and more equitable spending for the benefit of all Wirral's pupils, from the savings made.

## **17.0 Recommendations**

- 1) That statutory proposals be published in respect of Option A, closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School from August 2010.
- 2) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish these proposals, ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including requesting permissions from the Secretary of State and proposals for the re-zoning of schools, in furtherance of the proposals.
- 3) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to instigate an evaluation of potential sources of funding related to building work at the Fender Primary School site, including the Primary Capital Strategy and return to Cabinet with an option appraisal report on this matter.

**Howard Cooper**

**Director of Children's Services**



# List of Appendices

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Extract from School Organisation Plan: Policies and Principles
2	Cabinet Report and resolution from 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
<i>Consultation</i>	
3a	Analysis of Consultation
3b	Summary of responses
<i>Education and Inspections Act 2006</i>	
4	Summary of new regulations on school re-organisation
<i>Standards</i>	
5a	Standards – KS2 data; Value Added
5b	Standards – Extracts from Ofsted reports
<i>Issues concerned with size and viability</i>	
6a	Extract from “ In Pursuit of Excellence”, written by Wirral Headteachers and the Primary Team, School Effectiveness
6b	Extract from “Small Schools: How well are they doing?” (Ofsted 2000)
6c	Size and viability in consultation areas
<i>Building Costs</i>	
7	DCSF School Building and Design Unit – Information on costs and performance data, April 2003

## Minutes - Cabinet - 12 June 2008

Present  
Chair S Foulkes

Councillors  
George Davies, PL Davies, G Gardiner, SA Holbrook, SE Kelly, M  
McLaughlin, RK Moon, Jean Quinn, JV Stapleton

In attendance:  
JE Green, A Pritchard, GCJ Watt

### Minute 48 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING: REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR THE PHASE 4 PLANNING AREAS

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The Director of Children's Service presented a report which advised the Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation process which had taken place in the Woodchurch planning area, in respect of the options for consultation agreed at Cabinet on 29th November 2007. The report described the responses to the various options put forward for discussion, including additional suggestions put forward during the consultation process, and made recommendations with regard to statutory proposals in this area.

With the permission of the Chair, the Chair of Governors of Arrowe Hill Primary School addressed the Cabinet, and spoke against the proposal to close Arrowe Park Primary School and in support of the option contained within the report to amalgamate Arrowe Hill Primary School with Fender Primary School.

The Director of Children's Services responded to the issues raised in terms of the disruption of closing two schools, the fact that no capital was available for a new build school at the present time and the rules regarding a competition process if a new school was to be provided.

The Leader of the Council referred to the option of including a new school on the site of Woodchurch High School and the Director indicated that there were three site options considered for amalgamation. It was felt that Fender Primary School, with its close proximity to Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre was the most appropriate option.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning thanked the Chair of Governors and the staff at Arrowe Hill Primary School and indicated how impressed he was with their passion and commitment. He referred to the challenge of falling school rolls and the wise use of resources. In view of the number of schools within close proximity and to keep the disruption to a minimum, he supported the Option set out within the recommendation.

Councillor Holbrook queried the support for amalgamation from Fender Primary School and, in view of the timescales for proposed closure, would the school roll be sustainable.

The Director of Children's Services referred to the experienced team that would be involved in the closure if it was approved. He accepted that there were some advantages to amalgamation and indicated that the capital programme was compiled on the basis of school condition. With reference to the proposed closure date, it was noted that this was to avoid undertaking statutory consultation over the summer holidays and on past experience it was envisaged that the number at the school would enable it to remain open until the proposed closure date.

Councillor Kelly supported the recommendation to minimise disruption.





Headteacher  
Miss Hazel Williams

*Arrowe Hill Primary School  
Glebe Hey Road,  
Woodchurch,  
Birkenhead, Wirral  
CH49 8HE*

☎ 0151 678 5064  
Fax 0151 678 5065

e-mail: [schooloffice@arrowehill.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@arrowehill.wirral.sch.uk)

19<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Mr H Cooper  
Director of Children and Young People's Services  
Hamilton Building  
Conway Street  
Birkenhead CH41 4FD

Dear Mr Cooper

### **PRIMARY PLACES REVIEW – CLOSURE OF ARROWE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following the Cabinet's proposal in June 2008 to recommend the closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School, I would like to request that consideration is given to moving the closure forward from August 2010 to August 2009. The request is made with much reluctance but governors, staff and parents are agreed that this would be in the best interests of the children.

We remain deeply disappointed at the decision to close the school. However, governors and staff are resolved and committed to ensuring that, during the academic year 2008/09, the school provides the best possible educational experiences for the children and that they achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.

As we begin this new academic year we have 64 children on the school roll. Our biggest loss of pupils at the end of 2007/08 was from Y2 as parents considered this a particularly critical point in their children's education. We would anticipate a similar situation at the end of this academic year.



Our best estimate of the school roll for 2009/10 is 42 (13 in KS1 and 29 in KS2). The effect on the school budget of such a small number of pupils would be catastrophic. Governors and staff believe that such harsh constraints would make the school financially, organisationally and educationally untenable.

I trust, therefore, that you will give your earnest consideration to bringing the proposed closure date forward.

Yours sincerely

Miss J Grannell  
Chair of Governors

cc. David Armstrong  
Sally Gibbs

# APPENDIX C

## CABINET

Thursday, 16 October 2008

Present: Councillor S Foulkes (Chair)  
Councillors S Holbrook, G Davies, P Davies, G Gardiner, S Kelly, M  
McLaughlin, R Moon, J Quinn, J Stapleton

In attendance: Councillors JE Green L Fraser D Elderton

### **218 PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES REVIEW - PHASE 5**

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which provided a summary of the current position in respect of primary school places, developments resulting from previous phases of the Review, and issues for the future. It sought Cabinet's approval for further phases of area reviews involving schools and stakeholders to identify any further opportunities for the removal of surplus places, taking into account the impact of the forthcoming Primary Capital Strategy programme. The report also identified the programme from a Value for Money perspective. In relation to a previous phase, the report sought Cabinet's approval to an amendment to the potential implementation date for the proposed closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning referred to the reductions in numbers forecast for school roles over the next few years and indicated that the purpose of the review was to use public money effectively.

Resolved - That

- (1) a renewed approval be given to the principle of area reviews to study current primary school provision in order to match future needs and support the opportunity for transformational change provided by the Primary Capital Strategy;
- (2) approval be given to the sequence of planning areas to be examined in each new Review phase;
- (3) the principle whereby a Review can be initiated where a school's roll collapses, or a school is placed in an Ofsted category of concern, be approved; and
- (4) approval be given for the amendment of the implementation date for the proposed closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School to 31st August 2009.

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**WIRRAL COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006**  
**PROPOSAL TO CEASE TO MAINTAIN ARROWE HILL PRIMARY**  
**SCHOOL**

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Wirral Council as the local education authority ("the Authority"), Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED intends to discontinue Arrowe Hill Primary School, Glebe Hey Road, Woodchurch, Wirral, CH49 8HE from 31st August 2009.

All statutory consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with.

Parents of pupils on roll at Arrowe Hill Primary School at 31st August 2009 will be asked to express a preference for one of the alternative local schools. It is proposed to re-draw the catchment zones of Arrowe Hill Primary School and Fender Primary School to divide them between Fender Primary School and Overchurch Infant and Overchurch Junior schools. Pupils may transfer to any local primary school, subject to the availability of places and the admission arrangements published in the Authority's information booklet for parents.

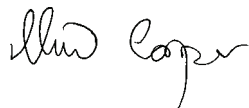
The travel distance from Arrowe Hill Primary School to the new zone school site is unlikely to result in any increase in car use. Applications for school transport to alternative schools will be considered on the basis of the Authority's school transport policy published in the Authority's information booklet for parents.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from the Primary Places Review website; [www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces](http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces) or on paper or CD-ROM by writing to the address below.

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:

Howard Cooper, Director of Children's Services, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD.

Signed:



Dated this 22nd day of October 2008

## Explanatory Notes

1) The purpose of this notice is to close Arrowe Hill Primary School and to advise parents of pupils who attend Arrowe Hill Primary School, and parents of pupils who live in the catchment zone served by Arrowe Hill Primary School, of alternative schools where their children may be educated.

2) The following streets from the Arrowe Hill catchment zone will be rezoned to Fender Primary School: Archers Court, Archers Way, Arrowe Brook Road, Arrowe Court, Arrowe Park Hospital, numbers 51 and above Arrowe Park Road, Atherton Drive, Beechwood Court, Belvedere Court, Berkeley Court, Berkley Avenue, Big Meadow Road, Brentwood Court, Caldwell Drive, Cheshire Acre, Cheswood Court, Childwall Green, Church Lane (Woodchurch), Colbert Close, number 86 to 156 Commonfield Road, Crewe Green, Domville Drive, Druids Way, Eltham Close, Eltham Green, Fleetcroft Road, Fletcher Close, Glebe Hey Road, Goodacres Court, Goodacres Meadow, Greenwood Road, Houghton Court, Houghton Road, Kiln Road, Leeswood Road, Lower Green, Maritime Court, Mavis Drive, Meadow Crescent, Merton Drive, Nantwich Close, Northbrooke Way, Parklands Court, numbers 56 and above, and 69 and above Pemberton Road, Pool Lane, Robin Way, Sandfield Road, School Lane (Woodchurch), Schoolfield Close, Schoolfield Road, Sherry Lane, Troutbeck Close, Whitefield Close, Woodchurch Lane (Woodchurch), Woodland Drive (Woodchurch), Woodland Road (Woodchurch), Woodvale Court and Yew Tree Close.

The following streets from the Arrowe Hill catchment zone will be rezoned to Overchurch Infant and Overchurch Junior Schools: Ford Way 1 to 121, Salacre Close, numbers 70 and above, and 77 and above Salacre Lane, Shortfield Road, Shortfield Way and Whiteside Close.

The following streets from the Fender Primary catchment zone will be rezoned to Overchurch Infant and Overchurch Junior Schools: Ford Close, Ford Drive, numbers 1 to 67 and 2 to 34 Ford Road and numbers 123 and above Ford Way.

A map showing the proposed alterations to catchment zones is available to view at Arrowe Hill Primary School, Fender Primary School, Overchurch Infant and Overchurch Junior Schools and on-line at:

[www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces](http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces)

3) The Authority's information booklets for parents are available on request from the Children and Young People's Department by calling 0151 606 2000 during office hours, or on-line at:

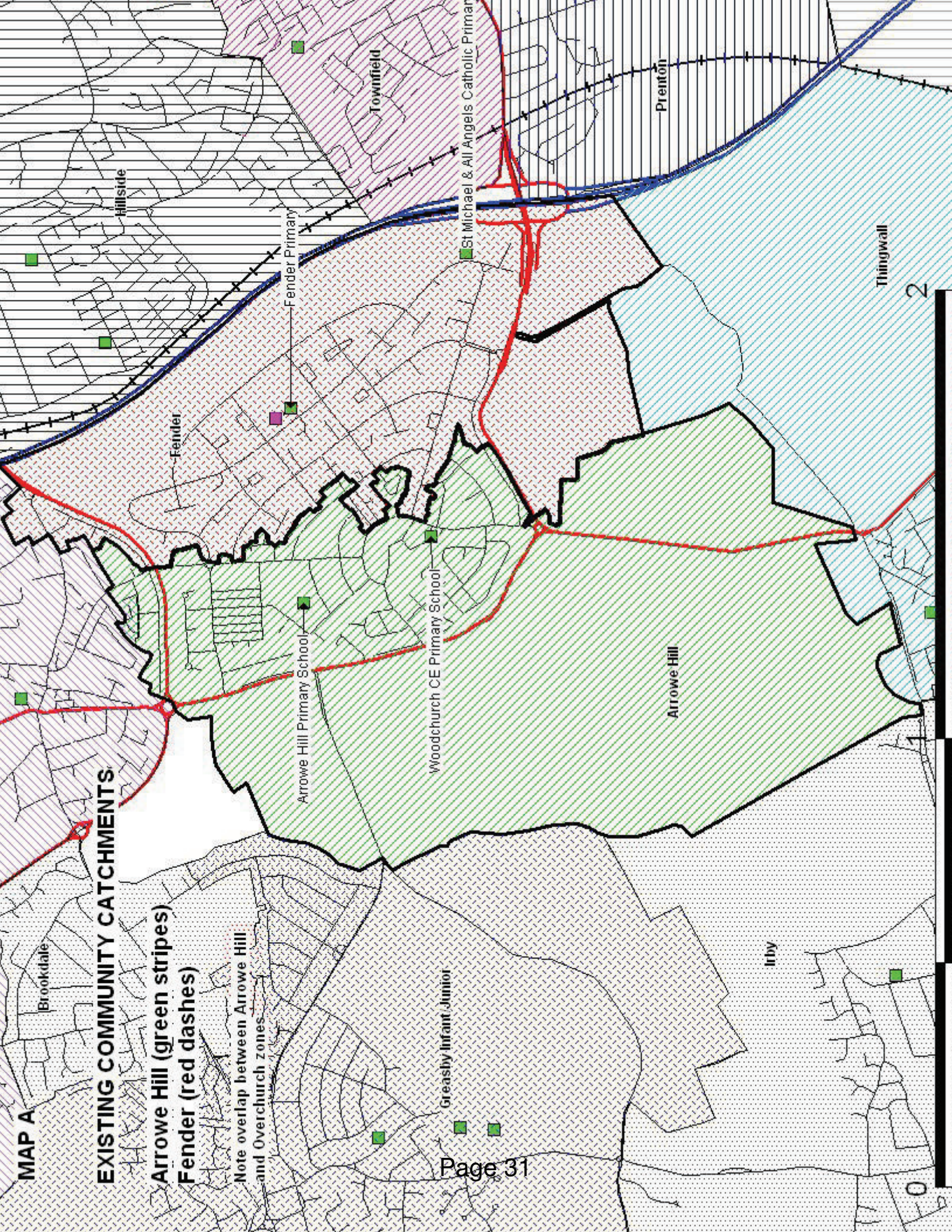
[www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/admissions/primarybook.pdf](http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/admissions/primarybook.pdf)



**EXISTING COMMUNITY CATCHMENTS**

**Arrowe Hill (green stripes)**  
**Fender (red dashes)**

Note overlap between Arrowe Hill and Overchurch zones

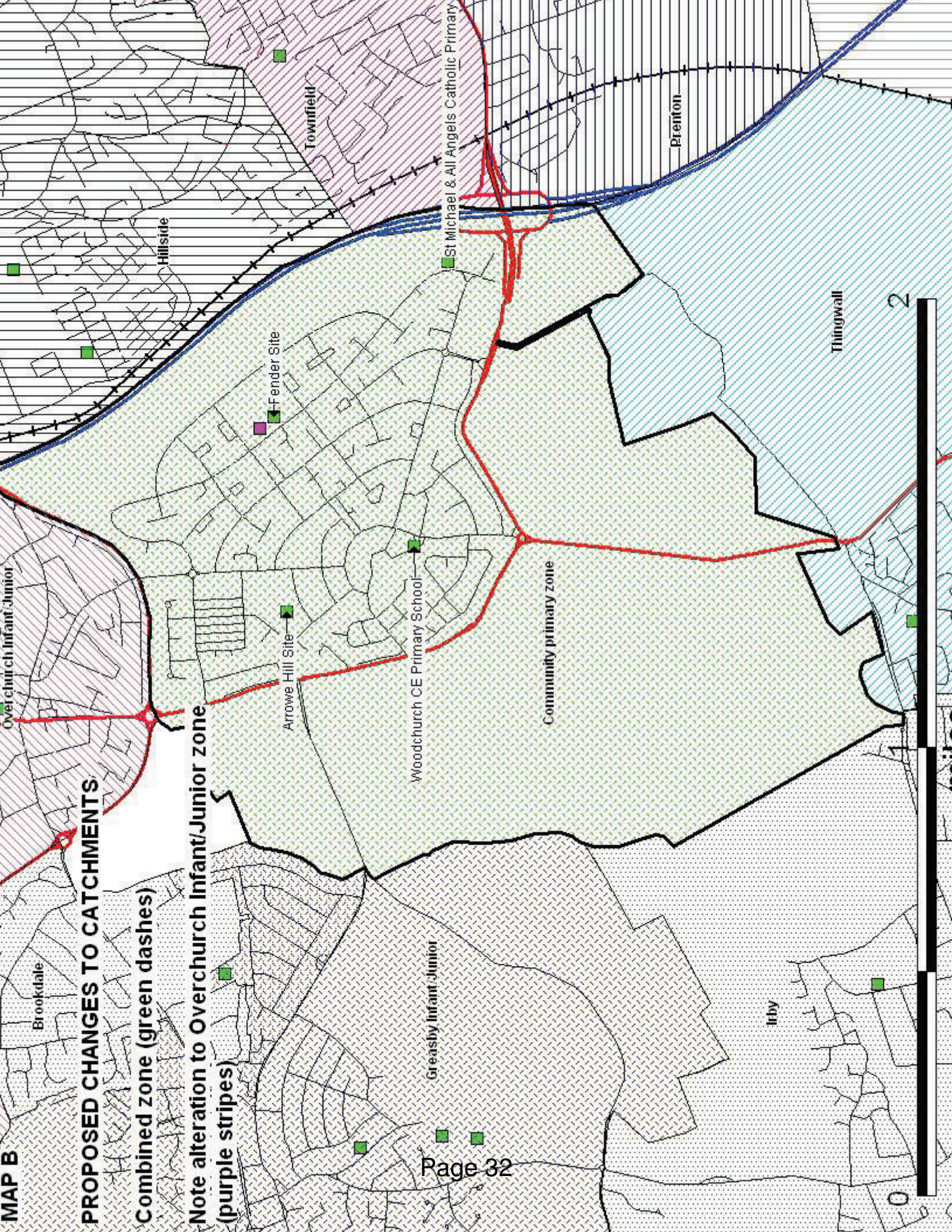




**PROPOSED CHANGES TO CATCHMENTS**

Combined zone (green dashes)

Note alteration to Overchurch Infant/Junior zone (purple stripes)





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

*Insert the information asked for in the expandable box below each section.*

### Contact details

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

Wirral Council, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED  
Arrowe Hill Primary School

### 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.

It is planned to implement this proposal from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

### Consultation

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

All statutory consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with. Public consultations were held during January to March 2008, including a consultation meeting at Arrowe Hill Primary School on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and at the neighbouring Fender Primary school on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008. All statutory consultees were consulted in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance and statutory requirements.

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.

See Appendices A and B.

### Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To discontinue Arrowe Hill Primary School.

## 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.

Arrowe Hill Primary had 115 pupils on roll in January 2008, about a third of the number on roll 12 years ago (343). This is largely the result of the falling population, although 73% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Woodchurch CE Primary School (37%, 101 pupils), Overchurch Infant and Junior (13%, 34 pupils) and Fender Primary School (11%, 30 pupils). There are a large number of surplus places (45%, 95 places), and this situation is not predicted to improve over the next five years.

A three year average of the overall value added score (2005 to 2007) shows that Arrowe Hill, Fender, Woodchurch CE and Overchurch Junior are making the expected rate of progress (100.8, 99.7, 100.0 and 100.3 respectively) with no significant difference in performance.

Ofsted reports of these schools are attached as Appendix D. The Woodchurch area will retain parental choice of a Community, Church of England and Catholic primary school following closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School.

Small schools inevitably cost more to maintain than larger schools. Wirral policy says that schools become increasingly more difficult to maintain as they fall below 180 pupils on roll. DCSF guidance says that "Schools with fewer than 150 pupils may be educationally and financially sustainable only through substantial subsidies via their local authorities funding formula".

Financially, the total sum available for spending on all our children does not increase if we choose as an Authority to organise our children in more schools than is necessary for the efficient and effective delivery of education. It follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children. In 2006-2007, expenditure per pupil at Arrowe Hill was £5,171 compared with the Wirral average of £3,249.

Closure of Arrowe Hill Primary School saves money for the overall schools budget. The saving is ring-fenced to the Wirral schools budget, which allows more funding to be spent on all Wirral's children and young people in order to raise standards across the borough.

## 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.

There are 21 alternative primary schools (counting Infant and Junior schools as a single school) within a 2 mile radius, at which in January 2008 there were 590 surplus places, compared to the number on roll of 115 pupils.

The number on roll at January 2008 at Arrowse Hill Primary was 115 pupils, and in September 2008 had fallen to 63 pupils. Excluding those pupils in Year 6 who will have moved onto secondary school in September 2009, there are expected to be 50 pupils to transfer to an alternative local primary school

At alternative primary schools in the Woodchurch planning area alone, there were 86 surplus places in January 2008. Dependant on parental preferences, additional accommodation may be required locally at Fender Primary School.

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.

Arrowse Hill is a mixed sex community primary school providing 210 places for day pupils aged 4 to 11. In January 2008 there were 115 pupils on roll, falling to 63 pupils in September 2008.

## Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or further education 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 local education authority 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 local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

All current and projected pupils from Arrowse Hill Primary could be accommodated at primary schools within a reasonable distance without requiring any new classroom provision. See S.8 above.

The catchment area of the school is to be divided between Fender Primary School and Overchurch Infant and Junior School. Proposed changes to the catchment areas are attached as Appendix C.

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

Dependant on parental preferences, additional places may be required at Fender Primary School. The current capacity of the Fender building is 210 pupils. If all former Arrowe Hill pupils on roll at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009 opted to transfer to Fender Primary School, it is estimated that two additional classrooms would be required, bringing the capacity to 270 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.

Large numbers of parents living within Arrowe Hill's zone already choose either Fender Primary or Overchurch Infant and Junior Schools, and there are 21 alternative primary schools within a 2 mile radius of the school. The catchment zone of Arrowe Hill Primary School following closure would, in the main, be allocated to Fender Primary, with the exception of a small area at the "top" of the zone which could be allocated to Overchurch Infant and Junior School. The intention of this division was to better match where parents live and choose to send their children to school. Parents currently in-zone for Overchurch Infant and Junior schools would continue to be in-zone and would be unaffected by this change. The proposed catchments are attached as Appendix C.

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

The school offers various out of school clubs including football, badminton and cricket, art, choir, ICT and French. A breakfast club operates from Arrowe Hill Primary School, with a joint afterschool club being held in collaboration with Woodchurch CE Primary School at the Woodchurch CE site. The school has also operated Family Learning courses in literacy, numeracy, ICT and parenting skills.

The afterschool club based at Woodchurch CE Primary School would not be affected by the closure of Arrowe Hill. Similar out of school activities are held at other primary schools in the area, and would be expected to continue.

For example, Fender Primary offers out of school clubs for football, baseball, netball, rugby, golf, athletics, yoga, dance, boxercise, choir, ICT, recorders, reading and study, art, sewing and cooking. The school participates in the Children's University. Various Family Learning courses are also operated, including parenting skills. A breakfast or afterschool club is not offered at present, with parents being directed to the facility at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, however, the school is currently undertaking a survey of parents to establish whether there is sufficient demand for before/afterschool care at the school itself. If Arrowe Hill were to close, funding for the breakfast club could be transferred to Fender Primary School.

### **Travel**

**15.** Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

All former Arrowe Hill Primary pupils on roll at this date who opt to transfer to Fender Primary School, regardless of home address, will be guaranteed a place at Fender Primary School. Arrowe Hill Primary School is 0.6 miles from Fender Primary School.

Of the 50 pupils expected to be on roll at September 2009, four would travel more than 2 miles to both Fender or Overchurch Infant/Junior, but all four already travel more than 2 miles to Arrowe Hill Primary, so can be expected to use whichever means of transport they are already utilising. Three pupils would be potentially be entitled to an in-zone place at Overchurch Infant or Junior School, should parents decide to apply. For just one pupil, the distance to Fender Primary is significantly further than the distance to Arrowe Hill Primary School.

An aerial photo showing the relative positions of these three schools is included as Appendix E.

### Walking Distances

NCyearActual	Arrowe Hill	Fender	Overchurch Infant/Junior
0	2.36	2.28	2.43
0	0.22	0.51	1.09
0	0.38	0.53	0.91
0	0.57	0.26	1.41
0	0.64	0.32	1.28
0*	0.66	0.8	0.87
1	0.38	0.53	0.91
1	0.36	0.63	1.04
1	0.24	0.73	1.13
1	1	0.45	1.8
1	0.33	0.63	1.09
1	0.45	0.46	1.41
2	2.36	2.28	2.43
2*	0.53	0.68	0.83
2	0.4	0.74	1
2	0.39	0.42	1.08
2	0.48	0.27	1.32
2	0.57	0.26	1.41
2	2.73	2.89	3.64
2	0.07	0.57	1.2
2	0.34	0.8	0.88
2	0.43	0.88	1.38
3	0.66	0.34	1.3
3	0.4	0.74	1
3	0.71	0.16	1.52
3	0.36	0.63	1.04
3	0.43	0.6	0.99
3	0.06	0.59	1.17
3	0.31	0.83	0.91
3*	0.54	0.95	0.77
3	2.02	1.94	2.1
3	0.34	0.7	1.37
4	0.41	0.71	0.97
4	0.22	0.51	1.09
4	0.38	0.53	0.91
4	0.36	0.63	1.04
4	0.42	0.63	0.97

4	0.09	0.59	1.22
4	0.57	0.2	1.23
4	0.3	0.59	1.17
5	3	2.92	3.07
5	0.25	0.67	1.12
5	0.66	0.34	1.3
5	1.16	1.54	0.89
5	0.42	0.76	0.98
5	0.25	0.62	1.28
5	0.45	0.56	1.47
5	0.42	0.73	0.87
5	0.24	0.73	1.3
5	0.52	0.54	1.1
5	2.16	2.54	1.4
6	2.36	2.28	2.43
6	0.81	0.26	1.61
6	1.16	1.54	0.89
6	0.1	0.64	1.12
6	0.28	0.57	1.08
6	0.31	0.6	1.08
6	1.88	1.8	1.96
6	0.23	0.69	1.26
6	0.64	0.32	1.28
6	0.36	0.68	1.01
6	0.47	0.36	1.16
6	2.16	2.54	1.4

Under 1 mile	Under 1.5 miles	Under 2 miles	Over 2 miles
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\* indicates current home address would be within Overchurch Infant/Junior zone under new catchment arrangements

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

The distance to Fender Primary is not significantly longer than the current journey distance to Arrowe Hill Primary School and pupils can be expected to continue to travel to school by whichever means they are currently using, with no significant increase in car use.

Pupils may transfer to any local primary school, subject to availability of places and the admission arrangements published in the Authority's information booklet for parents.

There are a total of 21 alternative primary schools (counting Infant and Junior schools as a primary school) within a 2 mile radius.

### Related Proposals.

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

There are no other proposals which are, or are about to be, published in relation to this

proposal.

### **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 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority 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 local education authority, 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) of the EIA 2006.

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 local education authority's assessment of the quality and quantity of the 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 for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority 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

## Appendix A

The following bodies and persons were consulted:

- School staff
- Governors
- Parents/Carers of pupils at the two schools
- Local Councillors
- Local MP (Stephen Hesford)
- The Anglican Diocese of Chester and Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury
- Governing bodies, teachers and other staff of all the primary phase schools within this small planning area, and Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre
- Parents/Carers of pupils at all primary phase schools within the small planning area, and at Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre.
- Trade union representatives

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Directly related</b>	<b>Others</b>
Arrowe Hill	6	6	0
Fender	68	58	10
Ganneys Meadow	0	0	0
Other Woodchurch	11		

Consultation meetings held at each school were attended as follows:

### **Arrowe Hill Primary School**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Phil Davies (Chairman)  
Marie Stacey – LA  
Chris Batman – LA  
David Armstrong – LA  
Sally Gibbs – LA  
Phil Edwards – Technician

Hazel Williams –Headteacher  
Jackie Grannell – Chair of Governors

Attended by 41 parents, 9 staff members, 5 governors, and 10 other interested persons.

38% of pupils were represented by at least one parent/carer.



### **Fender Primary School**

**Present:**

Cllr Phil Davies (Chairman)  
Marie Stacey – LA  
Chris Batman – LA  
David Armstrong – LA  
Sally Gibbs – LA  
Phil Edwards – Technician

Thelma Wiltshire - Headteacher  
Gill Curry – Chair of Governors

Attended by 52 parents, 22 staff members, 4 governors and 17 other interested persons.

42% of pupils were represented by at least one parent/carer.

### **Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre**

**Present:**

Cllr Phil Davies (Chairman)  
Marie Stacey – LA  
Marie Lawrence - LA  
David Armstrong – LA  
Sally Gibbs – LA  
Phil Edwards – Technician

Caroline Roberts - Headteacher  
Hugh Lloyd – Chair of Governors

Attended by 7 parents, 5 staff members, 3 governors and 5 other interested persons.

In order for all stakeholders to have access to relevant background information and have the opportunity to comment and respond, the following methods of consultation were employed :

- (i) the full consultation document and review pack was sent to all schools in each area; local One-Stop shops, libraries and the Central Library; Wallasey Town Hall and relevant community centres;
- (ii) parents'/carers' consultation leaflets and comments forms to all parents/carers, via all schools named in the options;
- (iii) Standard letters to all the schools in the small planning areas, one format for schools named in the options and one for other schools in the small planning area.

- (iv) A dedicated web-site on the Wirral Learning Grid was established and advertised on the council web-site, the council Intranet, and in the parents' consultation leaflets and the standard letters to schools. This site provided access to all the information produced in paper form and allowed e-mail responses to a dedicated e-mail address.
- (v) Meetings were arranged for all interested stakeholders at each of the schools named in options for closure or amalgamation. These meetings followed the same format, with a presentation on the overall position and the school specific position followed by around ninety minutes of time for audience comments, feedback and questions. The meetings were attended by parents, carers, staff, governors, Ward members and various other interested persons and bodies, including Diocesan representatives where appropriate. Each meeting was chaired by the Cabinet member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning. The dates for the meetings were in the parents' leaflets and on the specific web-site and a general notice was published in the local press.
- (vi) Opportunities were provided for other means of response. Submissions were received in paper and e-mail formats – all of which were made available before and at the Cabinet meeting, in addition to the summaries contained in the report.
- (vii) All of the relevant LA documentation produced for the consultation was shared with the Diocesan Bodies.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Summary of responses by school**

#### **People allied to Arrowe Hill Primary School**

##### **Falling rolls**

- Data on school rolls is incorrect
- Other schools on the estate are also small and have surplus places
- New houses being built on estate
- What if more children are born in future?
- Teenage mums are put off having more children

##### **Staff and Standards**

- A family school
- Concerns about loss of teaching and non-teaching staff
- Small schools may be harder to run, but we do it well
- Good with special needs pupils
- Teachers from other schools place their children here
- Good results
- Concerns about impact of age and experience on redeployment prospects since young teachers are cheaper to employ
- Mixed age teaching can be good
- Excellent school with good teaching
- Small schools have more time for children
- Top 2% of primary schools in the country
- Outstanding Ofsted report
- Offer diverse events
- Staff are personal, consistent and cater for children's needs

##### **Pupils**

- Children go on to do really well in secondary school
- Would take children out of area if school closed
- I bring my child here from out of area
- My child loves coming to school here
- No bullying or racism here
- Pupils feel secure and safe
- Concerns about disruption to education
- I moved schools when I was young, do not want that for my child

- Children with asthma makes it difficult to walk to another school
- Disruption to education for children in Year 6

### **The Options**

- Children from the two schools would not mix well
- Why are there no options involving St Michael and All Angels?
- Parents would have to buy new uniforms
- How would a new school building be funded?
- Support for a new school building
- I don't want my child to go to Fender as children are from different background
- Concerns about future use of land

### **The Process**

- Letters to parents sent out too late
- Decision already been made
- Taking away parents choice
- If amalgamation means competition, does this make it less likely to go forward?
- Does competition mean anyone could run the new school?

### **Building and site**

- Money spent refurbishing the school would be wasted
- School has only just moved from two buildings to one
- Cheaper to build here
- Closing the Infant building has already saved money and reduced surplus places

### **Traffic and transport**

- Concerns about drop off and parking at Fender Primary
- Long walk to Overchurch

### **Financial**

- Does every child get same amount of money in budget?

### **Other comments**

- Concerns about impact on the community
- Generations have been to this school
- New houses built on Arrowe Hill site would cause traffic congestion for residents

## **People allied to Fender Primary School**

## **Falling rolls**

- School population is growing
- Fender has more pupils on roll than Arrowe Hill
- Admissions for September 2008 are healthy
- More people are coming to live in the UK
- There are no spare classrooms
- Birth rate is rising
- New housing will generate more children

## **Staff and Standards**

- Inclusive school
- Positive staff attitude sorts out any bullying or bad behaviour
- School works closely with parents
- Helpful, approachable, caring, supportive staff
- Excellent school
- Reading recovery classes and reading buddies programme
- Safe and well organised school
- Special Needs Bases at Fender have excellent reputation
- Staff have time for pupils and parents
- Calm and relaxed atmosphere
- Lots of outside school activities and trips
- Can trust staff with our children
- School has worked hard to come out of Special Measures
- Supportive governing body
- Headteacher is proactive
- Concerns about increased class sizes
- It has been proved that small is best
- Concerns about staff losing jobs
- Behaviour is good – no fighting, bullying, swearing or stealing
- Staff are hard working, committed and kind
- School has quality marks
- Year 6 makes visits to Woodchurch High school

## **Building and site**

- If school closes, less people will use Ganneys Meadow
- Links with Ganneys Meadow EYC

- Disabled access is good
- Proximity to local amenities such as library, community centre and leisure centre
- Near to Woodchurch High
- Open land behind the school to expand into if needed
- Concerns about parking and access at Arrowe Hill
- Two EIB classes
- Good grounds and facilities, including ballpark and gazebos for shade in hot weather
- Centrally located
- Good ICT facilities
- Sound facilities in classrooms for hearing impaired
- Good sized bright classrooms with lovely atmosphere
- Fabric of the building has been improved
- Infant EIB has its own playground and toilets
- Close to Holy Cross Church

### **Pupils**

- Pleased with my child's progress here
- Children love coming to school
- Children gain confidence here
- Options will compromise children's education and affect their progress
- Concerns about additional disruption for children with ASD and special needs
- Children should not have to go back to schools they were bullied at
- Pupils go on to do well in secondary school
- Children would miss their friends
- SEN pupils are well integrated into mainstream classes
- Children cope better in a smaller setting
- I am being rehoused outside the area, but will keep my children at Fender
- My children have gone on to get good jobs
- Plenty of friends
- My child is happy and settled here
- Children need stability and to feel safe and comfortable

## **The Options**

- Arrowe Hill is already half-closed
- More children can come to Fender
- Closing Arrowe Hill would disrupt less children
- Can use Arrowe Hill site for new housing
- If both Fender and Arrowe Hill closed without a new school, more parents would want Woodchurch CE than St Michaels
- Better to amalgamate on one site than close one and keep the other
- Fender site better for amalgamation
- Keeping Fender site would be less disruptive for SEN pupils
- If Fender closes, fewer people will use Ganneys Meadow
- Would there be enough places for all the children of both schools if amalgamated?
- Would mean less schools
- Could there be an amalgamation with St Michael and All Angels?
- Why not build a primary school on the Woodchurch High site?

## **Traffic and transport**

- Easier for parents with younger children at Ganneys to bring older children to Fender than to get to Arrowe Hill
- Safe roads around school with speed bumps
- Fender is on the main bus route
- Near to Woodchurch High makes it easier to drop off younger and older children
- Concerns about traffic and congestion around Arrowe Hill site
- More parking at Fender
- Concerns about distance to alternative schools
- Minibuses bring children in from outside the area

## **Financial**

- This is all about money
- Other schools are not suffering by keeping Arrowe Hill and Fender open
- Investment in the building and site would be wasted if closed
- Would there be funding for a new school building or extensions if needed?

## **The Process**

- You've already made a decision



- Important to make a speedy decision to remove uncertainty

#### **Other comments**

- Centre of its community
- First school built on Woodchurch
- Generations have gone to this school
- Open for over 50 years

### **People allied to Ganneys Meadow EYC**

#### **Staff and standards**

- Concerns that review discussion may affect KS2 test results
- Mixed age teaching can be beneficial
- Concerns about larger class sizes
- All schools need more emphasis on respect for the community, for adults and for all cultures/faiths

#### **Financial**

- Why do small schools cost more than larger schools?
- Good idea to run one school with the savings reinvested

### **Other comments from the Woodchurch area**

#### **Staff and standards**

- Training courses run from the Fender site
- Arrowe Hill is a really good school
- Concerns about large class sizes
- Concerns about insufficient staff numbers

#### **Building and site**

- Fender is centrally located
- Fender is close to library and Ganneys Meadow
- Arrowe Hill has just had a lot of money spent on the facilities which would be wasted if it closed

#### **The Options**

- Shame either school must close, but would be financially more beneficial to run just one school
- Makes more sense to keep Fender because of proximity to Ganneys Meadow for people with younger and older children
- Should amalgamate at Arrowe Hill and use Fender as a community facility

## Arrowe Hill Primary School Public Meeting- 29.1.08

Introduction by HT     Brief review of the school  
   Top 2% of schools in added value.

Introduction by Councillor Davies  
Introduction by CB/DA/SG  
Marie Stacey – presentation 7.20 pm

### Question and Answer 7.50pm

- *Any response to a speaker is in italics*

Parent                    Have all the evidence – what can we say to save it?  
   Can we change your mind? Child wants to come to school.

*Phil Davies             I have an open mind – genuine consultation.*

Parent                    Our area will suffer if the school closes.

Parent                    Figures wrong for St Michael's – why are only two schools  
   under review?

*CB                         Decision made at Cabinet – CofE is large and full. RC  
   school is smaller and does have surplus. We have to  
   ensure faith provision. Only RC school on the estate. RC  
   school owned and run by the Diocese, without RC  
   cooperation very difficult to close a Catholic school.*

Parent                    Already closed the infants, hasn't that saved money?

*CB                         Yes it has led to a saving and we have invested to take  
   space out. Problem has not gone away.*

Parent                    No issues with mixed aged classes.

*CB                         Falling rolls issue does not go away – talked re challenges  
   of falling rolls when schools are good.*

Parent                    Question re investment in premises.

*DA                         Answered*

Former pupil            Question re 25% surplus

*DA                         Answered*

Former parent           Wanted to highlight positives of the school – quoted  
   strengths – no bullying, children keen to learn. Praise for  
   teaching staff – good pupil relationships. Children are  
   secure and safe. I moved schools twice due to closures in  
   Birkenhead, my education was “knackered” by this. Primary  
   is key – school produces the goods.  
   Land is worth £1million to the council.  
   Who will pay for new uniforms at £80 a go? – I have 3

	children.
Parent	Nobody has asked the teachers if they want to move to another school. Pupils seem safe and secure and the staff would want to stay as they are.
CB	<i>Responded setting out general points re treatment of staff in amalgamations and closures. Outlined process to date for all staff – teachers and non teachers.</i>
Parent	Need to think of the children – moving them will have an effect on them. don't want to be merged with Fender (audience agreed). Stated there had been issues with Fender – bullying.
Phil Davies	<i>Not helpful to criticise other schools.</i>
Parent	Woodchurch is a thriving area. What will happen in the future? "Baby boom" in the area.
CB	<i>Gave background to how we predict numbers. 73% of pupils go to other schools now so only 3 in 10 of any future pupils are likely to come to Arrowe Hill on current pattern.</i>
Parent & Gov	Child in school. Chose Arrowe Hill out of 4 schools. Chose it as the best school. Child doing well – will impact badly on my child and will take my choice away. I will have to make further choices. V positive about teachers. Query re amalgamation – could the school be run by someone else. Is that more likely to make the council stick with a straightforward closure.
CB	<i>Answered – gave background re opening new schools/competitions/school types. Councillors will be invited to make the best decision in the interests of the children. Explained differences between closure and amalgamation – in effect opening a new school.</i>
Parent	My daughter will sit her SATs in 2009, she will be badly affected and it would not be fair.
Parent	Child moved from St Michael's. I moved five times and got worse and worse each time – I don't want that to happen to my child.
Teacher	Thanks for the parents' comments. Would the work on our site make it cheaper to be based at Arrowe Hill.
DA	<i>We haven't done the sums ahead of consultation</i>
Same teacher	Younger teachers are cheaper, that will impact upon our re-deployment prospects.
CB	<i>Responded re: new governing body of an amalgamated</i>

*school. Seek support from governing body of any new school – who will also want to make the new school work and have the best staff.*

- Same teacher Schools have a certain budget – some schools will take a cheaper teacher over a more experienced teacher.
- CB *Responded re continued need for same numbers of staff if not opportunity to have more staff and further background to the situation in respect of staffing.*
- Parent Chose Arrowe Hill over Fender and Overchurch, moved from Overchurch to Arrowe Hill. Issues re the length of walk to Overchurch, particularly for children with asthma. Not right to consider closure.
- Child SAT results are higher here than at Fender. Lower ability children from Fender will pull down standards on Arrowe Hill pupils.
- Parent 3 generations of my family came to this school. I walk past Fender to come here – issues re bullying. My choice “I chose to bring my children out of the estate”.
- Parent People have kids at 16 and the pain puts them off having any more. Don’t want to mix with Fender kids.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Time Questions**

- Parent Traffic issue if you put all the children at Fender.
- Parent Arrow Hill is a family school – many families with several generations have attended the schools. Need to consider the effects on children.
- Parent Why not build a primary school at Woodchurch?
- DA *Answered*
- Parent Teachers want to place their children here.
- Parent No, Arrowe Hill, 115 children not in school.
- Parent Does each school get the same amount of money per pupil.
- CB *Explained that budget is formula driven largely due to pupil numbers.*
- Parent School has dealt well with a pupil with special needs.
- Headteacher Thanks to parents for support. Harder to run a smaller school but tonight shows we do it double well.
- Question re capital building funding.
- DA *Answered re Primary Capital Strategy*
- Chair of Gavs Thanks to everyone. We love our school and want it to stay open.

You have presented us with stark facts.

We are a community school. The children grow into productive adults.

Please consider us wisely.

Could plan for a new school alongside the new high school.

We would support a new school.

This is our lovely community school

Councillor  
Davies

Closing comments.

Post meeting – Parking round Arrowe Hill is residents only?

## Ganney's Meadow Children's Centre Public Meeting- 5.2.08

### **Approx 20 people present including Head, staff and governors**

Introductions :

Councillor Davies - no proposals for Ganney's, just wish to share the issues re surplus places in Woodchurch

Marie Stacey - presentation altered to suit setting.  
Re-stated no proposals in respect of Ganney's

### Questions/comments

- *Any response to a speaker is in italics*

Parent Arrowe Hill and Ganney's – have school closures influenced SAT results?

MS *Answered*

DA *Answered re school size/budgets*

ML *Answered re class sizes/mixed age teaching/standards*

Parent Want Woodchurch CofE. What are the Ofsteds on Fender and Arrowe Hill.

MS *Answered*

Parent Thinks it's a good idea to reduce costs on empty places. One school can meet the need. Savings can be invested. Could we emphasise greater respect in pupils and respect equal opportunities. Guidance on the faith side needed – Christian faith. Greater emphasis on the basics – respect/love/share.

MS *Responded : including reference to Neighbourhood Management Board.*

DA *Answered re new Woodchurch and possibility of new primary near Woodchurch.*

Councillor Thanks for coming/closing remarks.  
Davies

**Fender Primary School Public Meeting- 31.1.08**

Introductions by Councillor Davies

Marie Stacey – presentation 7.10 – 7.45 pm

Introductions – Marie Lawrence, David Armstrong, Sally Gibbs

**Question and Answers**

- *Any response to a speaker is in italics*

Parent Praise to the school staff (applause). National boom in childbirth. will need the spaces we are taking away. We are here for the needs of our children.

DA *Answered*

Parent Brought my children here from another school, having looked at all the schools. If you amalgamate you bring in more teachers and more children. Issues re class sizes. Children will not learn in larger classes.

MS *Responded*

Parent Issue re keeping the bases.

Parent Moved to school from Arrowe Hill – critical of school – good progress since moving.

Parent Asked for details re new housing.

DA *Answered*

Parent Private housing will generate new pupils.

Classroom Ass Spoke very positively re the school and the work and progress of the pupils. – Wouldn't be fair to change things.

Parent Why not amalgamate with St Michaels?

DA *Answered*

Parent Child in special unit. Very positive about the school. Lives in Prenton. No bullying here. Outlined great progress in unit by a child with additional needs. Child would find transition to new school very difficult.

MS *Answered re location of special units.*

Same Parent Not satisfied with answers re special units.

Parent Pupil in base. School is warm and the inclusion bases are fantastic. Makes sense to keep the site with the Children's Centre next door.



Grandma & dinner lady	Upsetting for children if they have to move. All that's being talked about here is money (applause).
<i>Phil Davies</i>	<i>Responded</i>
Parent	Traffic conditions at Arrowe Hill. Nightmare to drop children off. Fender is on a clear main road. All the schools on the estate come to the Fender site to use the library. Fender can access the library etc. without leaving the site. Closer to Woodchurch High School leisure centre.
Former pupil	School is near bus route, shops. Arrowe Hill was built as an overspill to Fender. Fender is the best site.
Parent	Child moved from Woodchurch CofE. I got the first positive comments on my child at Fender. Kept my child at this school even when parent moved some distance away.
Past Parent	School has a strong bond between parents and teachers. School has full support of parents.
Parent	Moved child from another school, having realized the work of the school. It is the Head and teachers who make the school – not the site.
Parent	Money is not an issue in this school. Child has special needs and school funds the additional support. I would not send by child to Arrowe Hill!
Parent	All the school is used, all is in good condition. I would not take my children up to Arrowe Hill. There are traffic issues at Arrowe Hill. We want to see the school stay here. The school works hard with the pupils. We will fight to keep the school open.
Non teacher	Traffic conditions at Arrowe Hill. I live near Arrowe Hill and worry about the roads. Fender is a friendly school.
Staff member	Numbers have gone up. School is becoming more popular. Children are a pleasure. Would like to thank parents for the comments made about the teachers.
Parent	Special needs child. Fender supported my child even when she was in Ganneys Meadow. Child has made great progress. I don't want my child to go to Arrowe Hill.
Parent	Special needs -autistic spectrum. Good progress made. Change would be very difficult for staff and location.
Parent	Child should have gone to Arrowe Hill. Chose Fender. My children have reading Recovery. Should close Arrowe Hill.
Parent	Issues re change applies to all children, not only children in inclusion bases. Normally only move children by choice, not

forced upon us.

*MS Gave background on previous moves.*

Parent What will happen if a child who has been bullied at Arrowe Hill has to go back there?

*MS Answered*

Parent Arrowe Hill would have expressed some concerns to us. Fender pushes pupils and got decent results for my child and he now does better at Woodchurch High than he would have done. Should wait a few years to see what happens with numbers.

Parent Very positive comments re school – after school clubs praised.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Comments**

Parent I couldn't get a child to Ganneys in the morning and then a child to Arrowe Hill nor could I collect in the afternoon from two sites.

Chair of Govs Thanked Marie Stacey  
Proud of comments made by parents.

Parent Why not build a primary school at Woodchurch High?

*DA Answered*

Parent Teachers want to place their children here.

Parent No, Fender, 115 children not in school!

Parent Does each school get the same amount of money per pupil.

*CB Explained that budget is formula driven largely due to pupil numbers.*

Parent School has dealt well with a pupil with special needs.

Headteacher Thanks to parents for support. Harder to run a smaller school but tonight shows we do it double well.

Question re capital building funding.

Chair of Govs Thanks to everyone. We love our school and want it to stay open.

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Closing comments.

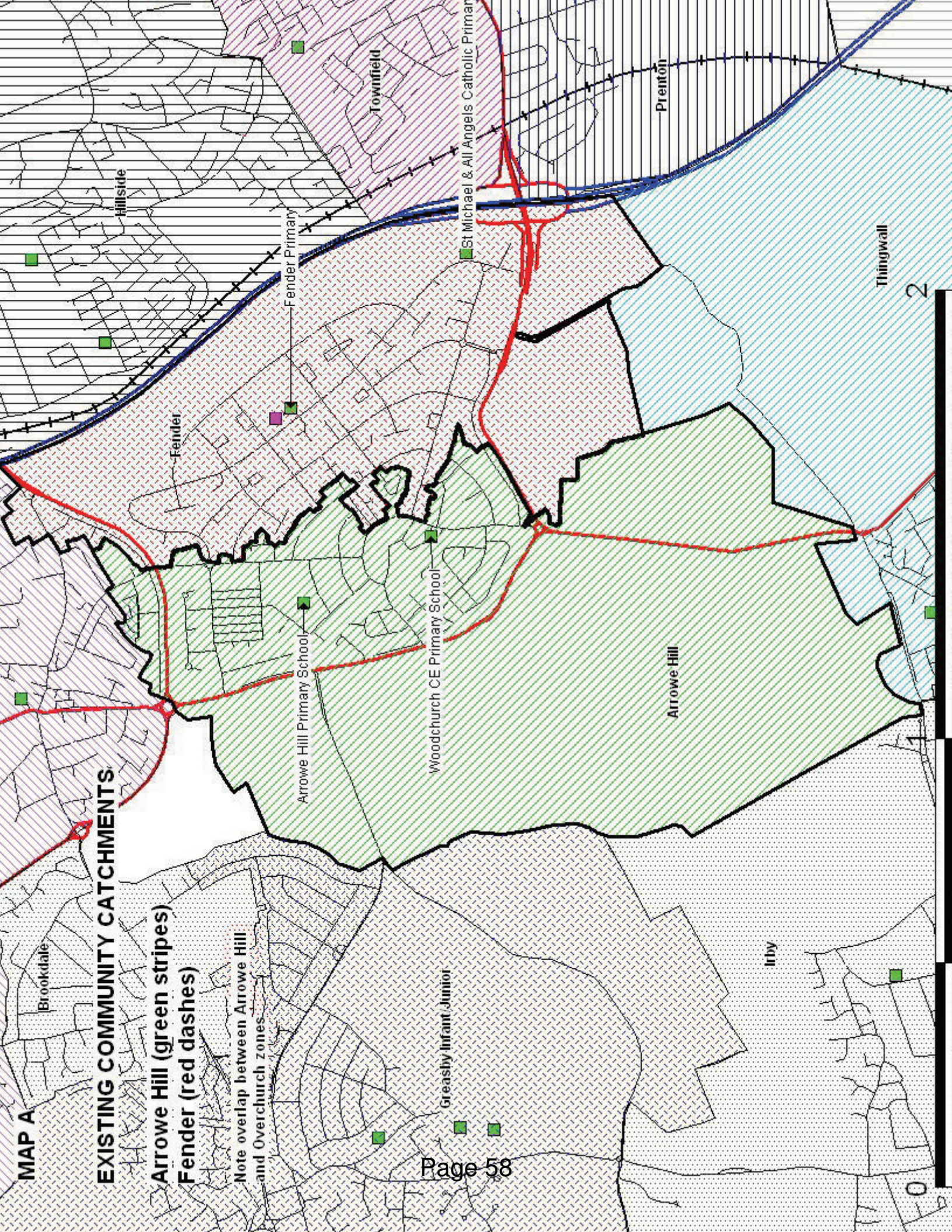


**EXISTING COMMUNITY CATCHMENTS**

**Arrowe Hill (green stripes)**

**Fender (red dashes)**

Note overlap between Arrowe Hill and Overchurch zones

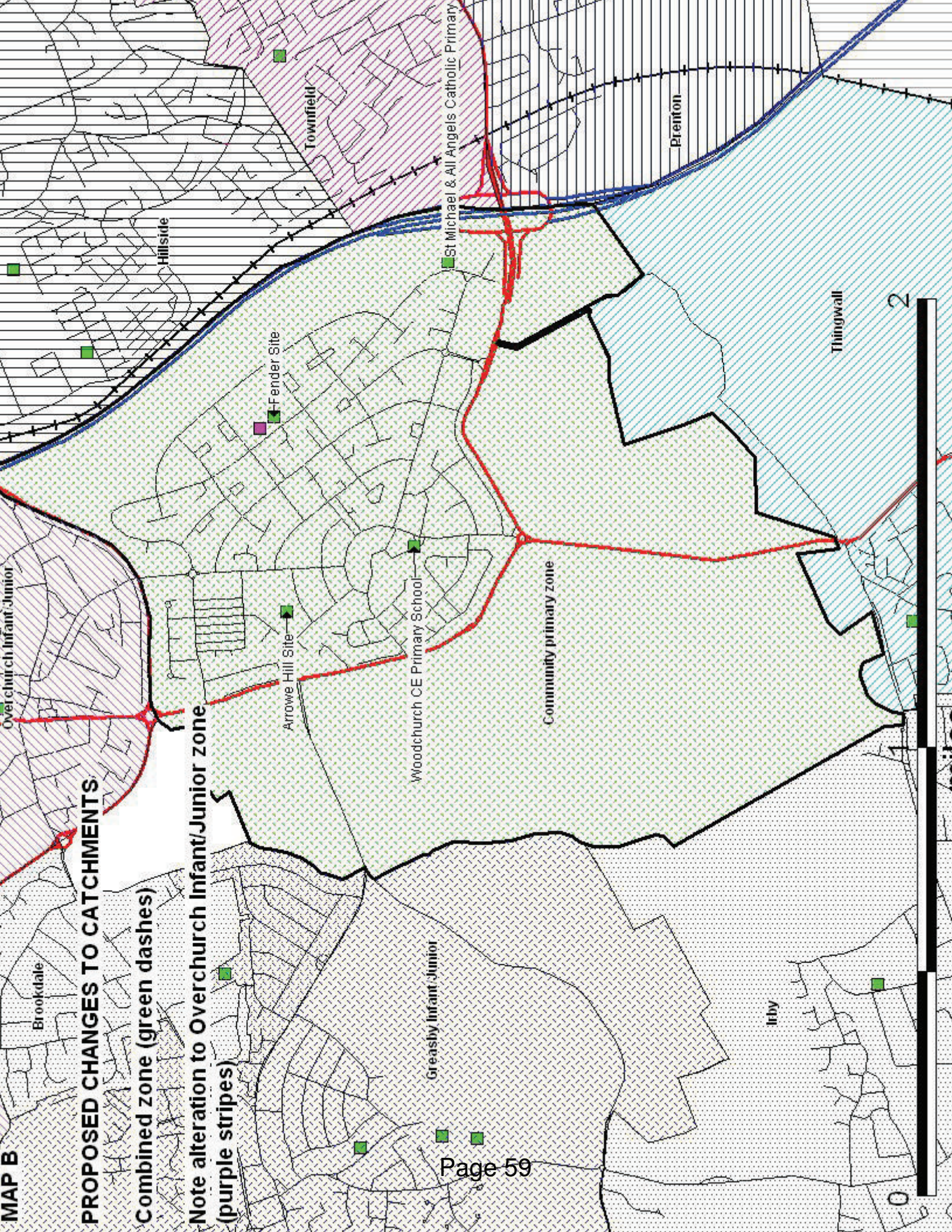




**PROPOSED CHANGES TO CATCHMENTS**

Combined zone (green dashes)

Note alteration to Overchurch Infant/Junior zone (purple stripes)





# Arrowe Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105052
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	308753
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael McIlroy HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms J Granell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss H Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Glebe Hey Road Woodchurch Wirral Merseyside CH49 8HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6785064
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and serves an area that experiences deprivation that is more than twice the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is over three times the average. Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

The school holds a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The school's strengths lie in the outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage and in the excellent personal development and well-being of its pupils. The care and support which learners receive is also very good.

The achievement of pupils is good. By the time pupils leave the school, results are consistently above average. Children enter the school with abilities in learning that are below that expected for their age group. They receive an excellent start to their education in the Foundation Stage and make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are currently making good progress, but this has not always been the case in recent years due to some discontinuity in staffing. Standards in this key stage in 2007 were broadly average but there are some weaknesses in provision for the more able pupils in reading and writing. Pupils' progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and standards have risen steadily over the last five years. The most recent assessments indicate that in 2007 overall standards were well above average.

The good progress made by pupils rests on a number of factors, including the very good personal development and well-being of pupils. Pupils enjoy school thoroughly. They particularly appreciate the many clubs and activities which school provides, some of which are thoughtfully aimed at enhancing their personal development and social skills. They have a very strong understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils' very good awareness of how to lead healthy lives is exemplified by their own decision to ban sweets in school. The school's strong emphasis on raising pupils' expectations of what they can achieve and how they should conduct themselves means that behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, despite the best efforts of the school.

The care guidance and support which pupils receive is good overall. The exceptional care and support provided by the school and other agencies strongly develop pupils' personal skills, reduce potential barriers to learning and enable pupils to focus on learning. Staff know their pupils well and as a result individual needs are well met. Very good support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils are given very good pastoral guidance but there are inconsistencies in the academic guidance which they receive.

The quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. A good curriculum is appropriately focused on developing pupils' basic skills, although provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably assisted by her deputy headteacher, provides clear direction for the school and has created a calm, caring and positive learning environment where expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Subject leadership is good overall. Governance is good. The school works hard to engage parents in their children's education and those who returned questionnaires are very supportive of the school's work. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is outstanding. Under the very good leadership of the Foundation Stage manager, provision is well organised and staff work as an effective team. Close liaison with parents and a nearby Children's Centre ensures that children are carefully and sensitively welcomed into the school and settle quickly.

Children experience a wide and rich variety of activities which are well matched to their needs and abilities in all the relevant areas of learning. The learning environment is bright, welcoming and well-resourced. Good opportunities are created for developing children's speaking and listening, mathematical understanding and independent learning. Children are given roles, such as that of the 'milk inspector' in order to develop their sense of responsibility. Very good teaching ensures that children make good progress and by the time they leave the Reception class most are working at the level typical for their age group. Learners' progress in each area of the curriculum is very carefully tracked and recorded. Consequently, staff have a clear view of children's strengths and weaknesses and of the next steps learners must take. There is a high level of care and support for children. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and appropriate support put in place.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve provision for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1 in reading and writing.
- Improve the consistency of the academic guidance which pupils receive.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school judges this area of its work to be satisfactory. Inspectors found it to be good overall. Since 2004, standards in Key Stage 2 have been above average and have improved year-on-year. The most recent assessments indicate that in 2007 overall standards were well above average. Pupils performed most strongly in science. The progress made by pupils in 2006 was well above average and provisional data suggests that in 2007 it has remained so.

The good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage has not always been sustained in Key Stage 1 in recent years and the overall standards attained by pupils have been inconsistent. This was due to some discontinuity in staffing. In 2005, standards were above average but in 2006 were well below. Provisional results indicate that pupils' attainment in 2007 improved and was broadly average. Pupils performed best in mathematics. Whilst some achieved the higher Level 3 in this subject, none achieved this level in writing or reading. Currently, pupils in this Key Stage are making good progress.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They feel safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Their strong understanding about how to stay safe is developed from their earliest days in school. For example, in the Reception class one child confidently explained the importance of wearing safety hats when working on building sites. Pupils' appreciation of the need for healthy lifestyles is reflected by the very good take up of sporting activities provided by the school. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to exercise positions of responsibility, such as office monitors, elected school councillors and as play-leaders. Older pupils regularly choose the music played in school assemblies. Pupils make the most of the many opportunities to make positive contributions to the local and wider community. They raise funds for charities active at home and abroad. They produced an anti-bullying leaflet which was distributed to local children and designed the winning poster in a local campaign against anti-social behaviour. Behaviour is good and pupils are courteous and helpful to visitors. Above average attainment



in numeracy and literacy and specific training for older pupils in financial literacy develops pupils' economic understanding well. Team working skills are well developed. For example, in one good literacy lesson pupils quickly and efficiently organised writing and speaking roles for each other in a collaborative writing exercise. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school works hard to improve punctuality and also attendance, which is satisfactory due to parental holidays taken in term time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Good relationships exist between pupils and adults and expectations of behaviour and what pupils can achieve are high. Careful explanations ensure that learners know what they must do. Skilful use of questioning encourages pupils to think carefully about their answers and is also used to assess learners' progress in lessons. Lesson planning is good and staff evaluate well what pupils have learned. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and skilled additional adults are well used, particularly to ensure that vulnerable pupils make good progress in their learning. Work is challenging as it is well matched to pupils' differing needs. Assessment data is used effectively to track the progress of pupils and to identify and target underachievement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They listen carefully to teachers and other pupils and work well together when asked to do so.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. It is focused appropriately on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and this has contributed to the steady improvement of results at Key Stage 2. Homework is aptly linked to work carried out in class. However, provision for ICT is not as well developed as it could be, partly due to recent building work. The school has appropriate plans to address this. The curriculum is enriched by a wide programme of visitors and educational visits. There is also a very broad range of extra-curricular activities such as judo, sailing and football. Some of these are specifically aimed at developing pupils' social and personal development. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn German and there are close links with a German school. An effective range of strategies are employed to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to develop their abilities, for example, through music clubs and competitions against other schools. A link with a local secondary school is effectively used to provide additional lessons for the more able pupils in mathematics.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The care and support which pupils receive are very good. Pupils are well supervised in the school's very supportive atmosphere. Risk assessments and child protection procedures are robust and there is regular monitoring of any accidents in school. Teachers know their pupils well and are strongly committed to both their academic and personal development. Pupils who join the school other than in the Reception class are made to feel welcome and settle quickly. Older pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils are well supported. Their needs are

identified early and prompt action ensures they make good progress in their learning. The pastoral guidance pupils receive is very good. Very good links with health and other agencies ensure that pupils receive strong and regular advice on how to stay safe and healthy. Older pupils receive appropriate guidance on growing up. 'Aspiration walls' and involvement in the 'Aim Higher' project encourage pupils to have high expectations of what they can achieve in later life. However, academic guidance is satisfactory. Not all pupils know their targets or the National Curriculum levels they are working at. Work is marked, but not all of it ensures that pupils know the next steps they must take in order to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school judges this aspect of its work to be good and inspectors agree. The senior leadership team, consisting of headteacher and deputy headteacher, leads and manages the school well and is focused on raising standards as well as promoting pupils' personal development. Together, they have created a welcoming, inclusive and supportive ethos in which learning can thrive. A good sense of teamwork permeates the school and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high.

Good use is made of assessment information to track pupils' progress and to target support, particularly at Key Stage 2. Statutory performance management procedures are usefully linked to raising standards. The school met and exceeded its challenging targets. The school improvement plan is well-focused on improvement. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is broadly accurate. Regular monitoring of the school's work is carried out. Resources are generally well used and careful thought is given to how initiatives will contribute to the school's improvement. Issues raised at the last inspection have been well addressed. Subject leadership is good overall. Managers of the core subjects monitor work in their areas and have drawn up action plans. The good leadership of the two coordinators for special educational needs ensures that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are addressed.

The school works hard to engage the support of parents and their views and those of pupils are regularly checked. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about the work of the school and provide both support and challenge for the headteacher.



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Arrowe Hill Primary School, Wirral, CH49 8HE

Thank you for being so kind and helpful when we inspected your school recently. I thought it would be good to write and tell you what we found. We judged your school to be a good school with a number of outstanding features. Some of the best things which we saw were:

- you really enjoy school and your behaviour is good
- you know how to stay safe and healthy
- you make a very good contribution to your local community
- you get a really good start to school in the Reception class
- you are very well cared for and supported by the staff
- your school is well led and you are well taught
- you have a very wide range of clubs and activities to take part in.

To make your school even better, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make some changes. These are:

- to help some of you in Key Stage 1 to do better in reading and writing
- to improve marking so that all of you know what it is you have to do to get better at your work.

Once again, many thanks for being so helpful and polite when we visited your school.



# Fender Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105039
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	287102
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Price Grimshaw

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	177
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs G Curry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Thelma Wiltshire
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	New Hey Road Woodchurch Wirral Merseyside CH49 8HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6770425
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6770425

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school that serves an area of significant social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's population is mainly White British, with very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Fender Primary School is a good school with several outstanding features. Improvements over the last three years can be seen in the rising trend in pupils' achievement and standards. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the school is continuing to improve all aspects of its work. This is an exceptionally caring school, where the many complex and varied needs of the pupils are successfully met through the work of teachers and support staff together with outside agencies. High expectations encourage pupils to develop a desire to achieve: 'our teachers tell us we can do really well, and we want to work hard' is a view shared by the majority of pupils.

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are particularly low in language and communication. As a result of good quality provision they progress well during this year, especially in the development of their early communication skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1. Although data from 2006 indicated a dip in standards at the end of Year 2, the school has now begun to address this. Systems for tracking progress have been improved so that any underachievement can be addressed by providing additional tailored support for those pupils who need it. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the national average, pupils make good progress overall. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well due to the high quality support provided and a number of these pupils make outstanding progress in relation to their needs and ability.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles and although bullying is rare, they are confident that staff will deal with any incidents effectively. Behaviour is good, both in classrooms and around the school. Positive attitudes towards learning are evident across the school and there is much emphasis on the development of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). This, combined with successful work on economic awareness, helps to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work. Pupils clearly articulate their future plans, which show that they are ambitious and highly motivated.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typically, lessons include a variety of interesting activities that successfully engage and inspire pupils. Pupils are praised for their efforts and encouraged to attempt tasks with confidence: they respond to this enthusiastically. Effective use of interactive whiteboards helps to enhance learning and maintain a brisk pace, which in turn supports pupils' good behaviour in the classroom. A minority of lessons are satisfactory rather than good as the pace is occasionally too slow and there is too much emphasis on teacher-led activities rather than independent learning.

The recent move to a theme-based curriculum is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning, although this initiative is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Systems for pastoral care are outstanding. The school works very effectively in partnership with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. All staff show a very high level of commitment to the welfare of the pupils and the great majority of parents are delighted with the school's work.

Very good leadership and management have helped to bring about the significant improvements since the last inspection. Rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision across the school inform good quality action planning, which clearly and accurately identifies priorities for future development. Although the school has a good understanding of its strengths

and weaknesses, it has been too modest in evaluating most aspects of the provision. The school uses resources well in order to achieve good value for money and the capacity for further improvement is also good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that it is all of at least good quality.
- Ensure that recent improvements to the curriculum are fully embedded across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well because of good quality teaching and close monitoring of their performance. Standards have improved steadily over the past three years and current evidence indicates further improvement is taking place. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is well below that expected for their age. Good quality care and teaching in the Foundation Stage help children to settle in to school life quickly and become confident learners. Although standards on entry to Year 1 are below national expectations, given the children's low starting point this represents good progress. The slight dip in the 2006 test results is being successfully tackled through additional support for pupils. As a consequence, current evidence shows that achievement for Key Stage 1 pupils is improving. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2 due to good quality teaching, including a shared focus on 'assessment for learning'. Although pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 are below those expected for their age, the improving trend shows that the school is gradually closing the gap and moving towards the national average. This reflects the importance placed on high expectations for all pupils, which is a cornerstone of the school's work.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures. Spiritual development is enhanced through uplifting assemblies. The school's motto, 'Learn to Live', is acted upon so that pupils are nurtured and valued as individuals: high self-esteem is promoted and all are encouraged to reach the highest standards they are capable of. Pupils treat visitors very well. They are polite and well behaved and very keen to describe their enjoyment of school life. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through a comprehensive programme of physical education each week combined with a healthy diet in school. The school has achieved considerable success in encouraging parents and carers to provide healthy packed lunches and the school council has been very active in improving the food choices in the dining room. School staff, in partnership with outside agencies, have worked hard to improve attendance, which is now close to the national average. Relationships with the community are excellent and pupils are keen and generous fund-raisers both locally and internationally. Parents hold the school in high regard.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident in all lessons. Teachers have high expectations and use praise and encouragement very effectively to build pupils' confidence.

As a consequence, pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn: several expressed the view that 'It's always good to have a go, even if you don't get it right first time!' Most lessons include a good variety of activities that help to keep pupils on task. However, in a small minority of lessons the pace is not sufficiently brisk and teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to learn independently. Support staff are deployed well and help to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive: teachers' written comments make clear to pupils what they need to do next.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has recently started to move towards a thematic approach to the curriculum, with much emphasis on creativity. There is already firm evidence that this new method is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff are encouraged by the initiative and welcome the opportunity to explore how certain concepts and skills may be taught, whilst pupils are inspired by the imaginative approach and clearly enjoy their learning as a result. For example, one group of pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of a variety of subjects through a topic on 'Circus', which included a very popular and enjoyable workshop on circus skills. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy their Spanish lessons, led by specialist teachers from a local secondary school. The curriculum is enhanced through a range of activities, including after school clubs and workshops, some of which are attended by parents. Enrichment activities include residential trips and activities led by visitors: for example, some particularly good work has been carried out in conjunction with a local artist, resulting in very high quality displays of art work. These opportunities contribute a great deal to pupils' personal development and self-esteem.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

All staff are extremely committed to the welfare of their pupils and devote a great deal of time and effort to their care and support. The school works very closely with outside agencies, including social workers and health professionals, and the work carried out through this partnership is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. A range of strategies, including additional support and booster classes for identified pupils, ensures that the needs of all are very effectively met. Attention to detail in the planning of teaching and monitoring of pupils' work reflects a whole school commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners. As a result pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate support is organised. This helps them to make good progress, matching that of their classmates. Looked-after children make excellent progress both in their academic performance and personal development. The school's very good use of data on pupils' progress enables staff to provide high quality academic guidance: as a result, pupils are fully aware of individual targets for their future development. Links with the local high school are excellent and pupils are well prepared to move on.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The strong dedication of leaders and managers at all levels has been a major factor in bringing about the improvements evident in the school's work over recent years. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has been fundamental in driving improvement, through a very



thorough and rigorous process of monitoring, evaluation and action planning. All staff take their responsibilities seriously and carry out their roles with great care. Middle managers, some of whom are relatively new to their role, are having an increasing influence on bringing about improvements in their subjects. A well-established system of performance management helps to focus teachers on raising standards and achievement as well as identifying professional development needs, which are then addressed through a range of training activities. The whole of the school workforce is managed well and support staff are included in performance management arrangements. Governance is good: members of the governing body assist school leaders by discussing issues in detail and are fully committed to all aspects of the school's work, in particular the role of the school within the local community.



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you learn.

We think that Fender Primary is a good school with some excellent features. You told us that your teachers are always praising you and encouraging you to 'have a go', and we saw this in your lessons. You told us that your teachers try to make the lessons fun and exciting and we were impressed that so many of you said that mathematics was your favourite subject! We can see that because you are working hard in mathematics your test results are getting better all the time. The artwork around school was absolutely lovely: we enjoyed hearing about your work with the local artist and you are lucky to have the beautiful butterfly sculpture in the playground. We attended one of your assemblies and enjoyed it very much. You have done so well in raising money for the children of Chernobyl and also for the local charity.

One of the best things about your school is that it is such a caring place. All the staff want you to feel happy and settled so that you learn well. The teachers, support staff and the school nurse all work very well together to make sure you are very well cared for in school. You told us that there is always someone to talk to, and it is also good that you care for each other so well.

We know that some of you have been doing some work based on themes such as 'chocolate' and 'treasure'. The circus workshop looked like great fun, and you told us how much you enjoyed it! We were impressed with the quality of work you had produced on these themes and we have asked the school to consider how they might extend this type of work across the whole school. We have also suggested that the staff think about how they can make all of your lessons as good as the very best.

One of the things we enjoyed the most during our time in your school was hearing about your ambitions for the future. It is fantastic that you want to work hard so that you can follow the career of your choice. Your headteacher and all the staff are there to help you achieve this: of course, you have to do your bit by continuing to 'have a go' and taking on board your teachers' advice on how to improve your work even more!

# Woodchurch CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105067
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	287110
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Martin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	217
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Alison Cretney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brian McGregor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane Woodchurch Wirral Merseyside CH49 7LS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6774788
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6779306



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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school, which has strong links with the local church and largely serves the surrounding housing estate. Some pupils travel from further afield to this popular, oversubscribed school. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is twice the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a very small proportion of them speaking English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is below that expected nationally. The headteacher has been in post since January 2006 and the deputy headteacher since only January 2007. The school holds the ArtsMark and ActiveMark gold awards and has the Healthy Schools bronze award for being a health-promoting school.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that it is a good school. A new leadership team has made a good start to improving the school's work. Pupils achieve well and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. When they enter the Reception class, the children's skills are generally below those expected for their age. Good provision in the Foundation Stage means that the children achieve well. Most of them reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6 teaching and learning are good overall and pupils continue to achieve well, so that by the end of Years 2 and 6 they reach standards similar to the national averages in reading, writing, aspects of mathematics and science. The skills of problem solving in mathematics are, however, lower than average, leading to overall standards in mathematics lower than in other subjects. Pupils' progress in learning how to apply mathematical knowledge to solve problems is inconsistent because learning targets, especially for more able pupils, are not challenging enough. Where targets are well defined, such as in Year 6, expectations are higher and pupils make better progress.

The school has a good curriculum which meets pupils' interests well. Recent work, based around themes, makes the curriculum more accessible and 'friendly' to pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy learning this way because lessons are more interesting. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. There are very evident strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which add great value to their personal development. Pupils behave well and enjoy school. They are exceptionally courteous and polite. The care of pupils is good overall, with exceptional pastoral care being a reflection of the school's very good atmosphere. Parents say they are pleased with the high quality of care shown for their children. Teaching and learning overall are good. However, academic guidance for pupils, such as in teachers' comments and marking, does not always sufficiently inform them how to improve.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, in the early days of establishing a new approach to leading the school, show good qualities of leadership in their vision and aspirations. However, although the skills of middle leaders are developing well, they do not yet have a detailed enough knowledge of pupils' achievement. Good systems have been set in place to improve team leadership and the responsibility of governors to hold the school to account. Together with strong local and community partnerships, this all gives the school good capacity to improve. Resources are managed and used well and, overall, the school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve use and application of pupils' number skills in practical and problem-solving situations to raise the standards of the more able pupils in mathematics.
- Improve the quality and reliability of marking, feedback to pupils and target setting to ensure that progress is consistently good in all classes.
- Increase accountability of middle leaders for checking that pupils' achievement is improving.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

On entry to the Foundation Stage there is a wide range of attainment but, overall, children's skills on entry are below those expected for their age. In the Reception class, good emphasis on the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number enables the children to

progress well enough for many of them, though not all, to reach the early goals for their learning. Those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others. This represents good achievement. This good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils generally reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are close to the average found nationally. However, standards in mathematics are lower than in the other subjects. This is because pupils, particularly the more able, are not consistently achieving as well as they should in applying their knowledge to solving problems. Where challenges are good, such as in Year 6, pupils' capabilities are reflected in the better rate of progress. Individual differences between year groups result in some fluctuation in standards from year to year, but pupils' good achievement is generally sustained. The progress of pupils currently in Year 6, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, shows that they are on course to achieve the realistic targets set for them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are exceptionally polite and friendly with each other and very confident and courteous when talking to adults. They have positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with their teachers. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in the school's improving attendance figures, presently a little above the national average. Pupils have a clear sense of moral and social responsibility, and this enables them to contribute well to the life of the school. For example, very good work by the Year 6 play leaders helps younger children to learn to play fairly at breaktimes, adding value to the quality of relationships between pupils throughout the school. Pupils contribute well to the well-being of their wider community through fundraising for charities.

Representatives of the school council reported how much they enjoy helping the school. They are proud of the success of their work, for instance to improve school meals and to persuade adults to invest in a cycle shelter. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development has very evident strengths, provided through thought-provoking assemblies and a well structured personal, social and health education programme. Pupils know the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and are aware of the benefits of exercise and good nutrition, as evidenced in the school's bronze award for being a health-promoting school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is consistently good, adding a high level of value to the children's learning. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is mainly good but, where it is satisfactory, expectations are not as high as they could be because assessment is not used well enough to set challenging learning targets. This is especially the case for more able pupils in mathematics. While the teaching and learning of number skills is good, the use of these skills for solving problems is weaker, leading to inconsistent progress in pupils' ability to use their mathematical knowledge and understanding in practical situations. Teachers' comments and the quality of marking are not always sufficient to help pupils improve. Progress is more rapid where marking and feedback to pupils are used well, such as in Year 6. This is because consistently good academic guidance raises the levels of challenge and expectation. Pupils then catch up to some extent, but not enough to enable them to achieve standards as good, for those in reading and writing.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The curriculum exceeds current requirements with Spanish being taught throughout the school. Pupils say they enjoy this and other opportunities to make their learning interesting. The school taps into valuable local and community partnerships to add variety to the curriculum and to meet pupils' individual interests. These include a sports partnership with the local high school to enable high school staff to teach physical education skills to pupils in Years 5 and 6, and gardening for Year 2 pupils, who work with a horticulturalist to grow vegetables in soil beds that they have helped to build and prepare. There are examples of good quality artwork on display. The school has made a good start on developing a curriculum based on learning themes; feedback from pupils is very positive. 'This is much better than having a book for each subject and I learn more,' explained a Year 5 pupil after a lesson on night and day which developed skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy and science.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Exceptionally good pastoral care is a noticeable strength of the school. Pupils feel safe and very well supported. They say that they know who to turn to for help if they are anxious or worried. When discussing a recent anti-bullying week, one Year 3 pupil said, 'There are no bullies at our school.' The school's very caring atmosphere is much appreciated by parents. They have faith and trust in the staff, knowing that their children are very well cared for, with someone pupils can seek out for advice and support if they are worried or anxious. The required arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Improved pupil tracking arrangements help to identify pupils who need extra support in order to do their best. At present, however, academic guidance for pupils is inconsistent. The use of marking and the process of setting targets to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve varies between classes. Very strong links with the local high school for sport and academic development aid pupils' transition to their next school. Year 6 pupils say that they feel well prepared for this move.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and the recently appointed but experienced deputy headteacher is good. Their skills and expertise complement each other well. The appointment of a deputy headteacher has restored the leadership team to full strength. Particular impact is seen in the school's priorities for moving forward with introducing learning based on themed lessons, which pupils enjoy, and assessment for learning to set more challenging targets. Much evidence of supportive teamwork shows that staff morale is very good. The headteacher has implemented a number of key improvements. The clear vision for the school's improvement is shared effectively with all relevant groups. The headteacher has defined leadership roles clearly and shared them among staff. Key leaders are, therefore, empowered to steer improvements, but this work is at an early stage of development. While middle leaders have begun to make an impact by leading the development of their subjects, they do not yet monitor pupils' progress and standards in sufficient detail. Good use is made, however, of data on pupils' progress to identify areas for improvement. The detailed, three-year school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities for development. The headteacher

and governors are responsive to the views of parents' and pupils'. For example, the school's format for reporting to parents has been improved as a result of parental feedback. Governors are very supportive. They know the school well and play their part in helping to shape its direction, but are not critical enough in holding the school to account for its performance. The school gives good value for money because the budget is managed carefully to assist in raising standards and improving provision in a purposeful learning environment.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to just below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

First of all, thank you very much for the welcome that you gave Mrs Flitcroft and me when we visited Woodchurch Church of England Primary School. You were very friendly and helpful. We were very impressed with how polite and well behaved you all are. We enjoyed our visit and it didn't take us long to realise that you enjoy learning very much. Thank you for all the discussions we had that helped us to find out how well your school works. You told me that you think you have a good school. I am sure that you will be pleased to know that we agree with you!

These are the things that we were most impressed by.

- Your good behaviour and your friendship and care towards each other.
- Your interest in the school's activities and your eagerness to learn. This means that you learn well and are keen to try your best to reach the standards expected of you - well done!
- The good care that your school gives you. You told us that you appreciate how well your school cares for you, especially when you have any worries, upsets or concerns.

There are just three things that we would like your school to do better.

- To improve your mathematical skills to help you to solve problems.
- Your teachers could improve the ways they mark your work and tell you what you need to do to improve it.
- How your teachers check that you are doing your best in all subjects could be improved.

Mrs Flitcroft and I would like to send you our best wishes for the future. We hope that you all carry on trying your best and enjoying learning.

# Overchurch Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105043
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	308750
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eithne Proffitt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	294
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andre Baird
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Chambers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Moreton Road Upton Wirral Merseyside CH49 4NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6773335
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6773335

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Overchurch Infant school is larger than average size. The majority of pupils attend from the immediate residential area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and within the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. Special provision is made to welcome pupils with additional medical and physical needs.

The school has gained the Artsmark Gold, Activemark, the National Healthy Schools Award, Eco Status and the International Schools Intermediate Award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Overchurch Infants is a good school with some outstanding features. This is because it aims high for its pupils, knows itself exceptionally well, and takes exceptional care of its pupils. Pupils place their trust in the adults in school and are developing into mature young people with a real sense of responsibility. The well-being and academic achievement of pupils is never off the headteacher's agenda and, with the support of a strong management system and perceptive governance, the school is successfully being driven forward after a short period of instability at leadership level. Through this time, there was a decline in standards to broadly average and also some pockets of underachievement, especially among the boys. The school is now rapidly recouping features of the outstanding achievement of the recent past and boys are now making notable strides in their learning.

Very close links between school and home and with other settings ensure that children's first days in Nursery or Reception are settled and happy times. These children come to school with skills that are broadly similar to children of their age. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage because of the wide range of learning experiences provided for them. By the end of Reception, children are working securely within the levels expected of them. This is especially so in their personal and social development. Pupils continue to make this good progress across Years 1 and 2. Current standards in Key Stage 1 indicate that standards are rising and are generally above average. Boys are now performing much better but the more able pupils could achieve at a better rate. Evidence from the school's outstanding tracking systems shows clearly that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Their confidence and social awareness develops excellently in their time in the school. They play very well together, behave exceptionally well and work hard. They care particularly about each other, their school, their community and the world in which they live. Attendance at school is satisfactory overall. The school is active in working with parents to improve this but some parents still insist on taking family holidays during term time.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some that is outstanding. Teachers ensure that lessons capture pupils' interests and encourage them to be effective learners. In some lessons, however, teachers do not expect enough of the more able pupils and consequently they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The curriculum focuses on the development of pupils' skills and is delivered through a wide variety of topics that are specifically planned to interest all pupils. Learning is suitably enhanced through an array of visiting specialists. Pupils' academic guidance is outstanding and, for such young children, they have an unusually clear understanding of their targets and how to achieve them. The drive, determination and direction of the headteacher have assured that all staff are suitably focused and accountable for pupils' progress. This effective school provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

When they first come to Overchurch Infants, the majority of children have generally acquired skills at a level expected for children of their age, although an increasing number are experiencing some speech and language difficulties. Induction to both Nursery and Reception is meticulously

planned to ensure that children, from the first moment, feel happy and secure. The teamwork of the Foundation Stage staff is the key to the provision's success. The children experience consistently good and outstanding teaching. Staff are not afraid to 'think outside the box' and take risks to provide exciting and engaging learning experiences. As a result, children have fun and do well in their learning. Planning is collaborative and increasingly focused on children's different needs and interests. Assessment of how children are progressing is firmly rooted in observations and this valuable information informs the next steps for the provision. Staff are creative in how they provide opportunities both indoor and outdoor that will capture and nurture all children, successfully supporting the whole-school target of engaging boys in their learning. When children leave the Foundation Stage, they are working securely within the levels expected for children of their age and are therefore well equipped for their next stage of learning. Comments such as 'My child's confidence has grown and their creativity has been developed,' typify parents' appreciation of the school. The setting is well led and managed with a shared vision of successful early years education.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the level of challenge for the more able pupils in all lessons.
- Work with parents to raise levels of attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Building effectively on the good start children make in the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are generally above average by the end of Year 2. In recent year, pupils made very good progress to reach standards by the end of Key Stage 1 that were significantly above national figures. In 2007, as a consequence of the instability in leadership, standards dipped. The biggest impact was felt in pupils' achievement in writing with boys underachieving in all subjects. An immediate, resolute refocus on standards, ensured that the school quickly got back on track. Current standards are above average with boys performing particularly well. Some of the more able pupils, however, do not achieve as well as they can because in some classes expectations are not high enough and these pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging activities. School tracking procedures are impressive and give clear messages about pupils' progress. The monitoring of individual pupils is very finely tuned and currently shows accelerated progress for the majority of pupils across the school. This better picture of achievement is beginning to have a significant impact on current standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils with additional medical and physical needs are given good support and help. In this inclusive school these pupils thrive and make good progress alongside their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is at the core of the school's work and contributes overwhelmingly to pupils' confidence and achievement. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is also outstanding. The school's award of Eco Status confirms its commitment to eco issues to the whole school and the wider community. Pupils express their spiritual development in a number of ways, for example in the assembly led by representatives from the church spirituality was tangible in pupils' singing and the awe in which they listened to and reflected on the story of Moses and Miriam. The pupils' acceptance of the differences

that exist among people around them and across the wider world supports their cultural development extremely well and lays the foundations for life in our culturally diverse society. 'The standards of cultural awareness are impressive,' is a reflection of the large number of positive parental views. From an early age, pupils are aware of healthy lifestyle choices and how to stay safe, including knowing some of the dangers of internet use. They willingly take on responsibilities, for example through the school council, the members of which speak with pride about their fundraising for the needy in other parts of the world. The Planet Patrollers also appreciate the important role they have in school - their distinctive hats add to their feeling of belonging to this important group! In lessons, even the very youngest pupils are beginning to show skills of perseverance, persistence and collaboration, preparing them well for their future.

Attendance at school is satisfactory overall. However, detailed school analysis shows significant numbers of pupils whose attendance is above and well above average. This analysis also highlights the large number of parents who insist on taking family holidays during term time. The school works hard to remind parents of the need to take holidays out of term time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning is good overall with some that is outstanding. All teachers have a strong commitment to capturing pupils' interests, encouraging eager learners and personalised learning. In outstanding lessons, teachers capitalise fully on all pupils' potential, leading to rapid progress. Crystal clear explanations, quick-fire pace, active learning, well targeted and challenging questioning and a strong inclusive ethos prompt pupils to think hard and stretch themselves to achieve the objectives set for them. For example, in one lesson the teacher was able to build on an educational visit to Dunham Massey Hall and pupils acted as detectives to 'sift' evidence on how holidays have changed over a hundred years. Pupils were engrossed in old photographs and demonstrated teamwork and collaboration, with the more able pupils meeting their own challenging objectives and also supporting other pupils to achieve theirs. In some lessons, however, insufficiently high expectations of the more able pupils means that they do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Teaching assistants play an active role in lessons, providing high quality, well planned support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This contributes well to the good progress they make. Outstanding use is made of assessment on a day-to-day basis and also to check on the pupils' progress towards their targets. School leaders are working hard to ensure that all teaching is of the highest standard possible with some teachers training to be 'coaches' to share the best teaching and learning provision across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy topics that cross subject boundaries and the Artsmark Gold, Activemark, eco and Healthy Schools awards and Intermediate International School status all add to the breadth of high quality experiences that pupils receive. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to develop key skills. It is effectively integrated into lessons. Investigative and problem-solving techniques and the inclusion of speaking and listening activities also feature strongly, preparing pupils well for future phases in their school life. In some lessons however,

activities are not always planned to sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. Writing is very well promoted through the 'Big Write' and through collaboration with creative partnerships. While a single modern foreign language is not yet a strong feature of school life, pupils are introduced to a variety of languages through, for example, registration in French and Maori. Visiting artists, Junior Chef Week, arts weeks, extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school and a wealth of multicultural activities, alongside targeted activities to improve boys' writing, have all helped to raise standards across the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This is a truly inclusive school where the pastoral care and support for all pupils, including those with severe medical and physical needs, is outstanding. All statutory requirements and procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils are in place and robustly applied. All staff know individual pupils very well and work very hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in school. 'It's great here, I love it!' typifies the view of many pupils. This very effective pastoral support ensures that all pupils, and especially the most vulnerable, have someone with whom they can share any worries or go to when they need time to reflect. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported through individual education plans that set out clearly how their needs should be met. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are outstanding from the moment children start at the school and underpin the pupils' outstanding personal development and good academic achievement. Academic guidance is outstanding. Very detailed, regular checks ensure that no child slips through the net. Teachers make exceptional use of this information and their knowledge of pupils to set individual targets to guide their future learning. Even the youngest of children know these targets very well and are clear about what they need to do to achieve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Since her return from secondment, the tenacious leadership of the headteacher has been responsible for a thorough review of expectation and rigour in teaching and learning. The recent decline in standards was viewed as unacceptable. With renewed vigour and with the full support of the leadership team and staff, a culture of accountability has been re-established. This now permeates the school and is the driving force for improvement. Structures for providing leadership and management at different levels have been clarified and middle managers play a full and active role in helping to raise standards and achievement in all subjects. The impressive systems and detailed information gathered on pupils' progress, alongside assessment data from class teachers, assure corporate responsibility for standards and achievement. School self-evaluation is accurately fed by a wide range of internal and external contributions. Governors play a major part in the work of the school, providing a good level of both challenge and dedicated support. Governors, led by a dynamic chair, are firmly focused on the key priority to raise standards and achievement even further. Given pupils' good progress, the headteacher's purposeful leadership, her powerful vision for the future of the school, and the governors and staff's high expectations of what pupils can achieve, the school has the commitment and good capacity to improve further.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Overchurch Infant School, Wirral, CH49 4NS

Thank you very much for welcoming us in such a friendly manner to your school. We enjoyed our visit very much and agree with you that Overchurch Infants is a good school. We thought many of the things about your school were good and we would love to share with you those that particularly pleased us.

- You are really enthusiastic about learning and you work hard.
- You are helpful and very considerate of other people's needs.
- You make good progress and many of you achieve well by the end of Year 2.
- Your teachers organise your learning in exciting ways that also make it fun. They also use ICT very well and so do you!
- Staff take good care of you and, through your targets, help you to understand clearly how to make your work even better.
- Your headteacher is extremely good at working out what improvements are needed and helping all the staff to put them into practice.

This is what we have asked the school to do next to make it even better.

- Make sure that all your teachers ensure that those of you who find your work easy are always challenged to do your best in all lessons.
- Work with your parents to make sure that they bring you to school every day.

You can help your school too by continuing to enjoy finding out about and doing new things and by working really hard.



# Overchurch Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105056  
**LEA** Wirral  
**Inspection number** 277283  
**Inspection dates** 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Michael McIlroy HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Moreton Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Upton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Wirral, Merseyside CH49 4NS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6774150
<b>Number on roll</b>	395	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 5220518
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr P Elliot
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Sumner

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7 to 11	7 February 2006 - 8 February 2006	277283

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Overchurch Junior School is situated in Upton, a suburb on the Wirral. The school is larger than average. About a quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic origin or have English as a second language. Four pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has a few pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils join the school from the neighbouring infant school. On entry, the skills and knowledge of pupils are above average. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Overchurch Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has a number of good features.

Pupils enter the school with standards in learning that are above average. By Year 6, standards achieved remain just above average. This is because the progress pupils make in the school is satisfactory. In the past, the school enjoyed a sustained period of higher levels of pupil achievement, under the leadership of the current headteacher. Since his secondment to another post in 2003/04, the school has lost some momentum and pupils' progress has slowed.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He has begun to remedy the weaknesses and under his leadership the school is well placed to move forward again. Middle management is satisfactory but some aspects of subject leadership are underdeveloped. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are not rigorous enough. The use of outcomes from these in planning for improvement requires development. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

The personal development of pupils is good and the school promotes this well. Pupils are well behaved and willing to learn. Attendance is good and learners enjoy their education. The care and support that pupils receive are also good.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of learners. Teaching is satisfactory overall but assessment is not used effectively enough to ensure that work is matched to the different abilities of learners. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and most other pupils make satisfactory progress. Some more able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Make monitoring and evaluation more robust and use the outcomes more effectively in strategic planning.
- Make more effective use of assessment information to inform lesson planning and improve the challenge presented to all pupils, particularly the more able.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement by pupils is satisfactory. They enter the school with levels of attainment in learning that are above average for children of their age. By the time they leave the school, their level of attainment is still above average overall. This represents satisfactory progress.

At the time of the last inspection, the progress made by pupils in their learning was very good. In recent years, however, this has slowed. Over the last three years it was broadly satisfactory. In the 2005 national tests, the achievement of pupils improved in science but dipped in mathematics. In English, fewer of the more able pupils gained the higher Level 5 due to weaknesses in writing. Consequently, the school did not meet all of its targets in 2005.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. More able pupils do not make as much progress as they could, particularly in English. This is because some of their work is not matched to their abilities and because the pace of learning in some lessons is not fast enough.

The school is aware of these weaknesses and is beginning to remedy them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They enjoy being at school as shown by their above average attendance and participation in extra-curricular activities. Pupils cooperate well with each other and adults, and most work hard. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Attitudes to learning are positive, although occasionally chatter spoils the concentration of others. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and are cheerful, polite and helpful. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship. Pupils are pleased that their views are acted upon; for example, their requests that the toilets be improved and for a quiet area on the playground have been met.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Lessons in personal and social education help pupils to reflect on issues and develop a sense of right and wrong. Their self-esteem is developed through their involvement in enrichment activities and the celebration of their achievements in assemblies. They gain a knowledge and understanding of world religions and different cultures through lessons. Close attention is given to the development of basic skills and pupils learn to work well independently and collaboratively. These factors are valuable in securing their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school judges teaching to be good but inspectors found it to be satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teaching was lively, interesting and learning proceeded at a good pace. Teachers had high expectations of behaviour, the most able pupils were stretched and learning was enriched by a variety of exciting activities. In one good

science lesson, for example, pupils enthusiastically played an exciting revision quiz prior

to their main learning activity.

Weaknesses in the satisfactory teaching included slow pace, activities that did not hold

pupils' attention, and a lack of challenge for more able pupils. Work was not always well

matched to the ability of pupils.

When lessons were not stimulating or well structured enough, the rate of learning was slower, but the good personal development of pupils meant that almost all pupils were well behaved. Skilled teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but are not used effectively enough to identify underachievement and improve the pupils' progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. It meets the needs of most groups of pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, it does not always meet the needs of the more able pupils. Close attention is paid to developing the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A good start has been made to the linking of subjects in a cross-curricular manner in order to make learning more relevant. An emphasis on the arts on special curriculum days and themed weeks extend the creative opportunities presented to pupils. The impact of these is visible in the outstanding artwork on display. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich learning. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a residential visit, which boosts their academic and social development well. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available, including sports, recorders, chess and choir. The school has its own orchestra. Careful attention is given to developing awareness of the need to exercise regularly, to stay healthy, and to avoid the temptations and risks that they may face as they get older.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and there are good procedures for health and safety. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school, trust staff and know where to turn for help. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in activities. They have clear individual educational plans, and parents and outside agencies are fully consulted. Procedures for tracking the progress of pupils and analysing what they need to do next are inconsistent. There are pockets of good practice which need to be shared throughout the school. Academic targets for more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenging.

The great majority of parents are supportive of the school and most consider that their children are extremely well cared for. Child protection procedures are in place. Staff praise pupils for their positive attitudes to work, for their politeness and the care and consideration they show to others. In this way, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and later life. Year 6 pupils are adequately prepared for secondary education. They visit local high schools for lessons. Specialist teachers from these schools visit to give taster lessons in subjects ranging from design technology to physical education.

The school encourages pupils to embrace healthy lifestyles. There are healthy options offered at lunchtime. On Tuesdays, the Parent Council sells toast at playtime and on 'Fruity Fridays' pupils can purchase fruit.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school judges the quality of leadership and management to be good. Inspectors found it to be satisfactory.

The headteacher has led the school successfully for many years. He has successfully fostered the good personal development of pupils which has created the basis for good

learning. Since his temporary secondment, however, the school has lost some momentum. While standards overall remain above national averages, they have declined from their previously high level. This is because the rate of progress made by the pupils has slowed.

The school's self-evaluation is sound. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and of where it needs to improve. He has identified key weaknesses and begun to remedy them. His good track record over many years and some improvements since the last inspection, such as the introduction of procedures to track pupils' progress, demonstrate that the school under his leadership has the capacity to improve.

Subject leaders and other postholders provide satisfactory leadership and management in their areas of responsibility. They monitor planning and have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas. Some aspects of subject leadership, however, are underdeveloped. There is a lack of consistency in the application of whole-school

policies. The monitoring and evaluation of subjects are not sufficiently rigorous to enable

issues that affect pupils' progress to be identified at an early stage and tackled effectively. The school is inclusive. Parents and pupils are consulted about developments. Positive suggestions, such as the creation of a chess club, have been adopted.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher. They are

informed about the work of the school but do not always provide enough challenge to its

leadership. The school provides satisfactory value for money.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when we inspected your school recently. I am writing to let you know some of the things we saw during our visit.

Some of the best things we saw at your school were:

- your behaviour is good and you are polite and kind to each other and to visitors
- you are well looked after by your teachers and other adults
- you enjoy your school and know how to live healthily and stay safe
- the wide range of sports and clubs that you can participate in
- your art and display work - much of this is outstanding.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make your school even better. We would like the school to:

- carry out more visits to classes to see that all of you are learning well and to see how things can be made even better for you
- check that the work you receive is hard enough for you
- make your lessons more interesting for you by speeding up the activities you do and by adding greater variety to what you do in class.

Once again, many thanks for your help and politeness when we visited your school.





Overchurch Infant School

St Joseph's Catholic (Upton) Primary

Fender Primary

St Michael & All Angels Catholic Prima

Arrowe Hill Primary School

Woodchurch CE Primary School

Brookdale Primary School

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	Admission number		Year Groups		Capacity and forecasts		
	2007	2008	2008	2008	2007	2008	2009-2012
<b>Schools within a 2 mile radius</b>							
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	55	55	7	7	385	330	330
Sandbrook Primary School	30	30	7	7	210	210	210
St Christopher's CE Primary School (Moreton)	56	56	7	7	350	392	392
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	19	19	7	7	117	117	117
St Peter's Primary School	30	30	7	7	210	210	210
St Vincent's Infant School	99	90	3	3	269	269	269
St Vincent's Junior School	103	103	4	4	412	412	412
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Upton)	42	42	7	7	301	315	315
St Michael's Primary School	30	30	7	7	210	210	210
St Peter's Catholic Primary School	22	22	7	7	175	150	150
St Vincent's Primary School	60	60	7	7	442	420	420
St Vincent's Primary School	60	60	7	7	429	420	420
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School	30	30	7	7	204	204	204
St Vincent's Primary School	30	30	7	7	241	210	210
St Vincent's Primary School	30	30	7	7	210	210	210
St Vincent's CE Primary School	30	30	7	7	224	210	210
St Vincent's Primary School	30	30	7	7	210	210	270
St Vincent's Primary School	38	38	7	7	264	237	237
St Vincent's Infant School	60	60	3	3	189	189	189
St Vincent's Junior School	77	77	4	4	308	308	308
St Vincent's Primary School	60	60	7	7	420	420	420

\*



	Number on Roll, and forecasts						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
<b>Schools within a 2 mile radius</b>							
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	310	319	324	325	340	348	
Sandbrook Primary School	137	146	140	141	149	151	
St Christopher CE Primary School (Moreton)	371	372	371	368	373	368	
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	88	86	96	97	97	96	
St Anan Primary School	122	116	118	111	105	103	
St Verchurh Infant School	241	250	251	256	252	253	
St Verchurh Junior School	371	340	348	326	329	332	
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Upton)	325	310	316	325	323	316	
St Illside Primary School	155	151	157	156	162	172	
St Peter's Catholic Primary School	148	152	150	150	141	143	
Stownfield Primary School	400	400	415	413	413	420	
Strenton Primary School	391	383	384	387	385	388	
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School	148	170	132	128	132	136	
St Ninewall Primary School	220	214	210	207	205	206	
Stoby Primary School	211	208	200	193	185	187	
Stoodchurch CE Primary School	218	216	214	212	210	210	
St Fender Primary School	180	192	177	179	181	180	
Stookdale Primary School	212	221	221	219	217	220	
Streasby Infant School	159	169	178	179	178	179	
Streasby Junior School	281	254	225	220	219	223	
Stur Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School	408	414	402	391	386	374	
Empty places (excluding schools with no surplus places)	586	582	691	743	750	727	
Total on roll at Arrowe Hill (as at Jan 08)	115	63	51				

After Y6 leaves in Summer 2008

Projected capacity at Fender Primary School assumes all former Arrowe Hill pupils transfer to the school. Actual future capacity will depend on parental preferences.

September 2008 numbers on roll are given here as a proxy for January 2009 Census, as reported by schools w/c 29th September 2008. 2010-2013 forecasts remain based on January 2008 data.

From: gillian456x@tiscali.co.uk [mailto:gilian456x@tiscali.co.uk]  
Sent: 02 November 2008 20:39  
To: George, John F. (Councillor)  
Subject:

Dear mr George

I am writing to ask you to speak to the head of child services. A notice was fastened on the gate of Fender primary school stating that arrowe hill is closing. As a working parent I did not collect my child from arrowe hill and therefore this is the first information I have received about it. I think Mr Cooper should have written to parents to explain what is happening and how as a parent I can appeal please can you find out what I can do about this.

gillian Hargreaves

From: Message.from.the.House.of.Commons.-.Find.your.MP.service@HPUX14X.PARLIAMENT.UK  
[mailto:Message.from.the.House.of.Commons.-.Find.your.MP.service@HPUX14X.PARLIAMENT.UK  
]  
Sent: 01 November 2008 23:34  
To: HESFORD, Stephen  
Subject: arrowe hill closure

Message :  
Dear Mr Hesford

Thank you for writing to Wirral council on my behalf. I feel it is a shame that they could write to you to clarify some of my questions but could not have the courtesy to write to me directly. Could you clarify these further points

- 1 what does council mean when they say they have been criticized for their rationalisation of schools
- 2 will council guarantee a place in a school of parent's choice.
- 3 Will council fund any extra expenses imposed on parents by the changes they are enforcing eg new uniforms bus fares new book bags pe kits
- 4 In final part of closure notice can parents appeal about closure?

In addition to this might I say to you that the L.E.A. claim no parents have complained to them after changes have taken place . Can I say I am not surprised I feel that in speaking with L.E.A I was not met with the understanding or respect that a deeply worried parent should receive and felt I was being bullied by the L.E.A. representatives for questioning their actions and expressing my concerns for my child . Having spoken to other parents from Arrowe Hillll this seems to be standard practise. Is it no wonder nobody complains they just give up in sheer frustration.

Yours sincerely Gillian

Hargreaves.

ps just noticed a letter on fender school about closure put up over half term holiday but not received any information directly is this really a good way for wirral to behave ppps why did you go to fender school but not arrowe hill at such a sensitive time?

Your MP : Stephen Hesford

Message ID : WR1225582458W490ce77a0d7b1

Name: g hargreaves

Postal code : CH498HA

Postal address : 238 newhey rd woodchurch

Email address : gillian456x@tiscali.co.uk

Constituency Searched for: Wirral West

Constituency From Postcode entered : Wirral West

This person is in your constituency

# Decision Makers' Guidance (Local Authorities and Governing Bodies) for:

## Closing a Maintained Mainstream School

For further information:

School Organisation Unit  
DCSF  
Mowden Hall  
Darlington  
DL3 9BG

Tel: 01325 391274

Email: [schools.organisation-unit@dcf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:schools.organisation-unit@dcf.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.dcf.gov.uk/schoolorg](http://www.dcf.gov.uk/schoolorg)

This guidance is extracted, for ease of reference by decision makers, from the full version of the “Closing a Maintained Mainstream School” guide. The statutory guidance sections are indicated by shading.

## Stage 4 – Decision

### Who Will Decide the Proposals?

4.1 Decisions on school organisation proposals are taken by the LA or by the schools adjudicator. In this chapter both are covered by the form of words “Decision Maker” which applies equally to both. Paragraphs 7-8 and 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006 set out who should decide proposals for school closures. Most decisions will be taken by the LA, however there is provision for some rights of appeal to the schools adjudicator.

4.2 The Department does not prescribe the process by which an LA carry out their decision-making function (e.g. full Cabinet or delegation to Cabinet member or officials). This is a matter for the LA to determine but the requirement to have regard to statutory guidance (see paragraph 4.15 below) applies equally to the body or individual that takes the decision).

4.3 Where proposals are published by the LA and there are no objections and the proposals are not “related” to other proposals, the proposals **must** be determined by the LA under Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. The proposals should then be decided within 2 months (and if not, the proposals must be referred to the schools adjudicator) and there is no provision for an appeal against the LA’s decision. A conditional approval cannot be given where proposals are decided under this paragraph.

4.4 If there are objections to the proposals, or there are no objections but the proposals are “related” to other proposals, the proposals **must** be decided under Paragraph 8 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. The LA will normally be the decision maker (i.e. except where the proposals are related to proposals for the establishment of a new school and the schools adjudicator is required to decide the new school proposals – see paragraph 5.6 of Part A, and paragraph 4.6 of Part B, of “Establishing a New Maintained Mainstream School”). If the LA fail to decide proposals within 2 months from the end of the representation period they **must** forward the proposals and any representations (i.e. not withdrawn in writing), to the schools adjudicator for decision. They **must** forward the proposals within one week from the end of the 2 month period.

### Who Can Appeal Against an LA Decision?

4.5 There is no right of appeal where proposals are decided under Section 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. In all other cases the following bodies may appeal against an LA decision:

- The local Church of England diocese;

- The Bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese;
- The Learning and Skills Council where the school provides education for pupils aged 14 and over; and
- In the case of **foundation** and **voluntary** schools only - the governing body or trustees of the school that is proposed for closure.

4.6 Appeals **must** be submitted to the LA within 4 weeks of the notification of the LA's decision. On receipt of an appeal the LA **must** then send the proposals, and the comments and objections received, to the schools adjudicator within 1 week of the receipt of the appeal. The LA should also send a copy of the minutes of the LA's meeting or other record of the decision and any relevant papers. Where the proposals are "related" to other proposals, all the "related" proposals should be sent to the schools adjudicator.

### **Checks on Receipt of Statutory Proposals**

4.7 There are 4 key issues which the Decision Maker must consider before judging the respective factors and merits of the statutory proposals:-

- Is any information missing? If so, the Decision Maker should write immediately to the proposer specifying a date by which the information must be provided;
- Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements? (see paragraph 4.8 below);
- Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice? (see paragraph 4.9 below); and
- Are the proposals "related" to other published proposals? (see paragraphs 4.10 - 4.14 below) and should therefore be considered together.

### **Does the Published Notice Comply with Statutory Requirements?**

4.8 The Decision Maker should consider whether the notice is valid as soon as a copy is received. Where a published notice does not comply with statutory requirements - as set out in The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (SI:2007 - 1288) - it may be judged invalid and the Decision Maker should consider whether they can decide the proposals.

### **Has the Statutory Consultation Been Carried Out Prior to the Publication of the Notice?**

4.9 Details of the consultation should be included in the proposals. The Decision Maker must be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements (see Stage 1 paragraphs 1.2 – 1.6). If some parties submit



objections on the basis that consultation was not adequate, the Decision Maker may wish to take legal advice on the points raised. If the requirements have not been met, the Decision Maker may judge the proposals to be invalid and should consider whether they can decide the proposals. Alternatively the Decision Maker may take into account the sufficiency and quality of the consultation as part of their overall judgement of the proposals as a whole.

### **Are the Proposals Related to Other Published Proposals?**

4.10 Paragraphs 9 and 19 of Schedule 2 to the EIA 2006 provide that any proposals that are “related to” particular proposals (e.g. for a new school, school closure or proposals by the LSC to deal with inadequate 16-19 provision proposals) must be considered together. Where the proposals are related to the establishment of a new school, and the schools adjudicator must decide the new school proposals (see paragraph 4.4 above) the schools adjudicator must decide the related proposals together. Paragraphs 4.11 – 4.14 provide statutory guidance on whether proposals should be regarded as “related”.

4.11 Generally, proposals should be regarded as “related” if they are included on the same notice (unless the notice makes it clear that the proposals are not “related”). Proposals should be regarded as “related” if the notice makes a reference to a link to other proposals. If the statutory notices do not confirm a link, but it is clear that a decision on one of the proposals would be likely to directly affect the outcome or consideration of the other, the proposals should be regarded as “related”. Proposals for a school competition should be considered together with proposals for any school closure where there is a clear link.

4.12 Where proposals are “related”, the decisions should be compatible e.g. if one set of proposals is for the removal of provision, and another is for the establishment or enlargement of provision for displaced pupils, both should be approved or rejected.

4.13 Where proposals for a closing school are “related” to proposals published by the local LSC, which are to be decided by the Secretary of State, the Decision Maker should defer taking a decision until the Secretary of State has taken a decision on the LSC proposals. This applies where the proposals before the Decision Maker concern:

- a. the school that is the subject of the LSC proposals;
- b. any other secondary school, maintained by the same LA that maintains a school that is the subject of the LSC proposals; or
- c. any other secondary school in the same LA area as any FE college which is the subject of the LSC proposals.

4.14 The proposals will be regarded as “related” if their implementation would prevent or undermine effective implementation of the LSC proposals.

## 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

attainment 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 attainment gaps.

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).

4.22 Where a school is to be closed so that it may be amalgamated with a more successful and/or popular school, the Decision Maker should again normally approve these proposals, subject to evidence being provided by the LA and other interests that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

### **Fresh Start and Collaborative Restarts**

4.23 Fresh Start and Collaborative Restart provide for poorly performing schools which are struggling to improve, to close and be replaced with new school provision, usually on the same site. When considering the closure of any school causing concern and, where relevant, the expansion of other schools, the Decision Maker should take into account the popularity with parents of alternative schools.

4.24 For all closure and Fresh Start proposals involving schools causing concern, copies of the Ofsted monitoring letters for the relevant schools should be made available. The Decision Maker should have regard to the length of time the school has been in special measures, needing significant improvement or otherwise causing concern, the progress it has made, the prognosis for improvement, and the availability of places at other existing or proposed schools within a reasonable travelling distance. There should be a presumption that these proposals should be approved, subject only to checking that there will be sufficient accessible places of an acceptable standard available in the area to meet foreseeable demand and to accommodate the displaced pupils.

### **Academies**

4.25 Academies are publicly-funded independent schools established in partnership with business and voluntary sector sponsors. They will normally replace one or more poorly-performing schools or will meet demand for new school places in diverse communities where there is only limited access to free high quality school places. Academies may be established in rural as well as urban areas. All Academies should contribute to a strategic approach to diversity in their area. The involvement of business and other non-Government partners will enable Academies to develop and implement new approaches to governance, teaching and learning in order to raise standards. All Academies will be required to share their facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.

4.26 Where an Academy is to replace an existing school or schools, the

proposals for the closure of those schools should indicate whether pupils currently attending the schools will transfer to the Academy and, if appropriate, what arrangements will be made for pupils who are not expected to transfer.

4.27 If provision for pupils at a school proposed for closure is dependent on the establishment of an Academy, any approval of the closure proposals should be conditional on the Secretary of State making an agreement for an Academy (see paragraph 4.64), but there should be a general presumption in favour of approval.

### **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 attainment gaps.

### **Balance of Denominational Provision**

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.

### **Every Child Matters**

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.

## **NEED FOR PLACES**

### **Provision for Displaced Pupils**

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.

### **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.

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

### **Impact on Community**

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.

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.

### **Community Cohesion and Race Equality**

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.

### **Travel and Accessibility for All**

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.

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.

### **Equal Opportunity Issues**

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.

### **Rural Schools and Sites**

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.

4.43 When deciding proposals for the closure of a rural primary school, the Decision Maker should refer to the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) 2007 to confirm that the school is a rural school. The list of rural primary schools can be viewed on line at:  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml)

4.44 In the case of secondary schools, it is the responsibility of the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is to be regarded as rural for the purpose of considering proposals for closure under this guidance and in particular the presumption against closure. The Department's register of schools - Edubase - includes a rural/urban indicator for each school in England based on an assessment by the Office for National Statistics. The Decision Maker should have regard to this indicator. Where a school is not recorded as rural on Edubase, the Decision Maker may nonetheless wish to consider evidence provided by interested parties that a particular school should be regarded as rural.

## **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

### **Boarding School Provision**

4.45 In making a decision on proposals to close a school that includes boarding provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether there is a state maintained boarding school within one hour's travelling distance from the school. The Decision Maker should consider whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future, including the children of service families.

## **SPECIFIC AGE PROVISION ISSUES**

## **Early Years Provision**

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.

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.

## **Nursery School Closures**

4.48 In deciding whether to approve any proposals to close a nursery school, the Decision Maker should be aware that nursery schools generally offer high quality provision, and have considerable potential as the basis for developing integrated services for young children and families. There should be a presumption against the closure of a nursery school unless the case for closure can demonstrate that:

- a. the LA is consistently funding numbers of empty places;
- b. full consideration has been given to developing the school into a Sure Start Children's Centre, and there are clear, justifiable grounds for not doing so, for example: unsuitable accommodation, poor quality provision and low demand for places;
- c. plans to develop alternative provision clearly demonstrate that it will be at least as equal in terms of the quantity and quality of early years provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; and that
- d. replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents.

## **14-19 Curriculum and Collaboration**

4.49 The Government has ambitious plans to increase post-16 participation rates and improve the skills of learners. The foundation for making progress is a transformed, coherent 14-19 phase offering a rich mix of learning opportunities from which young people can choose tailored programmes and gain qualifications appropriate to their aptitudes, needs and aspirations. This will be achieved by better collaboration between local providers, including schools, colleges, training providers and employers. Decision Makers should therefore consider what measures are being proposed to ensure that opportunities available to students in this age group are not reduced by the school closure, although the absence of such measures should not prevent

the closure of a poorly-performing school.

### **16-19 Provision – General**

4.50 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 provides an entitlement to further education and training for young people aged 16 -19. Schools and colleges should offer high quality provision that meets the diverse needs of all young people, their communities and employers. 16-19 provision should be organised to ensure that, in every area, young people have access, within reasonable travelling distance, to high-quality learning opportunities across schools, colleges and work-based training routes.

4.51 In September 2003 Ministers set out their **five key principles** for the reorganisation of 16-19 provision, following requests from partners (including the LSC and LAs) for more clarity on Government expectations. Decision Makers should therefore consider all proposals for changes to 16-19 provision in the context of these principles.

4.52 Details of the five key principles can be found in [‘Principles underpinning the organisation of 16-19 provision’](#) booklet. Briefly, they are:

- a. quality - all provision for all learners should be high quality, whatever their chosen pathway;
- b. distinct 16-19 provision - all young people should be attached to a 16-19 base which will meet the particular pastoral, management and learning needs of this age group;
- c. diversity to ensure curriculum breadth – well-managed collaboration between popular and successful small providers will enable them to remain viable and to share and build on their particular areas of expertise;
- d. learner choice – all learners should normally have local access to high quality 16-19 provision in a range of settings and any proposals for change to this provision should take into account the views of all stakeholders;
- e. affordability, value for money and cost effectiveness - proposals for change should include how any capital and recurrent costs and savings will lead to improved educational opportunities.

### **LSC Proposals to Close Inadequate 16-19 Provision**

4.53 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 (as amended by the Education Act 2005) gives the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) powers to propose the closure of 16-19 schools judged to require Special Measures. Where a 16-19 school is proposed for closure in such circumstances there should be a presumption to approve the proposals, subject to evidence being provided that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

### **Conflicting Sixth Form Reorganisation Proposals**

4.54 Where the implementation of reorganisation proposals from the LSC conflict with other published proposals put to the Decision Maker for decision, the Decision Maker is prevented (i.e. by the School Organisation Proposals by the LSC for England Regulations 2003 - SI 2003 No. 507) from making a decision on the “related” proposals until the Secretary of State has decided the LSC proposals (see paragraphs 4.13 to 4.14 above).

## **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.

### **The Special Educational Needs Improvement Test**

4.57 When considering any reorganisation of SEN provision, including that which might lead to some children being displaced through closures or alterations, LAs, and all other proposers for new schools or new provision, will need to demonstrate to parents, the local community and Decision Makers how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs. All consultation documents and reorganisation plans that LAs publish and all relevant documentation LAs and other proposers submit to Decision Makers should show how the key factors set out in the paragraphs below (4.58 to 4.61) have been taken into account. Proposals which do not credibly meet these requirements should not be approved and Decision Makers should take proper account of parental or independent representations which question the LA's own assessment in this regard.

### **Key Factors**

4.58 When LAs are planning changes to their existing SEN provision, and in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate likely improvements in provision, they should:

- identify the details of the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of:
  - a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy;
  - b) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;
  - c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
  - d) improved supply of suitable places.
- LAs should also:
  - i. obtain a written statement that offers the opportunity for all providers

- of existing and proposed provision to set out their views on the changing pattern of provision seeking agreement where possible;
- ii. clearly state arrangements for alternative provision. A 'hope' or 'intention' to find places elsewhere is not acceptable. Wherever possible, the host or alternative schools should confirm in writing that they are willing to receive pupils, and have or will have all the facilities necessary to provide an appropriate curriculum;
  - iii. specify the transport arrangements that will support appropriate access to the premises by reference to the LA's transport policy for SEN and disabled children; and
  - iv. specify how the proposals will be funded and the planned staffing arrangements that will be put in place.

4.59 It is to be noted that any pupils displaced as a result of the closure of a BESD school (difficulties with behavioural, emotional and social development) should not be placed long-term or permanently in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) if a special school place is what they need. PRUs are intended primarily for pupils who have been excluded, although LAs can and do use PRU provision for pupils out of school for other reasons such as illness and teenage pregnancies. There may of course be pupils who have statements identifying that they have BESD who have been placed appropriately in a PRU because they have been excluded; in such cases the statement must be amended to name the PRU, but PRUs should not be seen as an alternative long-term provision to special schools.

4.60 The requirement to demonstrate improvements and identify the specific educational benefits that flow from proposals for new or altered provision as set out in the key factors are for all those who bring forward proposals for new special schools or for special provision in mainstream schools including governors of foundation schools and foundation special schools. The proposer needs to consider all the factors listed above.

4.61 Decision Makers will need to be satisfied that the evidence with which they are provided shows that LAs and/or other proposers have taken account of the initial considerations and all the key factors in their planning and commissioning in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate that the reorganisation or new provision is likely to result in improvements to SEN provision.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Views of interested parties**

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.

## Types of Decision

4.63 In considering proposals for a school closure the Decision Maker can decide to:

- reject the proposals;
- approve the proposals;
- approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the school closure date); or
- approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition (see paragraph 4.64).

## Conditional Approval

4.64 The regulations provide for a conditional approval to be given where the Decision Maker is otherwise satisfied that the proposals can be approved, and approval can automatically follow an outstanding event. Conditional approval can only be granted in the limited circumstances specified. Conditional approval cannot be granted where proposals are decided under Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 (i.e. where there are no objections) – see paragraph 4.3 above. For school closures the following conditions can be set:

- a. the making of any agreement under section 482(1) of the 1996 Act for the establishment of an Academy, where the proposals in question provide for some or all of the pupils currently at the school which is the subject of the proposals to transfer to the Academy;
- b. the agreement to any change to admission arrangements specified in the approval, relating to another school;
- c. where the proposals depend upon conditions being met, by a specified date, for any other school or proposed school, the occurrence of such an event.

4.65 The Decision Maker **must** set a date by which the condition should be met but will be able to modify the date if the proposers confirm, before the date expires, that the condition will be met later than originally thought. The proposer should inform the Decision Maker and the Department (School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3

9BG) or by email to [schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk](mailto:schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk) when a condition is met. If a condition is not met by the date specified, the proposals should be referred back to the Decision Maker for fresh consideration.

## Decision

4.66 All decisions **must** give reasons for the decision (i.e. irrespective of whether the proposals were rejected or approved) indicating the main factors/criteria for the decision.

4.67 A copy of the decision **must** be forwarded to:

- the person or body who published the proposals;
- each objector except where a petition has been received. Where a petition is received a decision letter should be sent to the person who submitted the petition, or where this is unknown, the signatory whose name appears first on the petition;
- the Secretary of State (via the School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG or by email to [schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk](mailto:schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk) );
- where the school includes provision for 14-16 education or sixth form education, the LSC;
- the local CofE diocese;
- the Bishop of the RC diocese.

4.68 Where proposals are decided by the LA a copy of the decision **must** be sent to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG. Where proposals are decided by the schools adjudicator a copy of the decision **must** be sent to the LA who maintain the school.

## Can proposals be withdrawn?

4.69 Proposals may be withdrawn at any point before a decision is taken. Written notice should be given to the LA, or governing body, if the proposals were published by the LA. Written notice should also be sent to the schools adjudicator (if proposals have been sent to him) and the Secretary of State – i.e. via the School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG or by e-mail to [schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk](mailto:schools.organisation-unit@dcsh.gov.uk) Written notice should also be placed at the main entrance to the school, or all the entrances if there are more than one.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## **MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is further to a report submitted to Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007. At that time approval was granted for an application to the Department of Health for grant funding to set up a pilot project, hopefully as one of the 6 pilot sites the Department of Health was looking to support. That application was unsuccessful. Locally professionals across agencies have remained interested in the potential of Multi-Systemic Therapy as a successful intervention with adolescents who present with conduct and anti-social difficulties. Wirral Children & Young People's Department(CYPD), Youth Offending Service(YOS), Primary Care Trust(PCT) and the Cheshire & Wirral Foundation (NHS) Trust believe this evidenced based method of intervening with young people (age 11-17yrs) who are at risk of care or custody would make a positive contribution to improving the lives of individual children and their families, reduce anti-social behaviour and make a contribution in reducing high cost placements outside of Wirral. Using funding from the PCT, YOS and CYPD a project plan has been developed that would enable an MST programme to be delivered on Wirral. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the development of a Multi-Systemic Therapy programme on Wirral.

#### 1. Background

1.1 In response to the findings and recommendations of a recent Serious Case Review the Department has identified the need to enhance provision for a specific cohort of young people. These young people are typically:

- Aged between 10-17yrs
- Male
- Living with parent(s) or a family member.
- Presenting behavioural difficulties at school, home and in the community. These behavioural difficulties being longstanding and have proved resistant to interventions.
- Rejecting of parental boundaries/adult controls
- Committing, or suspected of committing, criminal offences.
- Involved with, or suspected involvement with, alcohol and/or substance misuse.
- Their behaviour is supported by their peer group
- Parental monitoring of the young person is poor and/or inconsistent.

Having met with partner agencies and reviewed current research about what works for this group of young people there is agreement that Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) is likely to be the most effective intervention. In preparation for the bid to the Department of Health in 2007 an audit was undertaken across agencies and this identified a group of 90 young people who would or could have benefited from this type of intervention in that year.

- 1.2 The Department of Health has been interested in finding effective and evidenced based methods of intervening with young people who present with what appear to be fairly intractable behaviour/conduct difficulties, emerging personality disorders, and for whom current support and diversionary methods are not successful in stopping their offending or challenging behaviours. These young people often end up in residential care or custody which is both high cost due to the extent of their behavioural challenges and often fails to produce any long term change in the young person's behaviours as when they return to live with their families, back in their community with their peer group the change in their behaviours is often not sustained.
  
- 1.3 The Department of Health(DH) issued Circular 8376 on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007 informing Local Authorities and PCT's of the potential to apply for funding for Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) Pilots if they could demonstrate the capacity to deliver such a programme. The Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families(DCSF) are both committed to the development of evidence methods of assisting children, young people and their families, and from their review of methods of intervention with young people presenting high levels of anti-social behaviour they found MST had the strongest evidence base for delivering successful outcomes in the short and longer term (Utting,D; Monteiro,H; Ghate,D; 2007). Wirral was one of a number of Local Authorities that submitted an application for grant funding. Wirral was not successful in receiving grant funding as a Pilot site but feedback we received was that our application was strong. A National Pilot MST programme has been established with leadership and support from the DH and DCSF for those Local Authorities that were successful in obtaining grant funding. Senior Managers from partner agencies on Wirral have met with the National MST leads from the DH to discuss the viability of Wirral developing an MST programme alongside the National Pilot Programme. The Department of Health saw this as a positive development and felt Wirral had the capacity to deliver a programme. They were not able to include Wirral within the Pilot Programme as research and evaluation contracts for the national programme had already been agreed based on a specified number of sites. They were, however, happy to offer help, advice and support were they could.

- 1.4 Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) is a specific treatment model which has been developed and refined in the USA since the late 1970's. The specific methodology of MST is regulated through the Medical University of South Carolina, MST Services. It was developed in response to research which highlighted the limitations in relation to the effectiveness of existing methods of intervening with young people and their families, where young people were presenting with severe behavioural problems. Research indicated that a number of individual, family and group therapies offered to young people and their families were not effective, other than in the short term. Alternatives to using these interventions with young people and their families, at home, was generally to place young people away from their families in residential or custodial settings, also indicated limited effectiveness and that changes were not maintained in their behaviour when they left those settings. These methods were also seen as having a high cost and minimal accountability. MST is a methodology developed using the research into the causality of behavioural problems in young people and is established to address the complex interaction of factors that cause some young people to develop severe anti-social behaviours and make them resistant to change.
- 1.5 Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) developed as a pragmatic and targeted approach to tackle anti social behaviour with the individual young person, their family, peer group, school and in their community. MST is based on research evidence that the young person's behaviours are developed in, and maintained by, the combined influences of all these areas of their life. MST offers an intensive approach to tackling the young person's behaviours across all the areas of their life - the parenting style of the family, the young person's behaviour and beliefs, the peer group they mix with, their school performance, and their access to structured and positive community activities. MST works to develop a more effective, supportive and positive system around the young person using a range of behavioural and evidence based interventions to achieve clear and defined outcomes - improved monitoring and control by parent(s), improved school attendance, involvement in an organised community activity, no drug use, no criminal behaviour. MST has developed techniques for engaging and working with hard to reach young people and their families and the evidence of effectiveness, in random control trials in the USA, compared to more traditional methods of intervening have proved positive in terms of decreased criminal activity, decreased rates of out of home placement and improved family functioning.
- 1.6 The development of Multi-systemic Therapy fits with both Central Governments and Local key objectives. As part of the Government's commitment to tackling social exclusion, set out in *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion* (September 2006) the Government made a



number of recommendations to promote more effective, earlier interventions for people experiencing social exclusion. Action 20 of the plan is concerned with early intervention in personality disorder and states *“the Government will launch pilots to test different interventions for tackling mental health problems in childhood, such as ‘Multi-systemic therapy’.... to prevent the onset of problems later in life”*. In addition *“Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care”* (2006) refers to the need to evaluate the effectiveness of evidenced based interventions, which work with adults and children with a complex range of problems to reduce the number of children entering care. Providing effective support to enable young people to remain safely within their family and community and prevent young people becoming “Looked After”, are also key local priorities. Local priorities relate to safely reducing the number of young people needing to be Looked After, the need to reduce the number of young people in high cost placements and outside Wirral boundaries. Locally, the nature and type of interventions applied with adolescents with challenging behaviours has been an issue raised within a recent Serious Case Review and the need to address this is part of the Action Plan.

- 1.7 Currently Wirral provides a number of services to address and respond to the needs of young people with high levels of challenging behaviour both through the Children & Young People’s Department, the Youth Offending Service, and Health services. The intention in developing an MST Programme is to test whether MST offers a more effective way of intervening with this group of young people and provides better value for money.
- 1.8 The development and delivery of an MST programme requires local stakeholder commitment to the development and use of the approach and an agreement from MST Services that Wirral is ready to implement the approach. Local stakeholders are in agreement with the proposed development. Discussions have taken place with MST Services about developing a programme and they have indicated that they would see Wirral as being in a position to move forward with developing an MST programme with a population that could benefit from this approach. To progress further they require the signing and purchase of a licence agreement about the use of MST Services materials and the working arrangements with them for training, support and supervision of the programme to ensure the model is applied correctly to the right group of young people.
- 1.9 The delivery of the programme will require the appointment of the following posts: 1 Clinical Supervisor, a Clinical Psychologist, who would be appointed by the Cheshire & Wirral Foundation (NHS) Trust; 3 MST Therapists, with relevant professional training and experience and 1

administrative support post appointed by the Children & Young People's Department. The Programme will be based with the Youth Offending Service and the Deputy YOS Manager will have operational responsibility for the Programme. A Multi-agency Management Group will be set up to oversee the development, problem solve any difficulties and monitor its effectiveness and outcomes. It is expected that the programme offering an intensive, focussed time limited intervention (MST would expect to work with young people for approximately 6 months) would offer a service to 24 to 35 young people and their families in a 12 month period.

## 2. Financial implications

- 2.1 The estimated cost of setting und running the Programme is £272,250 in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, due to set up costs, and £262,250 in subsequent years.

<b>PROGRAMME COSTS</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>ONGOING</b>
MST CLINICAL SUPERVISOR	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
3 MST THERAPISTS	£123,000	£123,000	£123,000
1 ADMIN SUPPORT	£20,250	£20,250	£20,250
LICENCE/TRAINING MST SERVICES	£39,000	£39,000	£39,000
SET-UP	£10,000		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£272,250</b>	<b>£262,250</b>	<b>£262,250</b>
<b>PROGRAMME FUNDING</b>			
YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE	£96,000	£48,000	£48,000
PCT	£130,000	£175,000	£175,000
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>£226,000</b>	<b>£223,000</b>	<b>£223,000</b>
<b>FUNDING SHORTFALL</b>	<b>£46,250</b>	<b>£39,250</b>	<b>£39,250</b>

- 2.2 It is proposed that a bid be made to the Councils Efficiency Investment Fund to fund the balance of costs, in order to pilot the initiative and help deliver current and future cost reductions.
- 2.3 The target group for this programme are the young people with challenging behaviour who are risk of custody or care. It would be expected that this programme would contribute to future cost reductions by maintaining young people with their families and in their communities. The service would provide an intensive, structured programme to approximately 24 – 35 young people per annum to reduce the need for care or custody through tackling their anti-social behaviour. Exact savings are hard to predict but Members will be aware that Residential Care and Secure Remands are high cost to the Local Authority at anything between £1,800 - £4000 per person per week or £93,600 - £208,000 per annum per young person.

### **3. Staffing implications**

- 3.1 There will be 5 posts in the MST programme. The Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (NHS) Foundation Trust will appoint the Clinical Supervisor as this post is required to be a qualified and experienced Clinical Psychologist. 4 posts will need to be created across the Children and Young People's Department & the Youth Offending Service, 3 at SW Grade SCP 26-36, and 1 Administrative Support post. The evaluation of the success of the programme will be undertaken over a 5 year period and posts will need to be available to cover this period.

### **4. Equal opportunities implications**

- 4.1 There are none arising directly from this report

### **5. Community safety implications**

- 5.1 The aim of the MST Pilot is to reduce anti-social behaviour.

### **6. Local Agenda 21 implications**

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report

### **7. Planning implications**

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report

### **8. Anti-poverty implications**

- 8.1 The Programme is being established to address the impact of social exclusion on young people and their families and provide opportunities to young people that will hopefully enable them to be economically self sufficient in the future.

### **9. Social inclusion implications**

- 9.1 The aims of the Programme are to engage and include young people in pro-social activities and be accepted and included in their community

### **10. Local Member Support implications**

- 10.1 Young People may be referred to the MST Programme from all Wards

## **11. Background papers**

- 11.1 Reaching Out: An Action Plan On Social Exclusion, Action 20: Early Intervention In Personality Disorder. Grant For The Development Of Multi-Systemic Therapy Pilots. Dept Of Health Circular Ref 8378, Issued: 2.6.07
- 11.2 Interventions for Children at Risk of Developing Antisocial Personality Disorder, Report to the Dept of Health & Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, Utting,D; Monteiro,H; Ghate,D Policy Research Bureau, 2007
- 11.3 Care Matters: Time For Change. Dfes June 2007
- 11.4 Wirral Local Safeguarding Children's Board: Executive Summary, Serious Case Review In Respect Of JLS Nov 2008

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That

- (1) the setting up of an MST Programme be formally approved;
- (2) the report be referred to Employment & Appointments Committee; and
- (3) the bid for funding to the Council's Efficiency Investment fund be approved.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director of Children's Services**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## **PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY AT BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposal to establish an Academy at the current Independent Birkenhead High School for Girls is currently nearing the end of the formal feasibility stage. The steering group for the project has been consulting with various stakeholders regarding the scheme. A letter from the Cabinet member to the steering group is attached as Appendix A to this report. The Council has now to decide formally whether it supports the establishment of the project despite some of the reservations which have been expressed previously by officers and reiterated in the Cabinet member's letter. The Secretary of State will then make a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal or not. The "Expression of Interest" which sets out the vision and rationale for the Academy is attached at Annexe B. My initial response to that is at Annexe C. The proposed Academy's admission arrangements are enclosed at Annex (D). The balance of this report sets out the issues for the Cabinet to consider.

### **1.0 Background**

1.1 The announcement of the proposal to establish an Academy at Birkenhead High School was made publicly by the then Minister for Schools, Lord Adonis to a conference in Autumn 2007. There had been no prior consultation with the Authority which was at that time embarking on the first stages of consulting with secondary schools in Wirral about the necessity to review provision across the borough in the light of falling rolls. Subsequent discussions both with the Department for Children Schools and Families and with the Office of the Schools Commissioner indicated that there was a strong expectation on their part that the proposal would come to fruition and the Academy in due course be approved. Following these discussions, where officers of the Authority had made clear the difficulties the proposal created for the production of a coherent strategy for educational provision across Birkenhead, the Schools Commissioner and the Minister asked for an independent review of the position which resulted in the "Gyte Report". This was the subject of a previous report to Cabinet in November.

### **2.0 Issues**

2.1 It has appeared to officers since the initial announcement that there has been a paradox at the heart of the proposal which it has proved impossible to resolve entirely satisfactorily. The purpose of the Academies programme and the justification for the large investment of public funds both into the buildings and into the substantial revenue start up costs of Academies is that they represent a radical solution to deep seated and long term problems of inadequate schooling in areas of high deprivation. It would be the expectation that any Academy would be a key part of a determined attempt to drive up standards amongst communities where these had remained stubbornly low. In some senses the Birkenhead Academy may be thought to be well placed to make just such a contribution. It is situated within easy walking distance of



many of Wirral's (and indeed England's) most deprived young people. Clearly as a fee paying independent school it has not historically served such a community but it could be argued that its currently good facilities (which through Academy investment would become excellent), combined with its traditional ethos of high expectation might transform opportunities for a large number of deprived girls. The expression of interest for the Academy however makes clear that it is the intention of the Academy to continue to serve "a wider area", by which is meant the whole of Wirral and beyond. Furthermore the school has been concerned to emphasise that in drawing its pupils from a wider area, the addition of this provision at a time when the council is looking to rationalise overall education provision in Birkenhead would not impact significantly upon neighbouring schools. Indeed in meetings that took place involving representatives of the Authority and the Minister during the summer it was stressed that the school would not look to increase its numbers so that its impact on neighbouring schools would be minimal.

## 2.2 Admission Arrangements

The most significant development with regard to this proposal since the submission of the Expression of Interest has been the establishing of admission arrangements for the school. These arrangements are attached at Annexe D. The main features to note are as follows:-

The arrangements for admission into reception give priority, where there is oversubscription, to girls at the Academy's nursery (the first priority, as required by law, would be for Children in Care). This differs from the Authority's admission procedures and may have the effect of narrowing access to the Academy.

The admission number into Reception is 40. Pupils within the Academy at Year 6 would then continue into Year 7 ie. secondary phase. A further 60 pupils would be admitted at Year 7 making a total admission number for that year of 100. If oversubscribed the Academy would select 10% of the 60 pupils by reference to an aptitude in music, which is one of the Academy's proposed specialisms. All remaining places would be allocated according to a "fair banding" procedure. This would involve all applicants for places undertaking a test, places being allocated across the ability range in 5 bands. This is described in detail within Annexe D.

It is proposed to set the admission number for the Sixth Form at 100.

## 2.3 Expected Numbers

The latest number on roll we have from the school is 686 (across the age range ie including all pupils from foundation to sixth form). The Expression of Interest indicates that this will rise to 998.

## 3.0 Wider Implications for school provision in Birkenhead

3.1 The implications for other schools arising from the establishment of the Academy depend upon how many parents seek to gain places at the Academy (both at primary and secondary level) and where those parents live. While it is the schools plan to continue to draw from a wide geographical distribution, and the initial applications for such places in the current round would seem to broadly reflect that ambition, it seems likely that in future the school will increasingly serve girls who live nearer to the site. This view is based upon the variety of options available to parents across Wirral,

including a number of good schools which include single sex as well as co-educational schools, grammar schools and all ability schools. Whilst it is impossible to predict the future with certainty it would seem to be wise to assume that in due course the school, if it succeeds, will draw pupils increasingly from Birkenhead. We therefore need to take account of that in planning for the future of Birkenhead provision generally.

### 3.2 Primary Schools

We are currently embarking upon round 5 of the rolling review of primary provision. All areas of the borough have been covered in rounds 1-4 and we have now returned to look again at what may be broadly described as "Birkenhead east of the motorway". It will be difficult to take account in this review of any impact the Academy may have. Current numbers within the primary part of Birkenhead High School were, at the time of the Expression of Interest, 209 pupils in total (excluding nursery) ranging from 45 pupils in Year 6, to 17 in Reception. Anecdotal evidence from some nearby primary schools indicates that there has been some modest transfer of pupils into the school by parents anticipating the approval of the Academy.

### 3.3 Secondary Schools

The Expression of Interest shows that there were 334 pupils at 11-16 within the school ranging from 55 in Year 7 to 71 in Year 11. Members will be aware that the Council is currently reviewing secondary provision in Birkenhead and clearly the establishment of the Academy is a significant factor to be taken into account in determining the future shape of provision.

There are two key issues: overall numbers and the gender balance. If the assumption is made that a revamped, improved overall secondary estate in Birkenhead would be sufficiently attractive to retain all Birkenhead children who were seeking places in non-catholic all ability schools, then it would be reasonable to plan for a requirement of 27 forms of entry. Assuming an approximately equal divide of boys and girls, we therefore need places for 14½ forms of entry each. The Council is already committed to rebuilding Woodchurch High School as its One School Pathfinder. This is currently planned to provide for 9 forms of entry. The school has a slight imbalance between the sexes with more boys than girls – but not greatly so. Prenton High School has been extensively rebuilt and remodelled and now provides excellent facilities and is proving most attractive to parents. It provides 5 forms of entry for girls.

If the Council proceeds to create a new school, as a further Academy, and closes Park High School and Rock Ferry High School and if such an Academy were to be planned, for say, 5 FE and if Birkenhead High School were estimated to provide 2-3 FE of places for Birkenhead Girls that would leave an estimated 6 forms of entry for Ridgeway High School. However if Woodchurch remained reasonably balanced in terms of gender and both Prenton and Birkenhead Girls took between them 8/9 FE then that would only leave around 1-2 forms of entry for girls to be shared between the new Academy and Ridgeway. This is a critical issue for consideration both within the secondary review of Birkenhead and in deciding how to respond to the Birkenhead High Academy proposal.

## 4.0 **Financial and Staffing Implications**

The Birkenhead High Academy will be funded centrally by Government. The Council has already agreed that if the proposal is approved it will be willing to procure the building works, as required under the Partnership for Schools procurement framework, subject to there being no financial risk to the Council (Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> June Minute 82).

## **5.0 Staffing Implications**

There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

## **6.0 Equal Opportunities Implications**

The issues around potential gender imbalance are described in the body of the report.

## **7.0 Community Safety Implications**

There are none.

## **8.0 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

Surplus places constitute a waste of resources

## **9.0 Planning Implications**

Any building proposals will be subject to the usual planning consents.

## **10.0 Anti-poverty Implications/ Social Inclusion Implications**

The Academy proposal is designed to counter educational disadvantage in deprived communities. The extent to which this proposal contributes to that is considered in the report.

## **11.0 Local Member Support Implications**

All wards are affected – particularly those in Birkenhead

## **12.0 Background Papers**

Correspondence, DCSF Website.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet's views are requested as to its formal response to the proposal to establish an Academy at Birkenhead High School.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director of Children's Services**

**From:** Cllr P Davies  
**Reply to:** Town Hall  
Brighton Street  
Wallasey  
Wirral  
Merseyside  
CH44 8ED

## **APPENDIX A**

to Ms N Magnier  
Consultant  
PKF (UK) LLP  
Farringdon Place  
20 Farringdon Road  
London  
EC1M 3AP

date 4 December 2008

your ref  
my ref PD/CB911a/pw

Dear Ms Magnier

### **Consultation regarding the proposal to establish an Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls**

Firstly may I thank you and the Headteacher for the opportunity to visit the school and participate in the recent consultation meeting. The Council will not be able to make a formal response to the consultation within the timescale. This issue, as you will be well aware, is one of some considerable sensitivity and I have asked the Director of Children's Services to prepare a full report on the proposal to be considered by Wirral's Cabinet at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The Director will then forward to you the considered response of the Cabinet on behalf of the Local Authority.

I would however at this stage set out the key issues which have informed the debate on this proposal since its inception and which will be the critical matters which the Cabinet and I will consider most carefully.

- (1) There is no objection in principle to the establishment of the Academy and the Council would welcome, again in principle, the progress towards inclusivity which would be represented by movement of an independent school to within the wider state funded family of Wirral schools.
- (2) There are however serious concerns regarding the addition at this stage of a new school which is physically located within an area where the Council was already acutely aware of a need to rationalise, and all probability reduce, existing secondary provision.

- (3) The fact that the school would provide exclusively for girls compounds this problem in that the existing provision within Birkenhead for secondary aged pupils already includes one girls' school (which is now over-subscribed). There is a concern regarding equity of provision and the impact that this proposal would have.
- (4) Whilst recognising that the proposal has sought to mitigate any impact upon the secondary schools in Birkenhead through the school's stated intention to continue to draw pupils from a wide area (and the adoption of an admissions policy for the school compatible with this intention) this in itself creates a further issue: the main justification for the establishment of academies is to make significant improvement in provision for the most deprived pupils in the area. If the school continues to draw pupils from a wider area, whilst this may limit the impact on local schools, it is difficult to see how it then would impact upon deprived children.

I trust that this is helpful in setting out the key issues, as I see them, from the perspective of the Local Authority. I will ensure that you are informed of the full response, immediately following the Cabinet meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.L. Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Councillor Phil Davies  
Deputy Leader of the Labour Group  
Cabinet Member for Children's Services & Lifelong Learning

department for  
children, schools and families



**THE BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY**

**IN WIRRAL**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR AN ACADEMY**

**Section 1: Executive Summary**

This is a proposal for Birkenhead High School on the Wirral, which is a successful independent day school for girls, aged 3-19, owned by the Girl's Day School Trust, to become an academy.

The Academy will be sponsored principally by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST). Founded in 1872, the GDST is the largest group of independent schools in the UK, and currently educates over 20,000 students aged 3 to 19 in 29 schools. As a charity it reinvests all income in its schools for the benefit of its pupils. It has a reputation for pioneering innovation in the education and care of pupils and is recognised at home and abroad for educational excellence. The GDST is also the sponsor of The Belvedere Academy in Liverpool.

The GDST is currently in discussion with a Russell Group University to be a co-sponsor of the Academy. As the proposed co-sponsor this university would bring both an ongoing aspirational link for the school in terms of educational excellence and support for a strong international dimension to the school.

Birkenhead High School Academy will be a non-denominational, all-through (3-19) girls' school. It will be located at the current site of Birkenhead High School.

The area in which the school is sited, the Wirral, is an area of contrast between an affluent western area, along the Dee Estuary, and the east of the borough, the traditional employment area centred on Birkenhead, along the River Mersey. Whilst the former is an area of high environmental quality with high property values and low unemployment, the latter provides continuous built development, including areas of severe decline and educational and social deprivation.

Overall the council is the 44th most deprived out of 150 in England. Unemployment is higher in the eastern wards and the quality of the



environment is poor in a significant number of areas, aspects of which are subject to large scale regeneration initiatives.

It is proposed that the Academy maintains a size of nursery provision similar to the current school's at 18 FTE places, slightly increases its primary and secondary capacity to 280 places for 5-11s (a two form entry of 40 per year group) and 500 places for 11-16s (a four form entry of 100 per year group), and provides all-through 16-18 provision of c. 200 places. This size of Sixth Form will enable the school to have places for all the students coming through the school into the Sixth Form, as well as offering some limited opportunities to a small number of other external students where they would benefit from this pathway as part of their 14-19 experience.

Comment [h1]: Not the ward it is in

Comment [h2]: This is a large increase from its current 17. Significant impact on primary.

Comment [h3]: This is a significant increase from its current 60. Change of admission criteria will impact on different schools.

The Academy will therefore provide a total of 980 places for 5-19s with a nursery of c.18 for 3-5 year olds. This is broadly in line with the current school's registered capacity and with its pupil numbers in the very recent past. The Academy's nursery provision is already included within the totality of universal early years provision on the Wirral. The increase in the size of the Sixth Form provision is not expected to impact negatively on the large and strong FE College and local grammar schools and will, through 14-19 collaboration, increase the range of options open to pupils from other schools within the Wirral.

Comment [h4]: Sixth Form College?

Admission of the Academy cohorts will be phased, with entry only at three key entry points in the school – Reception, Year 7 and the Sixth Form – in September 2009, thereby allowing the Academy to expand gradually year on year, reaching its full capacity of c.980 in 2016. This gradual expansion will minimise the impact on other schools in the Wirral, while helping to maintain the ethos and aspirational culture of the school.

The Academy will cease academic selection and instead admit an all-ability intake. In Year 7, alongside pupils feeding through from the primary section of the all-through school, and where the Academy is oversubscribed, priority will be given to looked-after children, 10% selection by aptitude in one of its chosen primary specialisms – Music – on the same basis as other specialist schools, and on fair banding of applications from across a comparable geographic community to that currently served by the school.

For Reception and Nursery, admissions will also be representative of a comparable geographic community to that currently served by the school to ensure the school continues to maintain its strong community links. Religious affiliation will not form any part of the selection criteria. After looked-after children, siblings will take precedence throughout the all-through establishment. Entry to the Sixth Form will be subject to the school's agreed minimum entry criteria.

Comment [h5]: Borough wide? In that case the deprivation factor is not relevant. Is this realistic at primary for a non selective school?

The Birkenhead High School Academy will continue to provide the high quality education of Birkenhead High School to the local and wider community, maintaining the ethos and aspirations of its predecessor school and, by providing high quality, free, non-selective places in the Wirral, build on principles of access and inclusion and a commitment to add value to pupils

with a range of talents, which have been the mainstay of the GDST's philosophy since its foundation. It will expect to retain the admirable ethos of the predecessor school, its culture of high expectations and raising aspirations, but attract a wider range of pupils, and embody the potential for innovation and educational excellence offered by the all-through setting.

Key themes of the educational vision for the Academy will be:

**A distinctive ethos built on a culture of high expectations, raising aspirations and the achievement of each pupil's personal best** – based on principles of access and inclusion and a commitment to add value to pupils with a range of talents.

**Raising aspirations and standards through the all-through school model** in which girls are given the opportunity to develop in a consistent environment dedicated to excellence from the youngest age.

**Excellence** – the GDST is committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning. The aim is to imbue each year group with values and aspirations of excellence, and communicate highest standards and expectations.

**Personal development** – the GDST is committed to fostering a lively spirit of enquiry and to developing individuals who are confident, competent and compassionate, responsive to their environment and to the concerns and needs of others.

**Enrichment and enhancement** – the pupils and staff will have access to the full range of enrichment that other GDST schools currently enjoy.

**Working with the local community and in partnership with local schools** – already a major element in the wider educational work of the GDST and its schools. The GDST envisages delivering this through the Academy's wrap around care provision, extensive and diverse extra curricular clubs programme, community service, Young Enterprise and Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes, gifted and talented and honours programmes, and master classes.

**Drawing on support and best practice from the GDST family** – including innovative career programmes to prepare students for higher education and the workplace, a wide range of cross-GDST sports competitions, the Minerva Network for alumni, extensive staff training and development schedule, the provision of innovative educational leadership programmes and the challenge of detailed benchmarking across GDST schools.

**A clear international dimension**

In order to prepare pupils for life and work in the global economy an international dimension will underpin all aspects of the Academy's curriculum and activities and linking with both the GDST's extensive international programmes and, it is hoped, with the international work of the proposed

University co-sponsor.

**The Academy will have music and maths as its specialisms.** Music and maths, and the cross-curricular links between music and maths, are areas of particular strength for both the GDST and the school. The GDST envisages significant cross-GDST and cross-authority engagement and outreach work to extend this programme at the Academy and spread best practice more widely, especially at 16-19 in the teaching of music and maths.

The GDST considers that the building and facilities, which are very well-maintained, require some new build or refurbishment in order to deliver the vision of the Academy as follows: – enhanced specialist facilities for the Academy's specialisms of music and maths across all phases (i.e. recording and control room, ensemble room and possibly a concert facility), enhancements of the reception/main entrance areas for primary and secondary provision to enrich the welcome for parents and students at all phases of the Academy, library and learning resources, ICT facilities in the junior school, staff workspaces and administration, enhanced dining facilities, additional general teaching and learning areas and social spaces and enhanced nursery facilities. In terms of space the most appropriate development opportunity would be on the site of the current assembly and dining hall facilities.

The school will cease to be fee-paying. The Academy will be funded in line with the Wirral's fair funding formula through an annual grant provided by the DCSF. The sponsor will also be seeking, as has been the case for The Belvedere Academy, funding which recognises the school's transitional requirements. The DCSF will provide any necessary capital funding for both the secondary and primary elements of the Academy.

Comment [h6]: If it does not grow it will not be viable. If it does grow it will impact on other schools. They can't have it both ways

Comment [h7]: Where from?

The new Academy will be proud to be a lead member of the independent sector stream of the Academies programme – of which its sister school the Belvedere Academy is the pioneer school. As a major independent school becoming an Academy, Birkenhead High School Academy will be accessible to all, providing high quality, educationally excellent, free, non-selective places to the local and wider community.

### 1.1 Key statistics

1. Predecessor School- Educational Attainment- KS2 2006									
	English		Maths		Science		Average point score		
	L4+	L5	L4+	L5	L4+	L5			
National Average	79%	32%	76%	33%	87%	46%	27.8%		
LA Average	81%	35%	77%	34%	89%	48%	28.1%		
School	98%	45%	93%	56%	98%	75%			

### 1.2 Key statistics

1. Predecessor School – Educational Attainment						
	GCSE 5 A*-C 2004	GCSE 5 A*-C 2005	GCSE 5 A*-C 2006	GCSE 5 A*-C 2007*	GCSE 2006 (inc E + M)	GCSE 2007 (inc E + M)*
National Average	53.7%	56.3%	58.5%	61%	45.3%	46%
LA Average	54%	57%	57.7%	61%	46.3%	48%
School	97%	95%	100%	94%	96%	90%

\* This is a provisional and unvalidated figure released at the discretion of the school and Local Authority.

Comment [h11]: Add Wirral girls' selective schools

2. Predecessor School – Deprivation			
	Pupils drawn from the bottom % of the most deprived wards in the country	School situated in the bottom % of the most deprived wards in the country	% pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
National Average			13.6%
LA Average	-	-	%
School	%	%	%

3. Predecessor School – Basic Characteristics						
	Pupils on Roll (3-11)	Pupils on Roll (11-16)	Pupils on Roll (16-19)	School Capacity	% pupils with statement of SEN	% pupils with EAL
National Average	-	-	-	-	2.2%	9.5%
LA Average	-	-	-	-	%	%
School	235*	334*	96*		%	%

\* As at 2006/07 latest full year figures.

4. Proposed Academy – Basic Characteristics					
	Planned number of pupils (3-11)	Planned number of pupils (11-16)	Planned number of pupils (16-19)	Planned maximum number	Specialism(s)
Academy	280 5-11s + 18 FTE in nursery	500	200	980 5-18s + 18 FTE in nursery	MUSIC MATHS
	Opening Date	New Build Date	Building Route	Faith Designation	Sponsor(s)
Academy	September 2009	2010-12 provisional	PfS	N/A	Girls Day School Trust (+ a Russell Group University)

## Section 2: The Predecessor School (s)

2.1 Will the Academy replace a school (Or schools)?	Yes	√
	No	

*If Yes, go to Section 2.2. If No, go to Section 3.1 Please select:*

### 2.2 Basic Characteristics

School Name: Birkenhead High School

School Address: 86 Devonshire Place, Prenton, Merseyside, CH43 1TY

Local Authority: Wirral (LA Code: 344)

Type of Establishment:

Community School	
Foundation School	
Voluntary Aided (VA) School	
Voluntary (VC) School	
City Technology College	
Independent	√
Other	

(if other please specify: )

Gender

Co-Educational	
Single Sex Boys	
Single Sex Girls	√

Age range: 3-19

Is this a designated Faith School:

Yes with faith admissions	
No, with faith admissions	
No	√

(Faith: )

Specialism(s) (if applicable): N/A

### 2.3 School Population

Admissions Number: 665

Comment [h14]: This can't be right

#### PRIMARY

Current number of pupils on roll as at: 209 + 26 nursery (latest full year figures as at end of academic year 2006/2007)

X R: 17 Yr1: 19 Yr 2: 23 Yr 3: 29 Yr 4: 40 Yr 5: 36 Yr 6: 45

Number of Reception Year pupils admitted in:

Comment [h15]: They are proposing to double their numbers on reception in the context of falling cohorts

September 2003: 23

September 2004: 23

September 2005: 18

September 2006: 17

#### SECONDARY

Current number of pupils on roll as at: 334 (latest full year figures as at end of academic year 2006/2007)

Yr 7: 55 Yr 8: 69 Yr 9: 66 Yr 10: 73 Yr 11: 71

Comment [h16]: They are talking about increasing their intake by 100% at a time of falling cohort. This is not marginal.

Number of Year 7 pupils admitted in:

September 2003: 74

September 2004: 66

September 2005: 63

September 2006: 55

7



Number of Year 12-13 students at the school in:

September 2003: 142  
September 2004: 142  
September 2005: 127  
September 2006: 96

**Comment [h17]:** They expect to increase their size by 100%. What is the evidence and business case for this?

Percentage of pupil population who joined or left the school other than at the start or finish of the academic year in:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Junior	3.6	6.1	15.2	9.3
Senior	2.0	1.2	1.6	3.8

#### 2.4 Admissions

A copy of the current Admissions Policy is attached. Mark if agree ✓

#### 2.5 Leadership

Name of Head teacher: Mrs Carole Evans

Head teacher has been in post for: 10 Years 4 Months

#### 2.6 School Improvement

Intervention status:

None	✓
Special Measures	
School Improvement Notice	
Interim executive Board	
Serious Weakness	
Causing Concern	

Please provide details:

The current school is a high performing independent sector school, joining the Academies programme under the independent sector stream of the

Academies programme.

Does the predecessor school receive any external support and/or is in receipt of a tailored external support package?	Yes	
	No	√

If yes, please provide details:

Please provide details of the school's involvement in any local collaborative arrangements, such as Excellence in Cities: N/A

## 2.7 Finance

Does the predecessor school currently have a budget deficit?*	Yes	
	No	√

If yes, please provide details:

Does the predecessor school currently have an in year deficit?	Yes	
	No	√

If yes, please provide details of the LA's plan to reduce the deficit:

The Birkenhead High School makes an operating surplus before accounting for the central contribution from the GDST for the costs of bursaries and scholarships, which are provided in order to support the GDST's commitment to inclusion and access.

Comment [h18]: Astonishing!  
What are their budget projections?

## Section 3: The Proposed Academy

### 3.1 Academy Population

Planned Maximum Number: 980 + 18 FTE nursery places

Gender:

Co-Educational	
Single Sex Boys	
Single Sex Girls	√

Forms of Entry: 2 FE Primary Admissions Number: 40 Primary  
: 4 FE Secondary : 100 Secondary

Primary and Pre-School

Nursery (age 3-5): 18 FTE

Years 1-6 (age 5-11): 280

Secondary

Years 7-11 (age 11-16): 500

Years 12-13 (age 16-19): 200

**Please provide a detailed justification for the size of the proposed Academy:\***

There are four distinct residential areas on the Wirral – Birkenhead, Wallasey, Bebington and Deeside. Birkenhead contains areas of severe decline and deprivation with one ward having the highest levels of child poverty in England. Overall the Wirral has 138 maintained schools, serving a school population of nearly 55,000 pupils. There are 22 secondary schools, four of which are voluntary aided and two are foundation schools.

The Academy will increase the accessibility of non-selective, high quality, free places for the local and wider community in a high performing school. It will also provide, through its all-through ethos and model, an increased choice of school models for the community. As part of the independent sector stream of the Academies programme, the development of Birkenhead High School as an Academy will strongly support government policy “to enable the school to make its excellent education more widely available than in the past” ('Academies and Independent Schools' prospectus).

The all-through model, with the capacity in the Sixth Form to support the expectation that every girl will progress through to the Sixth Form, will also support the agenda to ensure all students have a clear 14-19 pathway.

The Academy will also be responding to an educational demand from the local and wider community which can be clearly seen in the historical numbers at the school in recent times under the Assisted Places scheme.

In real terms, the intended increase in pupil numbers will be relatively small, given the phasing of the intake and the spread across the 3-19 age groups and the Academy will be a comparable size to the size of the school in the very recent past. When the proposed Academy is full, the number of pupils aged 11-16 and pupils aged 16-19 will increase by a maximum of 156 and 104 students.

The impact on nearby schools is likely to be marginal because:

- o the Academy will supply a relatively small number of places in each year group;
- o the relatively small increase will be managed across both the primary and secondary phases
- o the Academy will serve pupils from a wide catchment area;
- o expansion up to the Academy's full capacity will take place over a period

Comment [h19]: What percentage currently progress, albeit to other institutions?

Comment [h20]: Evidence?

Comment [h21]: The rise is significant in terms of the falling cohort when the LA is removing places. They propose to insulate themselves from this fall. What is the evidence that they will succeed? If they do, other schools are at risk; if they do not, the public purse is

- of years rather than immediately with entry points at Reception, Year 7 and Sixth Form only.
- o the Academy's nursery provision is already included within the totality of universal early years provision on the Wirral
- o the increase in the size of the Sixth Form provision is not expected to impact negatively on the large and strong FE College and local grammar schools and will, through 14-19 collaboration, increase the range of options open to pupils from other schools within the Wirral.

Comment [h22]: Sixth form college?

### 3.2 All-age Academies\*

**If the Academy proposes to cater for primary pupils, please provide a reasoned argument for an all-age Academy:**

Birkenhead High School is (and always has been) an all-through school for girls from the age of three to 19 and this model is a significant reason for its success. The all-through model is essential to realising the vision of the Academy to provide a first-class education for future generations of girls living in the Wirral.

Through an all-through approach, pupils will be given the opportunity to develop in a consistent environment dedicated to excellence. The ethos of the Senior school will be strongly reinforced by the continuation of two forms of entry from the Junior department: girls who are already steeped in and committed to the values of excellence of the school.

The experience of both this school and the wider GDST is that the all-through approach is a key enabler in curriculum continuity and planning, exchange of good practice between phases and excellent delivery in critical areas for pupil attainment and support, such as assessment and reporting.

The all-age Academy offers genuinely exciting opportunities for innovation and the delivery of excellence within the school. For pupils this will enable the further development of cross-age mentoring and shared learning, as well as providing superb role-modelling for the younger pupils, through the involvement of senior pupils as mentors, in pastoral care (through peer-counselling schemes) and through activities which support learning and achievement, such as 'study buddies' or reading coaches.

The model will also provide opportunities for older pupils to take on leadership roles, for example through the Community Sports Leader Awards and in organising co-curricular activities.

In terms of practice we strongly believe the evidence that successful transition between ages and stages is best supported by careful liaison informed by an understanding of the cross-phase process and expectations which build upon the progress made in the primary stage.

Secondary trained staff also benefit greatly from professional learning with primary colleagues, for example in individualising learning, in more effectively using formative assessment, or in developing new approaches to fostering creativity and in the more flexible approach to curriculum design which is increasingly being considered for KS3 to maintain learning and attainment

For staff the all-through environment also gives opportunities for greater cross-phase understanding and for joint INSET training reinforced through the GDST's new MSc in Educational Leadership.

For pupils who are identified as gifted and talented further support can be offered through use of specialists from the secondary stage, who would not otherwise be available, to provide extension and enrichment activities and qualified subject specialist teaching where appropriate, and to share in planning for transition.

**If the Academy proposes to cater for nursery pupils (age 3-5), please provide details of how this will fit with the Local Authority strategic plan for nursery education:**

There is universal nursery provision for all three and four year olds in the Wirral area. The Birkenhead High School nursery provision, which will continue into the Academy, is included within this mix of council maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector provision.

The nursery phase of the school is vital to the all-through ethos of the school and is an integral part of the school – again following the highly successful existing model of an all-through 3-19 school at Birkenhead High school currently and across the GDST.

### **3.3 Opening Dates\***

September 2009 in existing buildings (if applicable)

September 2010-2012 – **provisional** – in new/refurbished buildings

### **3.4 Specialism(s) \***

The Academy will specialise in: **Music and Maths**

### **3.5 Admissions\***

Please confirm that the Academy's admissions policy will comply with admissions law, the School Admissions Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice as they apply to maintained schools.	Mark if agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Please confirm that the Academy will have regard to and have an independent appeal panel which acts in accordance with the Secretary of State's guidance on exclusions.	Mark if agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Please confirm that the admissions policy will ensure that the Academy meets the statutory requirements (i.e. "provides education for pupils of different abilities who are wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated").	Mark if agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Comment [h23]: What does "area" mean?

The Academy will take up its place on the local Admissions Forum.	Mark if agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If oversubscribed will the Academy select up to 10% of its pupils by aptitude for the specialism?*	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment [h24]: Only if oversubscribed?

**If yes, please provide details of how the sponsor will develop a selection mechanism that is not dependent on ability:**

An appropriate test to assess pupils by aptitude for the Academy's music specialism – covering pitch, rhythm, texture, and melody, based on tests used in other schools – will be developed during feasibility.

**Please provide any further details known about the proposed over-subscription criteria and admissions policy. In particular, how the policy will lead to a balanced intake and whether fair banding will be considered\*:**

Further details of the admissions policy and oversubscription criteria, for each relevant age group, will be developed during feasibility, in consultation with the local authority.

The Academy's sponsor proposes to maintain the predecessor school's current broad catchment area which covers the whole of the Wirral peninsula, for each relevant age group, and to increase the size of the school (broadly in line with previous size) on a phased basis to limit the impact on neighbouring schools.

Academy students will therefore be recruited into Reception (Foundation 2), Year 7 and Sixth Form one year at a time from the Academy's opening in September 2009 to ensure the school grows gradually and minimise any impact on surrounding schools.



For Nursery and Reception admissions will also be drawn from the Wirral-wide catchment area, reflecting the broad geographical community the school currently serves.

- o Where the Nursery is oversubscribed, priority will be given to looked-after children and siblings, with remaining places offered by random allocation from all those applying to the school from the Wirral-wide catchment area.
- o Where the Reception is over-subscribed, priority will be given to looked-after children, children at the Academy's nursery, and siblings, with remaining places offered by random allocation from all those applying to the school from the catchment area.

In Year 7, in addition to the Academy's Year 6 pupil progressions, places will be allocated on the basis of 10% of places selected for aptitude for music. Thereafter the Academy will consider siblings and then fair banding of applications from across a comparable geographic community, with priority given to looked after children. Fair banding will follow the same protocols as used for the sister Belvedere Academy and the William Hulme Academy but with a Wirral-wide catchment area. As per The Belvedere Academy the banding used will be Norm Referenced Banding achieving an intake representative of the ability profile of those children applying to a school.

Comment [h25]: If oversubscribed?

Comment [h26]: Not the whole Wirral ability profile?

**Year 12 (Sixth Form)** admission will be in accordance with the Academy's minimum entry requirements.

Religious affiliation will not form any part of the selection criteria at any stage of the school.

By definition, given that the school is an all-through school, all current pupils at the school from 3-19 will have protected places. The Academy cohorts will be phased in from the Reception, Year 7 and Year 12 on a year by year basis, with no infilling to the existing year groups.

### 3.6 Special Educational Needs (SEN)\*

Please confirm that the proposed Academy's SEN policy will meet the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice.	
Mark if agree	√

**Please provide details of the proposed Academy's provision for pupils with SEN, including any specific SEN Units:**

The Academy will develop effective provision for children with SEN, working with the local authority to meet the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. The Academy will have first class SEN provision, based on the principle of inclusion. The predecessor school is already implementing its access plan and all new facilities and necessary refurbishments will be designed with disabilities in mind. The Academy will use innovative techniques for tackling learning difficulties and will have a particular focus on all aspects of

numeracy. The Academy will also provide a very strong educational offering for children under its gifted and talented programme.

If proposing to include an SEN Unit please confirm that it will form part of the Local-Authority wide provision for SEN and that the Local Authority will bear all costs (capital and revenue) of this provision.	N/A	
Mark if agree		

Comment [h27]: EBD?

### 3.7 Vision\*

#### The Sponsor

The Academy will be sponsored principally by the GDST. Founded in 1872, the GDST is the largest group of independent schools in the UK, and currently educates over 20,000 students aged 3 to 19 in 29 schools. As a charity it reinvests all income in its schools for the benefit of its pupils. It has a reputation for pioneering innovation in the education and care of pupils and is recognised at home and abroad for educational excellence. The GDST is also the sponsor of The Belvedere Academy in Liverpool.

The GDST is currently in discussion with a Russell Group University to be a co-sponsor of the Academy. The proposed University sponsor would bring both an aspirational link for the school in terms of educational excellence and a strong international dimension to the Academy.

#### Vision

The Birkenhead High School Academy will offer a distinctive educational experience to all pupils with a culture of high expectation.

Key themes of the educational vision for the Academy will be:

- **A distinctive ethos built on a culture of high expectations, raising aspirations and the achievement of each pupil's personal best.** This will be built on the success and ethos of the predecessor school – based on principles of access and inclusion and a commitment to add value to pupils with a range of talents which have been the mainstay of both Birkenhead High School's and the GDST's philosophy since their foundation.
- **Raising aspirations and standards through the all-through school model.** In an all-through school girls are given the opportunity to develop in a consistent environment dedicated to excellence from the youngest age. The ethos of the Senior school is strongly reinforced by its cohort from the Junior department of girls who are already steeped in, and committed to, the values of excellence of the school.

- **Working with the local community and in partnership with local schools**, already a major element in the wider educational work of the GDST and its schools. The GDST envisages delivering this through its wrap around care provision, extensive and diverse extra curricular clubs programme, community service, Young Enterprise and Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes, gifted and talented and honours programmes, and master classes.
- **Personal best.** The Academy will aim to help each pupil attain their personal best. The aim is to enable every student to fulfil every aspect of their potential, academically, personally and socially. Personal, individual targets will be set to stretch and challenge students, to reinforce strengths and address weaknesses through independent learning and personal learning plans for every student.
- **Excellence.** The Academy is committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning. The aim is to imbue each year group with values and aspirations of excellence, and communicate the highest standards and expectations. Teachers will be provided with all necessary support to be able to 'deliver' excellence in and out of the classroom.
- **Personal development.** A key aspect of the Academy will be the importance of the personal development of each young person enrolled at the Academy. The GDST is committed to fostering a lively spirit of enquiry and to developing individuals who are confident, competent and compassionate, responsive to their environment and to the concerns and needs of others. Within a safe and supportive environment, pupils will be encouraged to take risks and to challenge themselves. This is already an important part of the culture of the predecessor school, with BHS active in Young Enterprise and holding the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh's Award. More than 2,000 DoE awards have been presented to BHS students and the school award, one of only a handful made each year, marks the school's exceptional commitment to the scheme and, more broadly, to developing wider social responsibility.
- **Enrichment and enhancement.** The pupils and staff will have access to the full range of enrichment that other GDST schools currently enjoy. The GDST enables pupils to flourish and excel by providing a unique mix of the collaborative climate, quality of experience, individual support and leadership opportunities which excite and extend their talents. Pupils at the Academy will have access to the GDST's own gifted and talented provision to support accelerated learning for talented pupils in each selected subject.

The all-through character of the Academy will be a central element in its ethos and will provide important opportunities for innovation:

**For all pupils** this will enable the further development of cross-age mentoring and shared learning, as well as providing role-modelling for the younger children, through the involvement of senior pupils as mentors, in pastoral care

(through peer-counselling schemes) and through activities which support learning and achievement, such as 'study buddies' or reading coaches and through providing opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, for example through the Sports Leader Awards, in organising co-curricular activities.

**For younger children** who are identified as gifted and talented additional support can be offered through use of subject specialists to provide extension and enrichment activities and flexibility in stage rather than age progression.

**Seamless transition between ages and stages** – supported by careful liaison, informed by an understanding of the cross-phase process and expectations, joint planning and working by primary and secondary staff, and more flexible approaches to curriculum design and delivery, particularly for KS3, to maintain attainment and progression.

#### **The Academy curriculum**

The Academy will continue to draw on best practice from the GDST's 24 all-through schools, the use of educational research to inform teaching and learning and its links with higher education institutions, in its persistent drive for improvement and its commitment to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential.

#### **Nursery/Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2**

The Academy's Early Years provision will embed the notion of the 'thinking community', where each child's independent spirit, thought and individual ways of looking at the world will be nurtured and shared, and where learning is fun, engaging and interactive- promoting creativity and innovation- for example using philosophy lessons at Key Stage 2 to develop thinking skills or the outdoor environment as an integral part of learning in the Foundation Stage.

Pupils' social and personal growth will be enhanced by the opportunity from the outset to develop high levels of 'emotional intelligence' and coping skills for life, for example through the inclusion of an internationally researched programme – 'Zippy and his Friends' – for six- to seven-year-olds, enabling them to develop coping strategies in a variety of real-life contexts. This will be in addition to support from their teachers, the involvement of older pupils, 'Friendship Circles', and a positive emphasis on caring and mutual respect which characterises the ethos that the school will continue to promote. As with all GDST schools the Academy will seek to develop competent, confident and compassionate students.

#### **Key Stage 3**

The Academy will broadly follow the National Curriculum as is already the case at GDST schools, as it is in the interests of pupils to follow a broad and balanced offer, and will take advantage of the greater flexibility that now underpins the National Curriculum in order to use it creatively. The GDST is also open to potentially using the thematic approach which KS3 now encourages at the Academy (as for all GDST schools).

### **The 14-19 Curriculum**

The Academy's sponsor and the predecessor school are committed to delivering an exciting, rigorous and varied curriculum which inspires pupils with a love of learning, challenges and extends them intellectually and personally and enables them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to succeed in education, work and life.

Alongside the current broad and deep offer at GDST schools of GCSEs and A Levels, the GDST has strongly welcomed the thinking behind the 14-19 developments associated with the Tomlinson report and has also been actively investigating diploma-style provision. In keeping with its commitment to maintaining high standards and broadening choice, the Academy will wish to consider the contribution of those Diploma pathways, such as Science, which complement and extend its strengths and specialisms. The Academy would expect to co-operate with other providers in entitlement of 14-19 delivery (eg in opening up the specialism of Further Maths).

The proposed links with an HE provider will also give opportunities for enrichment, stretch and challenge for the 14-19 phase – for example, provision of HE modules in the Sixth Form and opportunities for students to attend masterclasses and seminars. For staff the link also has the potential to offer subject expertise through CPD links.

### **The international dimension**

Pupils entering the Academy in September 2009 will not retire until 2070 – for them the global workplace will be the only reality they know. In order to prepare pupils for life and work in the global economy an international dimension will underpin all aspects of the academy's curriculum and activities, linking with both the GDST's extensive international programmes and, it is hoped, with the international work of the proposed University co-sponsor. This will be based on:

- Access to the international focus and dimension brought by its sponsor the GDST, such as its exchange programme for Heads with China, and its work in developing international schools in India and China;
- Links with other schools and universities, such as the student Summer School, taking place at Ningbo in 2008, and a student exchange programme with the University of Mumbai;
- Close links with universities to further develop international opportunities for staff and students;
- Support to the staff at the Academy in accessing the width of expertise across the GDST from staff who are working on the international dimension within GDST schools – via for example, the GDST's collaborative forums in this area through its ICT network.

An extensive and innovative programme of careers support and guidance will be provided through the GDST, utilising the sponsor's extensive network of former pupils. This comprises an online careers directory of professions, a network of ex-pupils able to offer advice and support, help sourcing work experience and gap year placements, a comprehensive programme of CareerStart workshops, interactive life-skills workshops, the involvement of



world class trainers, and a rough guide to university.

**Specialisms – delivering excellence and innovation in education through the music and maths specialisms.**

Music and maths, and the cross-curricular links between music and maths, are areas of particular strength for both the sponsor, GDST, and the predecessor school. The GDST envisages significant cross-GDST and cross-authority engagement and outreach work to extend this programme at the Academy and spread best practice more widely, especially at 16-19 in the teaching of music and maths. Through its specialisms the academy will:

**Music specialism**

- Encourage students to develop a lifelong passion for, and appreciation of music, not only as composers and performers but also as audiences, technicians and critics.
- Encourage all students to participate in a wide variety of music making, allowing pupils to follow courses at their own pace, utilising the passion and skills of older students to excite and engage the Academy's nursery and primary aged pupils and new pupils admitted to the Academy at 11 years of age.
- Identify ways in which music can improve learning in other curriculum areas – for example combining music and maths – and will take a lead in the imaginative use of new technologies as a means of enhancing learning in music.
- Provide a varying and continuing programme of music performance and extra-curricular music activities. The breadth of the GDST also may offer the potential for collaboration with other schools in music, and potentially links with specialist music schools such as Chetham's, Royal Northern or Purcell, and also with local, regional, national and international music based industries, to enable pupils to work in school with professionals involved in music and to enjoy musical experiences outside the classroom.
- Place high status on a range of courses in music across the width of classical music, music technology, recording and mixing. The Academy will also maximise opportunities for its own pupils and pupils from other local schools and young people in the wider community to achieve in music and gain access to employment, further training and higher education in the growing range of professions and occupations within this and related sectors.
- Contribute to the Music Manifesto and support the delivery of wider opportunities for primary aged pupils in the Academy and in other primary schools to learn a musical instrument.

**Mathematics specialism**

The Academy's sponsor and the predecessor school recognise that maths skills will be ever more important in the 21st century, both in their own right



and to support other disciplines such as science, ICT and business. Maths is a great strength of both Birkenhead High School and the GDST, with high numbers of girls taking Maths and Further Maths at A Level.

Building on BHS's current high performance in maths the Academy will:

- Further enhance the visible mathematics ethos in which maths permeates all aspects of the life of the Academy, provide extensive enrichment activities, utilising the application of ICT and technological resources to develop understanding of mathematical concepts, take part in national initiatives and competitions, international Olympiads, and extend the range of maths courses at all key stages.
- Continually seek to raise the quality of teaching and learning in maths and develop innovative opportunities to teach and learn maths.
- Act as a lead centre in developing and sharing good practice and resources across the whole community in maths.
- Actively engage and work with business, industry and higher education to promote the use of mathematics outside of the Academy.

The Academy's specialisms will permeate all aspects of the curriculum and support the school's all-through ethos, for example with Sixth Form mathematicians working with primary aged pupils during maths weeks, combining a number of music and maths lessons in the early years in line with research evidence that suggests that the way the brain interprets music, pattern and relationships is similar and that correlation to pattern is linked to how children read, and in the sharing of musical cultures to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of others and benefit from the richness of diversity in a meaningful and practical way.

The Academy's music and maths specialisms will strengthen the opportunities open to pupils and complement the range of specialisms both in Birkenhead and more widely across the Wirral.

#### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

The Academy will capitalise on its technology rich learning environment to meet the needs of all learners, develop innovative learning materials and activities across its wide age range, enhance personalised learning and assessment, provide access for pupils and staff to the widest possible range of learning opportunities and specialist provision, support student and teacher contact with other schools and colleges, and enable parents and carers to monitor and support their children's learning.

In the ICT context, the school will be part of the GDST-wide ICT community which provides leading-edge support to GDST schools, staff and pupils (the ICT teacher at Birkenhead High School, for example, currently delivers training at Liverpool John Moores University) including the delivery of an innovative educational network, called MyPlace, which provides a vehicle through which staff and students can communicate, collaborate and share, developing an active learning community.

The Academy's aim will be to ensure that using ICT in innovative and

imaginative ways becomes second nature for all students and staff. The Academy will seek to collaborate with local primary and other secondary schools across the Wirral with a view to making technology-based specialist resources available to a wider group of students.

#### **Extended schools**

The Academy will work with the local community to provide access to a range of extended services to meet the needs of its evolving pupil population and its local community, continuing and enhancing what is already a major element of the school's work. It is envisaged this will include:

- Wrap around care provision (breakfast club and after-school club) from 8am until 6pm.
- An extensive and diverse extra-curricular clubs programme during and after the school day.
- Community service, Young Enterprise and Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes.
- Gifted and talented and honours programmes, and master classes for 14-19 students.

This will follow models already existing in other GDST schools – for example at Blackheath High School where the innovative Open Door programme brings adult learners into the school.

#### **Pastoral care and support**

A detailed programme of pastoral support, a strong feature of the GDST, will be available for every pupil – with named tutors for all students and clear structures. An in-depth understanding of pupils will be intrinsic to the nature of the Academy (and is frequently highlighted as a strength of GDST schools at inspection). A high degree of interaction between older and younger pupils will also contribute to the supportive environment.

In addition to arrangements for the academic development of students, appropriate emphasis will be placed on structures for high-quality care, guidance and support of students, a strong feature of the GDST. The formal curriculum will be complemented with a full programme of careers education and guidance, pastoral care, professional mentoring and personal, health and citizenship education, and activities to promote students' general well being, and encourage students and their parents to participate fully in the life of the school.

#### **Management, leadership, and governance**

##### **Professional development**

A rigorous programme of review and self evaluation will inform the Academy's planning and development. The GDST has operated an extensive staff development programme for more than a decade, achieving notable success in 'growing its own leaders', and has recently introduced an innovative MSc in Educational Leadership, developed in partnership with the University of Leicester and HTI. The Academy will build on this foundation, maximising opportunities to engage high-quality specialists in all curriculum areas, enhancing cross-phase collaboration and development, and ensuring that all

staff benefit from an entitlement to continuing professional development, including refresher courses, post graduate studies and collaborative projects, and opportunities made available by the GDST's local and national HE partners. The Academy will engage in National College for School Leadership programmes, in particular, the ECM Leadership Direct initiative.

#### **Governance**

Management and governance will be through the GDST Academy Trust, supported by a local governing body for the new Academy operating under the multi-academy model already approved by the DCSF. The local governing body will follow the model of The Belvedere Academy, with membership including the Principal, one elected parent member, one elected non-teaching staff member, one elected teacher member, one person appointed by the local authority and other such members as the governors decide.

The GDST intends, subject to discussions with the Academy Trust, to provide a range of educational and other services to the Academy in order to ensure continuity of provision for existing and former pupils and to fulfil its role as sponsor by sharing its experience and knowledge of achieving the highest standards in education for the benefit of the school, its staff and pupils and the wider community.

#### **Building design**

The GDST considers that the building and facilities requiring new build and refurbishment in order to deliver the vision of the Academy are as follows: enhanced specialist facilities for the Academy's specialisms of music and maths across all phases (recording and control room, ensemble room and possibly a concert facility); enhancements of the reception and main entrance areas for primary and secondary provision to enrich the welcome for parents and students at all phases of the Academy; library and learning resources, ICT facilities in the Junior school, staff workspaces and administration, enhanced dining facilities; additional general teaching and learning areas and social spaces; and enhanced nursery facilities. In terms of space the most appropriate development opportunity would be on the site of the current assembly and dining hall facilities.

#### **Summary**

The Birkenhead High School Academy will be proud to be a lead member of the independent sector stream of the Academies programme – of which its sister school The Belvedere Academy is the pioneer school. As a major independent school becoming an Academy, Birkenhead High School Academy will be accessible to all providing high quality, educationally excellent, free, non-selective places to the local and wider community.

## Section 4: The Academy Site and Building

### 4.1 Site Basics

The Academy will be located at the following address: 86 Devonshire Place, Prenton, Merseyside, CH43 1TY. This is currently the site of Birkenhead High School.

**The approximate size of the site to be transferred to the Academy Trust is: 3.82 hectares (9.43 acres)**

Will the proposed Academy have access to playing fields of a sufficient size to deliver its proposed vision and curriculum?	Yes	√
	No	

**Please provide details:** The current Birkenhead High School is located over a number of inter-relating sites. At present the Infant and Junior schools have dedicated playground facilities allowing for most of its PE curriculum to be delivered on-site. To the rear of the Junior school there is also a generous provision of tennis courts, which are used by both the Junior and Senior schools. Similarly, there are a number of netball courts situated on the Senior school site. In addition, adjacent to the Junior school, approached from Sandy Way, there is a dedicated secure sports field totalling 2.56 acres and incorporating a full size MUGA (multi-use games area) provision. The school also incorporates a four-court sports hall facility, with a fitness suite and swimming pool.

A copy of the Ordnance Survey map is attached with the boundaries of the Academy site clearly marked.	Mark if agree	√
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### 4.2 Site Ownership

The site of the proposed Academy is owned by the\*:

Local Authority	
Diocese	
CTC Trust	
Other	√

**The site is owned by the Girls' Day School Trust:**

If it is not currently a school site, please provide details of the ownership and

current usage of the entire site and details of who will bear the costs of acquiring the site:

If the site is currently a school site, it will be transferred at nil cost (or leased at nominal rent) to the Academy Trust prior to the Academy opening, with terms agreed prior to Funding Agreement.	
Mark if agree	√
N/A	

**The GDST will transfer, on a leasehold basis, the Senior and Junior school sites to the GDST Academy Trust prior to the Academy opening, with terms to be agreed prior to Funding Agreement, subject to any consents required by law. The Academy will have use of the tennis courts (shaded on the Ordnance Survey map) pursuant to a licence, as set out in section 4.3.**

If the site is owned by the Local Authority does it intend to seek permission to dispose of any part of it?	Yes	
	No	.
	N/A	√

If yes, please provide details:

#### 4.3 Site Issues

Please confirm that the site is clear and unencumbered.*	
Mark if agree	

**Or, if this is not the case, a detailed strategy has been agreed with DCSF for the clearance of the site and the bearing of associated costs including the details for dealing with any current tenants on the site:**

The GDST is the trustee of the charity known as Birkenhead High School for Girls Playing Fields, pursuant to a Charity Commission Scheme dated 2nd June 1989. Under the Scheme the playing fields are vested in the GDST as trustee and the GDST can lease the playing fields (subject to some conditions). The Scheme will require amendment and should specifically refer to the Academy. This will require Charity Commission approval; however, we do not foresee this causing any difficulties.

The tennis courts are under a long licence to Birkenhead Lawn Tennis Club Limited (expiring in 2059). The GDST intends to grant the Academy Trust that will operate Birkenhead High School Academy a licence to use the tennis

courts, which would allow the Academy the same usage rights as the current school.

**If the Academy proposes to open in existing buildings (Section 3.3), please provide a brief description of the age, size and condition of these buildings:**

The Junior and Senior schools are located on separate sites on opposite sides of Devonshire Place.

The school is not purpose built and therefore does not enjoy the benefits of having all of its facilities and buildings of the same type and easily accessible.

A steel footbridge is used for pupils passing between the two sites. The main vehicle entrances are on Devonshire Place, while separate entrances are available for kitchen deliveries. The main sports facilities are also located on a separate site adjacent to the Junior school

The main school buildings are of various ages and suffer from typical design and maintenance problems associated with buildings of their age. The school is well maintained and substantial amounts of work have been carried out.

The asbestos records are in place and a strategy is in place to ensure that asbestos is removed or contained.

House 46 was built in the late 19th century and houses the Sixth Form including common rooms, careers offices, toilets, computer rooms, offices and teaching rooms. The building is part two-storey and part three-storey. A basement extends below the rear of the block

The science laboratory block was built in the early 1970s and is a four-storey building housing chemistry, physics and biology laboratories.

Leverhulme House was built in the late 19th century and contains classrooms, IT facilities and toilets. It is a two-storey, purpose-built teaching facility and, as such, fulfils its function well.

House 86 was built in the 19th century and is a part three and part four-storey block that was the original school building and prior to that was a residential accommodation. The building has a newer section to the north side though this is still more than 100 years old.

The Assembly Hall was built in the late 1960s to early 1970s and houses the main kitchens, servery, assembly hall and also offices at the perimeter.

The art and technology block was built in the mid 1970's and is a single storey block. It contains two art classrooms and two design technology classrooms.

The drama block was the original stable block to the main house and is single



storey and contains a large open plan drama facility. The building is well suited to its use and provides an acoustically separated facility in good condition.

The sports hall building was built in the 1980s and houses a swimming pool and changing room at ground floor and a gymnasium at first floor level and is in good condition.

The library is a single storey block. At the rear there is an original block constructed in 1920 of traditional construction with pitched slate covered roofs and solid brick walls.

The Junior school comprises two buildings, Houses 29 and 31, both built in the late 19th century.

The GDST considers that the building and facilities requiring new build/ refurbishment in order to deliver the vision of the Academy are as follows: enhanced specialist facilities for the Academy's specialisms of music and maths across all phases (recording and control room, ensemble room and possibly a concert facility); enhancements of the reception and main entrance areas for primary and secondary provision to enrich the welcome for parents and students at all phases of the Academy; library and learning resources; ICT facilities in the Junior school; staff workspaces and administration, enhanced dining facilities; additional general teaching and learning areas and social spaces; and enhanced nursery facilities. In terms of space the most appropriate development opportunity would be on the site of the current assembly and dining hall facilities.

**Please provide details of discussions with Local Authority planners or legal advisors on any likely planning or legal restrictions that could preclude Academy building development, lead to abnormal costs, or impact on the proposed programme:**

The GDST has not had discussions with the Local Authority planners at this early stage, owing to the fact that there are no project or development proposals at a sufficient stage.

However, this is the site of an existing school, with a history of successful building development; we reasonably assume that any development proposals could be successfully negotiated with the local planning authority as the expansion proposals for the proposed Academy are modest.

The playing fields and the tennis courts are subject to the restrictions set out above.

**Please provide brief details of a satisfactory plan for dealing with any co-locating primary school, Pupil Referral Unit, youth or community groups sharing the site, including who will bear associated capital and**

**revenue costs:**

N/A

**Where required in response to site constraints or as a result of remodelling, please provide details of a decanting plan for existing occupants during construction and details of who will pay the associated costs:**

The site is large enough to ensure that it should be possible to remodel and rebuild the school without significant disruption to the day-to-day working of the Academy (with the possible assistance of some temporary accommodation during the construction works).

Therefore, it is not envisaged that any decanting will be required as a result of remodelling works or site constraints.

Please confirm that the Local Authority will meet the cost of any off site works that may be associated with the development of the Academy.	
Mark if agree	N/A

**4.4 Building and Project Management\***

The Department intends to deliver all procurement through Partnerships for Schools (PFS) and Local Authorities. This Academy will be procured through:

<b>BSF Local Education Partnership</b>	
<b>PfS National Framework</b>	√

**If other, please provide details of an alternative procurement strategy agreed with DCSF:**

As the Birkenhead High School Academy is not located in a local authority which has been identified as prioritised for inclusion in Building Schools for the Future ('BSF'), it is anticipated that any building programme for the Academy will be delivered through the special 'national framework' for Academies set up by Partnership for Schools ('PFS').

The Sponsor wishes to discuss with DCSF and PFS the most appropriate method of procurement and delivery of Academy building work to achieve best value and take account of the particular circumstances of this project.

The GDST also wishes to follow The Belvedere Academy project management approach for the feasibility and implementation stage, where project management for the Academy development was provided by a combination of Project Managers from the DCSF framework agreement, and an educational lead working directly for the GDST as sponsor, with a deep

understanding of the GDST and the context for transferring a high-performing independent school into an independent sector Academy.

## Section 5: Agreements

### 5.1 Sponsor Agreement

The GDST and (depending on the outcomes of current discussions) a Russell Group University will provide sponsorship in kind comprising time and expertise and, for the GDST, primarily the current site and buildings and an operational high-performing school.

The GDST supports in principle the creation of an endowment fund for the Academy.

Details are as follows:

As a high performing sponsor, sponsorship by the GDST is at heart about the transfer of expertise and ethos to the new Academy.

In addition the GDST will transfer, on a leasehold basis, the Senior and Junior school sites to the GDST Academy Trust prior to the Academy opening, with terms to be agreed prior to Funding Agreement, subject to any necessary consents required by law.

The GDST will continue to award prizes and scholarships to pupils at Birkenhead High School Academy from its prizes and scholarships fund.

This sponsorship assumes a satisfactory outcome of the feasibility study, and subsequent internal approvals.

(Depending on the successful outcome of the current conversation) for the Russell Group University, as a high performing sponsor, sponsorship will consist of the transfer of expertise and ethos of the sponsor as described above.

The funding agreement and its schedules have not been reviewed in detail at this stage and the GDST reserves the right to discuss and negotiate the provisions of the agreement and the schedules with the DCSF during the feasibility phase.

Please confirm that you understand and are content with the roles and responsibilities of the Sponsor, as set out in <i>Sponsor Guidelines</i> .	
Mark if agree	√

**5.2 Local Authority Agreement\***

Does the Local Authority agree to all aspects of this proposal, including the admissions criteria proposed in Section 3?	Yes	
	No	

Does the Local Authority confirm that it will bring forward proposals for the closure of any predecessor schools?	Yes	
	No	N/A

Is this proposal included (or will be included) within the Local Authority's BSF Strategy for Change?	Yes	
	No	

Comment [h28]: Chance would have been a fine thing!

If you have answered no to either of these questions, please provide full details:

Comment [h29]: Our reply should really cover this bit

If this project involves a predecessor school, please provide details of the proposed consultation that the Local Authority will undertake on its closure:  
N/A

**5.3 Neighbouring Local Authority Agreement\***

If the proposed Academy is likely to impact upon neighbouring Local Authorities have these Authorities been consulted and approved this Academy project.	Yes	
	No	
	N/A	

**5.4 Governing Body Agreement\***

If this Academy project involves a predecessor school, the Governing Body of that school has agreed to this proposal?	Yes	√
	No	
	N/A	

**Please provide details:** The Trustees of the GDST, who are legally responsible for the predecessor school, are strongly in favour of this proposal – subject to a satisfactory outcome of the feasibility study and an appropriate level of funding. The GDST Academy Trust, which will be operating the Academy, supports the proposal going forward to the feasibility stage.

**5.5 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Agreement\***

Has the Local LSC been consulted on and agreed to any proposed post 16 provision?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

A letter confirming support is attached?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If No - Please provide copies of any correspondence and give details of LSC objections:

**5.7 Site and Building**

All parties are content with the selection of this site and no others are under consideration for this project.	
* Subject to our earlier comments	Mark if agree* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Department has put out a tender on the open market for the Project Management of Academy projects. Please confirm that all parties are content to select a Project Management company from the DCSF framework.*	
*subject to our earlier comments	Mark if agree- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please confirm that all parties understand and are content with the roles and

responsibilities of the Sponsor, Steering Group, Academy Trust, Local Authority and PfS in relation to the Academy buildings, as set out in <i>Delivering Academy Buildings through PfS</i> :	
*Subject to our earlier comments	Mark if agree* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5.8 Please provide details of any known impediments, risks, conditions or hazards not mentioned elsewhere in this document:

5.9 We fully support all aspects of this Expression of Interest and agree to use it as a basis for the future development of an Academy project.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(For and on behalf of the Sponsor)

Name in full:

Position:

Date:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(For and on behalf of the Local Authority)

Name in full:

Position:

Date:



## **Section 6: Contact Details**

**Name of Sponsor representative:** Barbara Harrison/Diana Gerald,  
The Girl's Day School Trust  
Address: 100 Rochester Row, London SW1P 1JP  
Email: d.gerald@wes.gdst.net  
Tel: 0207 393 6626  
Mobile: 07879 414491  
Fax: 020 7393 6789

**Name of Local Authority representative:**  
Address:  
Email:  
Tel:  
Mobile:  
Fax:

**Name of predecessor school representative:**  
Address:  
Email:  
Tel:  
Mobile:  
Fax:

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**THE ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO THE BIRKENHEAD HIGH  
SCHOOL ACADEMY**

**Birkenhead High School Academy**  
**86 Devonshire Place**  
**Prenton**  
**Merseyside**  
**CH43 1TY**

**Principal: Mrs C Evans**

**Admission Number:**

<b>Reception</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>60</b>

1. Birkenhead High School Academy ("the Academy"), agreed in principle by the Government, is on target to open in September 2009. It is anticipated that the funding for the Academy, which will admit pupils of all abilities and will not charge fees, will be finalised in December 2008.
2. Birkenhead High School Academy will be a non-denominational all-through school for girls aged 3 to 19 years old and will specialise in the teaching of music and mathematics. The Academy will admit an all-ability intake and 10% of girls at Year 7 will be selected on their aptitude for music. It will serve the local and wider community, and welcome applications from parents both within and outside the Wirral area. The Academy will build on high aspirations, inclusion and excellence which are the hallmarks of the current school.
3. The Academy is sponsored by The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), and funded in partnership with government.
4. This document sets out the admission arrangements for the Academy in accordance with Annex B to the Funding Agreement between the GDST Academy Trust and the Secretary of State. Any changes to the arrangements set out in this document must be approved in advance by the Secretary of State. Obligations in this document are to be treated as if imposed by the Funding Agreement.
5. This annex may be amended in writing at any time by agreement between the Secretary of State and the GDST Academy Trust.
6. The GDST Academy Trust will act in accordance with, and will ensure that the Independent Appeal Panel is trained to act in accordance with, all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families ("the Codes") as they apply at any given time to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. For this purpose, reference in the Codes or law to "admission authorities" shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the GDST Academy Trust.

## Birkenhead High School Academy

7. The GDST Academy Trust will take part in the Wirral's Admissions Forum and have regard to its advice; and will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority and the local in-year fair access protocol.
8. Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct the Academy to admit a named pupil to the Academy on application from a local authority. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the Academy.
9. While Birkenhead High School Academy is its own Admissions Authority, it will follow the Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admission arrangements for Reception and Year 7. Admissions arrangements for Nursery and Sixth Form are managed directly by the Academy.

### **ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

#### **Admission number**

10. The Academy will open on 1 September 2009 with Published Admission Numbers relating to pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 7 and Year 12, as set out in this policy. Pupils in other year groups will transfer automatically from the predecessor school, Birkenhead High School ("BHS"), which will close on 31 August 2009.
11. The agreed admission numbers for the Academy for the academic year 2009-2010, and for subsequent years (subject to any change approved by the Secretary of State), are as follows:

Nursery	18 full-time equivalent
Reception	40
Year 7	60
Year 12	100 minus those pupils eligible to transfer from the Academy's own year 11
12. Birkenhead High School Academy may set higher admission numbers as its Published Admission Numbers for any specific year. Before setting an admission number higher than its agreed admission numbers, the Academy will consult with primary and secondary schools in the Wirral. Girls will not be admitted above the Published Admission Number except for good reason. Any such admission shall be reported to the Secretary of State.

**Arrangements for admission to the Nursery**

*Process of application*

13. Applications for Nursery places at Birkenhead High School Academy are not part of the Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admissions arrangements and should be made direct to the Academy on the Academy's nursery application form. Applicants should reach the age of **3** during the year **1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009**.
14. The application form should be completed and returned to the Academy by **12 December 2008**.

*Consideration of applications for entry into Nursery*

15. The agreed admissions number is 18 full time equivalent (FTE) places. Girls will be offered up to five part-time sessions per week. The sessions last 2½ hours and typically will be either all morning or all afternoon sessions.

*Oversubscription procedure*

16. Where Birkenhead High School Academy is oversubscribed in Nursery the Academy will allocate places using the following criteria which are listed in priority order:
  - a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;
  - b) Girls who, on the date of admission, will have an older sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered sister enrolled at the Academy (or who were enrolled in Nursery and upwards at the predecessor school, BHS, and will continue to be so enrolled in July 2009).
17. Where in category b) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.

**Arrangements for admission to Reception**

*Process of application*

18. Applications for places at Birkenhead High School Academy in Reception will be made in accordance with Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Parental Preference Form, provided and administered by Wirral Children's Services.



## Birkenhead High School Academy

### *Consideration of applications for entry into Reception*

19. The agreed admissions number for Reception is 40.
20. Applications for places for Reception can be made for girls who turn **5** between **1 September 2009** and **31 August 2010**. Parents of girls in the Nursery must apply for a place in Reception using the Parental Preference Form. Applications should be sent to Wirral Local authority by the closing date set out in the Wirral composite Admissions Prospectus.
21. All girls will be offered places in Reception to start in September. However parents and guardians of girls reaching compulsory school age between March and August can defer admission until the following January, if preferred. Nonetheless, applications must be made on the Parental Preference Form on the dates set out above.
22. Where fewer applications than places are received, the Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. If the Academy is oversubscribed it will allocate places in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 23 to 24 below. Girls with statements of special educational needs will be admitted where the Academy is named in the statement.

### *Oversubscription procedure*

23. Where Birkenhead High School Academy is oversubscribed in Reception the Academy will allocate places using the following criteria which are listed in priority order:
  - a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;
  - b) Girls at the Academy's Nursery or the Nursery of the predecessor school, BHS;
  - c) Girls who, on the date of admission, will have an older sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered sister enrolled at the Academy (or who were enrolled in Reception and upwards at the predecessor school, BHS, and will continue to be so enrolled in July 2009).
24. Where in categories b) and c) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.
25. In the event of oversubscription in Reception, the above procedure will be open to scrutiny by an appropriately qualified external consultant appointed by the GDST Academy Trust board.

**Arrangements for admission to Year 7**

*Process of application*

26. While Birkenhead High School Academy is its own Admissions Authority, applications for places at the Academy for Year 7 will be made in accordance with Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Parental Preference Form, provided by the relevant local authority.
27. In addition, parents or guardians must complete the Supplementary Information Form, provided by the Academy. The Supplementary Information Form is to be completed and returned to the Academy before 4.00pm on **24 October 2008** (to coincide with the date for returning the completed Wirral Children's Services Parental Preference Form), for applications for the academic year 2009-2010.

*Consideration of applications for entry into Year 7*

28. Birkenhead High School Academy has an agreed admission number of 60 pupils in Year 7. The Academy will accordingly admit 60 pupils in the relevant age group each year if sufficient applications are received. Pupils transferring from Year 6 at the predecessor school, BHS, or already on the roll at the Academy in Year 6 will be able to automatically progress to Year 7. The total year group for Year 7 will be 100. If fewer pupils transfer from Year 6, the Academy will admit over the admission number up to the overall size of the Year 7 group.
29. The Academy will consider all applications for places. Where fewer applications than places are received, the Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. If the Academy is oversubscribed it will allocate places in accordance with the procedure set out below.

*Oversubscription procedure*

30. Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admissions number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs where the Academy is named in the statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out in paragraphs 31 to 35 below.
31. In accordance with its first specialism, Birkenhead High School Academy will select 10% of the places available based on their aptitude for learning music ("the Music criterion"). An appropriate assessment for aptitude for learning music will be carried out by the school and applicants seeking entry under the Music criterion will also sit the non-verbal reasoning assessment set out in paragraph 32 below. The six places will be filled by those applicants who are assessed to have the greatest aptitude for music. Should there be a tie for last place(s) available, places will be allocated on a random basis. All applicants who seek a place under the Music criterion but to whom an offer is not made

## Birkenhead High School Academy

will be considered in accordance with the Banding procedure set out below. Where the Academy is oversubscribed the successful Music criterion applicants will not be allocated a place until after all those girls in public care (Looked After Children) have been allocated a place within their relevant band.

32. All remaining places, after places have been allocated in accordance with paragraph 31, will be allocated on the basis of Norm Referenced Banding in line with the Admissions Code. All applicants will take a non-verbal reasoning assessment, administered by the Academy and marked by an independent assessor, GL Assessment. The non-verbal reasoning assessment will not be used in determining offers under the Music criterion.
33. The Academy will admit the required number from each of the five ability bands based on the following percentage guidelines:

Band 1	20%
Band 2	20%
Band 3	20%
Band 4	20%
Band 5	20%

It is possible that the number of places to be determined by Banding will not be a multiple of five, in which case the following will apply.

If the number of places to be determined by banding leaves:

- a remainder of 1 when divided by 5, the place will be allocated to Band 3;
- a remainder of 2 when divided by 5, the places will be allocated to Bands 2 and 4;
- a remainder of 3 when divided by 5, the places will be allocated to Band 2, 3 and 4; and
- a remainder of 4 when divided by 5, the places will be allocated to Band 1, 2, 4 and 5.

34. If there are more applicants for each band than places available, within each band places will be allocated in the following order:
  - a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;
  - b) Girls who, on the date of admission, will have an older sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered sister enrolled at the Academy (or who were enrolled in Year 7 and upwards at the predecessor school, BHS, and will continue to be so enrolled in July 2009);
  - c) Where in category b) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places

## Birkenhead High School Academy

will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.

35. Girls who have not taken the Banding test (apart from Looked After Children who must always be given priority) will be considered **after** children who have sat the Banding test. They will be prioritised on the basis of criteria b) to c) above (in order). All applicants will be offered fair access to the test and reminded of the date, time and location of the test.
36. In the event of oversubscription in Year 7, the above procedure will be open to scrutiny by an appropriately qualified external consultant appointed by the GDST Academy Trust board.

### **Arrangements for admission to post-16 provision**

#### *Process of application*

37. Applications by external applicants for Sixth Form places at Birkenhead High School Academy should be made direct to the Academy on the Academy's application form not later than **27 February 2009**. Girls in the Academy's Year 11, or currently enrolled in Year 11 at the predecessor school, BHS, will automatically progress to the Academy's Sixth Form provided they meet the minimum entry requirements set out in paragraphs 39 to 42 below. All internal applicants must return an internal transfer form by **12 December 2008** as set out in paragraph 43 below.

#### *Consideration of applications for entry into Sixth Form*

38. The Academy has an agreed admission number of 100 pupils to Year 12, minus those eligible pupils progressing from the Academy's own Year 11. The Academy will accordingly provide for the admission or progression of 100 pupils to the Sixth Form if sufficient requests for progression or applications for entry are received. If the admission number 100 is met through internal transfers, no external applicants will be admitted.

#### *Minimum entry requirements*

39. The minimum academic requirement for entry into Birkenhead High School Academy Sixth Form (for both internal and external applicants) is six GCSE passes at Grade B or above, including English and Mathematics.
40. Individual subjects may also have particular requirements for the grades obtained at GCSE and these will be detailed each year in the information supplied to prospective students. However, if the Sixth Form is not full, and a student does not meet the grade requirement for a particular subject (but does meet the requirements for the Sixth Form), a range of alternative courses available within the Academy's Sixth Form curriculum will be offered.

## Birkenhead High School Academy

41. The Local Governing Body shall have discretion to take account of serious illness which has adversely affected an individual applicant's performance in applying the academic entry criteria.
42. Admission to the Sixth Form is also subject to the availability of places in a student's intended subject choices. However, if particular subjects are full but the Sixth Form is not, a range of alternative courses available within the Academy's Sixth Form curriculum will be offered.

### *Internal applicants*

43. Girls who are already on roll at the predecessor school, BHS, are entitled to transfer into the Sixth Form provided they meet the minimum standards for entry. All girls will be offered a course discussion to help them make the appropriate choices. Internal transfer forms should be returned to the Principal by **12 December 2008** in order to help the Academy to determine the number of places available for external applicants. Transfer forms received after this date will still be accepted but subject choices may be more limited because some courses may already be full. Offers of places will be conditional upon the entry requirements being achieved.

### *External applicants*

44. Girls who do not yet attend the predecessor school, BHS, should submit an external application form as soon as possible and not later than **27 February 2009**. Late applications will be considered if places are still available, although subject choices may be limited because some courses may already be full.
45. Those external applicants whose predicted GCSE grades meet the minimum level required will be offered a course discussion. Offers of places will be conditional upon the entry requirements being achieved.

### *Oversubscription procedure*

46. In the event of there being more external applicants to the Sixth Form than places available, applications will be considered as follows. After the admission of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs where the Academy is named in the statement, any remaining available places will be allocated in the following order to girls who achieve the entry requirements:
  - a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;
  - b) Girls who, on the date of admission, will have a sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered sister enrolled at the Academy (or who were enrolled at the predecessor school, BHS, and will continue to be so enrolled in September 2009);



## Birkenhead High School Academy

- c) Girls who wish to follow subject courses that are not fully subscribed;
  - d) Where in categories b) and c) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated to girls on a random basis across the Wirral and beyond.
47. In the event of oversubscription in Sixth Form, the above procedure will be open to scrutiny by an appropriately qualified external consultant appointed by the GDST Academy Trust board.

### **Casual admissions: i.e. admission to all year groups except Nursery, Reception, Year 7 and Year 12**

48. All girls who are on roll in Reception to Year 10 in the predecessor school, BHS, in July 2009 will automatically progress through the Academy. As the Academy builds towards its full capacity, Year groups 1 to 6 and 8 to 11 will remain at their existing size as at July 2009. If existing girls at BHS do not progress to the Academy, or leave during the course of an academic year, or between academic years, places will be offered to applicants. If there are more applicants than places the Academy will apply the oversubscription criteria set out above.
49. Notwithstanding the above, the Academy may refuse admission to particular applicants in the specific circumstances described in paragraph 3.10 (children who have been permanently excluded two or more times) of the statutory School Admissions Code or any like provision in any subsequent Code.

### **Operation of waiting lists for admission – Reception and Year 7**

50. Where in any year the Academy receives more applications for places in Reception and Year 7 than there are places available, a waiting list will operate between March and the end of the academic year for which they applied. This list will be maintained by the Academy, and all unsuccessful applicants will automatically be placed on the waiting list unless a parent or guardian requests otherwise. Banding will not be applied to waiting lists.
51. When, and if, places become vacant they will be allocated to girls on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in paragraph 23 for Reception and 34 a) to c) for Year 7.
52. No waiting list will be operated for years other than Reception and Year 7.

### **Arrangements for the Independent Appeal Panel**

53. Parents or guardians will have the right of appeal (except in the case of Nursery places – see below) to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with

## Birkenhead High School Academy

an admission decision of Birkenhead High School Academy or if children in year 11 of the Academy are refused progression to the sixth form. The Appeal Panel will be independent of the Academy. The arrangements for appeals will be in line with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families as it applies to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. The determination of the Appeal Panel will be made in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code and is binding on all parties. The Academy will prepare guidance for parents or guardians about how the appeals process will work and provide a named contact who can answer any enquiries about the process.

54. There is no right of appeal for refusal to offer a nursery place.

### **ANNUAL PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Consultation**

55. Birkenhead High School Academy will consult by 1 March each year on its proposed admission arrangements:
- a) Wirral Children's Services;
  - b) The admission forum for the Wirral;
  - c) Any other admission authorities for primary and secondary schools located within the relevant area for consultation set by Wirral Children's Services;
  - d) Any other governing body for primary and secondary schools (as far as not falling within paragraph c)) located within the relevant area for consultation; and
  - e) Affected admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas.

#### **Publication of admission arrangements**

56. Birkenhead High School Academy will publish its admission arrangements each year once these have been determined, by:
- a) copies being sent to the statutory consultees;
  - b) copies being sent to primary and secondary schools in the Wirral;
  - c) copies being sent to the offices of Wirral Children's Services;
  - d) copies being made available without charge on request from the Academy; and



Birkenhead High School Academy

e) copies being sent to public libraries in the area of the Wirral for the purposes of being made available at such libraries for reference by parents and other persons.

57. The published arrangements will set out:

- a) the name and address of the Academy and contact details;
- b) a summary of the admissions policy, including oversubscription criteria (including any arrangements for admission to post-16 provision);
- c) a statement of any religious affiliation;
- d) numbers of places and applications for those places in the previous year; and
- e) arrangements for hearing appeals.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

## **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT**

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the latest position on the expected performance reward grant (PRG) for Wirral's 2005-2008 LAA stretch targets. The report also outlines the position regarding use of the performance reward grant which is expected to be received, based upon most recent forecast performance information.
- 1.2. £7.589m is expected to be achieved in performance reward grant which equates to 77% of the £9.824m available. This figure is based upon previous, current and expected performance against the LAA stretch targets.
- 1.3. The stretch targets have been reviewed in terms of the contribution partners have made to their delivery, and it has been proposed that following the deduction of support costs and a contribution to the community and voluntary sector (the "Network"), the remaining amount of reward received is apportioned according to the contribution made to achievement. Based upon these calculations, the council would expect to receive a total of £5.742m in revenue and capital over two years.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. Wirral adopted its first LAA in April 2006 and simultaneously signed off 12 stretch targets to be delivered in partnership. The 12 stretch targets are measured by 22 performance indicators with the successful achievement of the targets attracting performance reward grant at the end of the stretch target period. The total PRG available is £9.824m.

### **3. Performance Reward Grant Allocations**

- 3.1 The Local Area Agreement Programme Board has received regular reports on the performance of the stretch targets, and information from these reports has been communicated to Cabinet. Previous reports to the board have predicted the expected PRG to be in the region of between £8.064m to £8.440m. A review of all the stretch targets was completed under the direction of the Deputy Chief Executive in September 2008 to obtain a robust and accurate picture of the stretch target performance, discuss any risks identified, and to drive any further improvements which can be made to maximise the PRG available.
- 3.2 The current expectation of £7.589m is considered to be a more accurate estimate as it is based on more recent data and forecast information. The reasons for the full amount of £9.823m not being achieved are outlined below:
  - i. Retention of drug users target will not be met due to issues over the methodology for this indicator. Wirral has a high proportion of problem drug

users in treatment and retains a high percentage; there is a declining number still to be engaged and therefore a declining number to be retained. **£573k will not be achieved.**

- ii. Older people helped to live at home target will not be met due to changes in the provision of services that were unforeseen during the target setting and negotiation period. **£409k will not be achieved.**
- iii. BME smoking cessation target is expected to reach 60% of the stretch target. **£327k reward is expected to not be achieved.**
- iv. Young people not in education, employment and training targets will not be met. **£818k will not be achieved.**
- v. The Department for Work and Pensions no longer produce the performance information as specified in Wirral's LAA stretch target guidance for attendance allowance and pension credit claimants' indicators; therefore current performance levels are unclear for these two stretch target indicators. **£106,422 potential PRG has also not been included in the expected figure whilst a decision is awaited from Government Office for the North West.**

3.3 All other targets are expected to be achieved in full.

3.4 Performance Reward Grant (PRG) for the achievement of stretch targets is payable 50% revenue and 50% capital over two years (2009/10 and 2010/11).

3.5 It has been agreed by the LAA Programme Board that a portion (£450k) of the PRG received is top-sliced to cover costs for Wirral Council providing financial, performance management and secretariat support over the three year LAA period. The LAA Programme Board also agreed that the £200k funding provided by Wirral Council in addition to Pump Priming Grant to fund stretch target activity is recovered from the PRG awarded to the partnership upon achievement of the stretch targets. A contribution (£100k) was also agreed to be awarded to the community and voluntary sector (the "Network") from the overall PRG received. The PRG received will therefore be top-sliced by £750k.

3.6 The stretch targets have then been reviewed in terms of the contribution partners have made to their delivery, the following apportionment has therefore been agreed by the LAA Programme Board to be spent within Wirral by the following organisations / partnerships:

Organisation / Partnership	£ allocated	% allocated
Wirral Council	£5,092,256	74.46%
Wirral Primary Care Trust	£856,067	12.51%
Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	£845,528	12.36%
Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team	£44,899	0.66%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£6,838,750</b>	<b>100%</b>

The figures in the table above are provisional based upon the current forecast position at Quarter 2, as reported to the LAA Programme Board at their meeting on

19<sup>th</sup> November 2008. These figures may therefore be revised should the final position be different to that which is forecast at this stage.

#### **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1. Subject to the achievement of the LAA targets a projected reward grant of £6.8 million is anticipated over the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11. The grant is 50% revenue / 50% capital, and after the agreed 'top-slicing', the amount available for Council revenue in 2009/10 is £1.4 million. This was agreed by Cabinet on 10 December 2008 and built into the Projected Budget for 2009/10.
- 4.2. As mentioned in Section 3, the financial information provided in this report indicating the amount of PRG Wirral Council is expecting to receive is based upon the current forecast position, and is therefore subject to change.

#### **5. Staffing implications**

- 5.1. There are no staffing implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **6. Equal Opportunities implications**

- 6.1. There are no equal opportunities implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **7. Community Safety implications**

- 7.1. There are no community safety implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **8. Local Agenda 21**

- 8.1. There are no environmental implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **9. Planning implications**

- 9.1. There are no planning, land use etc. implications for Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **10. Anti-poverty implications**

- 10.1. There are no implications for people from deprived communities in Wirral resulting from this report.

#### **11. Social inclusion implications**

- 11.1. There are no implications that will potentially exclude individuals or groups from accessing services resulting from this report.

#### **12. Local Member Support implications**

- 12.1. There are no issues mentioned in the report that are particularly relevant to a ward or small number of wards. The impact will be felt across the whole borough.

#### **13. Background Papers**

- 13.1. "Projected Budgets 2009-2011" 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

13.2. "Council Summons" 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

#### **14. Recommendations**

That

- (1) the amount of performance reward grant expected and the financial implications set out in section 4 of this report be noted;
- (2) as Wirral Council is the accountable body for the Local Area Agreement, the LAA Programme Board's recommendations for the apportionment of performance reward grant as set out in section 3 of this report be approved.

#### **J. WILKIE**

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report was prepared by Siân Williams, who can be contacted on 691 8637.



WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

## **COLLECTION FUND 2008-09**

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### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report estimates the Collection Fund deficit for the year ending 31 March 2009. This deficit has to be notified to the precepting Authorities by 22 January 2009.

### **2. REQUIREMENT TO CALCULATE ANY SURPLUS/DEFICIT**

- 2.1. In accordance with the Local Authority (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992, the Authority must annually estimate the likely surplus or deficit on its Collection Fund for the current financial year. The estimate should be made on, or as to close to, 15 January as possible but cover the period up to 31 March. The Authority must notify the precepting Authorities of the Fund within 7 days of the 15 January and the estimated surplus or deficit can then be taken into account by the precepting bodies for calculating their likely precept required on the Collection Fund for the following year.
- 2.2. Any surplus or deficit on the Fund must be shared pro-rata to the existing precepts on the Fund. Based upon 2008/09 Wirral is responsible for 85.93% of the precept on the Fund with the Merseyside Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities accounting for 9.71% and 4.36% respectively.

### **3. ESTIMATED DEFICIT FOR 2008/09**

- 3.1. The Collection Fund balance for the year ending 31 March 2009 is estimated to be a deficit of £800,000 and this will result in charges to precepting bodies as follows:

	£
Wirral Council General Fund	687,440
Merseyside Police Authority	77,680
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority	<u>34,880</u>
Total	<u>800,000</u>

- 3.2. The Collection Fund deficit at 31 March 2008 was £1.4 million. This related mainly to the effect of past reductions in Council Tax Benefit receipts to the Fund arising from the treatment of single person discounts. The Council Tax base calculation now reflects these changes. £600,000 of the deficit will be recovered from preceptors as planned during 2008/09.
- 3.3. In 2008-09 the Council Tax Collection rate is currently ahead of the 2007-08 performance and is expected to finalise at 98.8%. I am continuing to monitor collection performance in light of the economic situation but collection performance remains strong. The deficit forecast therefore is to recover past shortfalls arising from the changes outlined above.
- 3.4. Cabinet is advised that provision was made in 2007-08 Accounts within the Collection Fund Reserve to fund the Council share of the above Collection Fund deficit.

#### **4. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The consequence of the distribution of the Collection Fund deficit is that the Authority will incur a one-off charge to the General Fund of £687,440 during the 2009/10 financial year.
- 4.2. There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

#### **5. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

#### **6. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are none arising from this report.

#### **7. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are none arising from this report.

#### **8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. There are none arising from this report.

#### **9. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. There are none arising from this report.

#### **10. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATION**

- 10.1. There are none arising from this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1. Local Authority Funds (England) Regulations 1992.

**12. RECOMMENDATION**

12.1. That the declaration of an estimated deficit of £800,000 for the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2009 be noted and the precept bodies be charged accordingly.

FNCE/299/08

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

## **PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011**

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### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report presents the projected budgets for 2009-2011 to coincide with the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR).

### **2. BUDGET 2008-09**

- 2.1. The summary budget for 2008-09 as agreed by the Council on 3 March 2008 is as follows:

	£m
Base Budget	302.6
Resources	
Formula Grant	147.4
Area Based Grant	28.4
Council Tax	123.2
Collection Fund	- 0.5
Use of Balances	<u>4.1</u>
	302.6

### **3. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW**

- 3.1. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2007, was announced on 9 October 2007. An initial report on the Pre Budget Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer including the CSR was presented to the Cabinet on 1 November 2007. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced the three year provisional Local Government Finance settlement on 6 December 2007 and the final settlement on 24 January 2008.
- 3.2. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2009-10 was issued by the DCLG on 26 November 2008, with the details of specific grants to follow. The provisional settlement restated the indicative figures included in the settlement issued on 24 January 2008 and was reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2008.
- 3.3. Consultation on the provisional settlement closed on 7 January 2009.

#### 4. **VARIATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR 2009-2011**

- 4.1. **Inflation** – Provision is included for pay and prices at 2% and for income at 3% for 2009-2011.
- 4.2. **Capital Financing** – Cabinet on 10 December 2008 agreed the capital programme for 2009-2012 at an additional financing cost totalling £3.2m for 2009-10 and £2.9m for 2010-11.
- 4.3. **Highways Maintenance** – provision is included for the transfer of highways expenditure of £1.7m to the revenue budget from the capital budget.
- 4.4. **Waste Disposal** – The waste disposal levy is projected to increase by 15.4% per annum.
- 4.5. **Pension Fund** - The Pension Fund has been actuarially revalued as at 31 March 2007. The phased implementation of the revised contribution rates over three years was agreed by the Cabinet on 12 December 2007.
- 4.6. **Merseytravel** – The Merseytravel levy is projected to increase by 4% per annum.
- 4.7. **Invest to Save Schemes** – The Cabinet has agreed a number of invest to save schemes which will reduce expenditure by £0.9m in 2009-10 and by a further £0.4m in 2010-11.
- 4.8. **Private Finance Initiative** – Increase in PFI payments of £0.4m in 2009-10 and a further £1m in 2010-11 as the PFI reserve reduces.
- 4.9. **Benefits Subsidy** – The Department for Work and Pensions has announced that benefits subsidy will be reduced by 3% per annum in real terms, 5% per annum in cash for certain elements of the subsidy, a reduction of £0.7m per annum.
- 4.10 **Local Area Agreement** – Options for the use of the Reward Grant, the revenue element of which is estimated at £1.9m for each of 2009-10 and 2010-11 were agreed by the LAA Board on 19 November 2008 with £1.4m being used to support the budget.
- 4.11. **Energy** – The increased cost of fuel and energy has been estimated at £9m in 2009-10 as reported to Cabinet on 9 July 2008.
- 4.12. **Foster Care Fees** - Cabinet on 4 September 2008 agreed to an increase in foster care payments of £0.5m for 2009-10.
- 4.13. **Technical Services** - Cabinet on 10 December 2008 agreed to increased requirements for 2009-10 totalling £0.7m.
- 4.14. **Other Unavoidable Growth** – A number of relatively minor items of unavoidable growth of less than £0.2m will arise. These should total less than £1m.

## 5. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

5.1. There are a number of other developments which are likely to impact on the financial position of the Authority over the period 2009 to 2011. The impact of these issues will be reported to the Cabinet as and when they are resolved. Some of the potentially most important issues are:-

- (a) Implementation of Local Housing Allowance from 1 April 2008 which was reported to Cabinet on 12 December 2007.
- (b) Revised Local Government Pension Scheme introduced from 1 April 2008.
- (c) Review of the calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision which was reported to Cabinet on 16 April 2008.
- (d) Review of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme. A consultation paper on a revised scheme to commence in 2009 was reported to the Cabinet on 29 November 2007. A further consultation paper has been received which if implemented could result in a grant of £0.2m in 2009-10 and £0.5m in 2010-11.
- (e) Replacement of Planning Delivery Grant with the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant which was reported to Cabinet on 25 September 2008.
- (f) Review of Supporting People Grant to be undertaken in 2009 with the grant to be absorbed into the Area Based Grant from 2010-11.
- (g) Implementation of supplementary business rates which was reported to Cabinet on 29 November 2007.
- (h) Review of the Area Cost Adjustment.
- (i) Review of the population statistics to include the effects of recent migration, which was reported to the Cabinet on 16 April 2008.
- (j) Review of the funding of social care with proposals to be released in 2009.
- (k) Transfer from the PCT of responsibility for the commissioning of social care for adults with learning disabilities from 2009-10. Agreement with the PCT on the scale of the transfer had to be reached by 1 December 2008. The PCT has reported that the transfer should be £6m.
- (l) Transfer of the responsibilities of the Learning and Skills Council to Local Authorities from 2010.
- (m) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in October 2009.
- (n) Implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards from 2010 which will increase leasing costs.



## 6. BALANCES

- 6.1. The balances for 2008-09 have been set at £5m but the Audit Commission has restated its view that balances should be a minimum of 2% of the net revenue budget which for Wirral would be £6m.
- 6.2. The financial out-turn for 2007-08 was reported to Cabinet on 26 June 2008 indicating a net underspending of £1.6m, and additional late grant notifications totalling £0.6m.
- 6.3. Increased energy and fuel costs for 2008-09 estimated to total £3.5m were reported to Cabinet on 9 July 2008.
- 6.4. The Insurance Fund annual report was presented to Cabinet on 9 July 2008 incorporating a transfer of £3.0m from the Insurance Fund to the General Fund.
- 6.5. The receipt of additional Local Authority Business Growth Incentive grant totalling £1.3m was reported to Cabinet on 23 July 2008.
- 6.6. Cabinet on 4 September 2008 agreed a projected overspending of £3.5m in 2008-09 on Adult Social Services, of which £0.8m will continue into 2009-10. Cabinet on 16 October 2008 agreed to bring forward the closure of Feltree House thus reducing the projected overspending in 2008-09 by £0.2m and in 2009-10 by £0.5m. The Director of Adult Social Services has reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committees that the projected overspending is likely to exceed this figure but this has yet to be reported to the Cabinet.
- 6.7. There is a projected overspending of £0.8m on Regeneration.
- 6.8. Following the Audit of the Accounts for 2007-08 the capitalisation of highways improvements has been reduced from £3.7m to £1.5m in 2008-09 as reported to Cabinet on 16 October 2008.
- 6.9. Cabinet on 6 November 2008 agreed to fund the following improvement teams from the Efficiency Investment Budget in 2008-09.

	£000
Procurement and Creditors	1,022
Change	635
Customer Services Development	183
Adult Social Services Reform	<u>360</u>
	2,200

In 2009-10 the cost of the Adult Social Services Reform Team will increase to £518,000. Funding of these teams from the Efficiency Investment Budget will allow the original funding to be added to balances.

6.10. Cabinet on 10 December 2008 agreed to transfer reserves and provisions totalling £360,000 into the General Fund balances, £230,000 of which is to offset the projected overspending in Regeneration.

6.11.		£m
	Balances as at 1 April 2008	5.0
	Out-turn 2007-08	1.6
	Additional Grants	0.6
	Insurance Fund	3.0
	Energy and Fuel	- 3.5
	LABGI	1.3
	Adult Social Services	- 3.3
	Regeneration	-0.6
	Highways Improvements	- 2.0
	Improvement Teams	2.2
	Reserves and Provisions	<u>0.1</u>
		4.4

## 7. EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

7.1. The gap between projected expenditure and anticipated resources will need to be bridged by a combination of savings and/or increased Council Tax.

7.2. Cabinet on 13 March 2008 agreed the following efficiency targets for 2009-11 but reserved the right to vary these targets during the year.

Department	Target	Target
	2009-10	2010-11
	£000	£000
Adult Social Services	4,620	3,780
Children and Young People	2,350	1,920
Corporate Services	710	580
Finance	740	600
Regeneration	3,060	2,500
Technical Services	1,620	1,320
	13,100	10,700

7.3. The efficiencies agreed in preparing the budget for 2008-09 included £0.9m in Adult Social Services which will become effective from 2009-10.

7.4. Cabinet on 16 October 2008 agreed a number of efficiencies:-

	£m
Children Residential Care	0.7
ERIC Service	0.5
Housing and Council Tax Benefit	0.6
Treasury Management	0.5
General Efficiencies	<u>0.6</u>
	2.9

7.5. Cabinet on 6 November 2008 agreed a number of efficiencies:-

	£m
Supported Living	1.0
Reform Care Grant	1.5
Corporate Procurement Contracts	1.5
General Efficiencies	<u>0.5</u>
	4.5

7.6. Cabinet on 27 November 2008 agreed general efficiency proposals totalling £1.0m.

7.7. Cabinet on 10 December 2008 agreed a number of efficiencies:-

	£m
Nursing Home Fees	1.0
General Efficiencies	<u>0.3</u>
	1.3

7.8. I am assuming an annual Council Tax increase of 4%.

7.9. The Minister for Local Government has confirmed that the Council Tax capping limit will remain at 5%.

## 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. The projected budgets for 2009 to 2011 are compiled from the base budget for 2008-09 approved by Council on 3 March 2008, the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009-2012 agreed by the Cabinet on 23 July 2008, and updated for the issues outlined in this report. The projected budgets are shown in the Appendix.

## 9. **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are none arising from this report.

## 10. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are none arising from this report.

## 11. **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are none arising from this report.

## 12. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

12.1. There are none arising from this report.

## 13. **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1. There are none arising from this report.

14. **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. There are none arising from this report.

15. **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1. There are none arising from this report.

16. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1. Comprehensive Spending Review – Treasury – October 2007  
Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2009-2012 – July 2008  
Provisional Formula Grant Settlement 2009-10 –DCLG –November 2008  
Estimates 2008-09 – March 2008

17. **RECOMMENDATION**

17.1. That the projected budgets continue to be reported to the Cabinet in line with the agreed financial and performance management timetable.

IAN COLEMAN  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/296/08

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

## PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011

	2009-2010	2010-2011
	£m	£m
Base Budget	299.6	311.9
Increased Requirements		
Pay Inflation	3.4	3.3
Price Inflation	3.6	3.6
Capital Financing	3.2	2.9
Highways	1.7	-
Waste Disposal	2.2	2.5
Pension Fund Revaluation	0.5	0.5
Merseytravel	1.0	1.0
Private Finance Initiative	0.4	1.0
Benefits Subsidy	0.7	0.7
Energy and Fuel	9.0	-
Foster Care	0.5	-
Technical Services	0.7	-
Area Based Grant	2.7	- 0.4
Supporting People	-	10.3
Unavoidable Growth	1.0	1.0
Efficiency Investment Fund	<u>2.9</u>	<u>2.9</u>
	333.1	341.3
Reduced Requirements		
Income Inflation	-1.0	-1.0
Invest To Save	- 0.9	- 0.4
LABGI	- 0.2	- 0.3
Children Residential Care	- 0.7	-
ERIC Service	- 0.5	-
Housing & Council Tax Benefit	- 0.6	-
Treasury Management	- 0.5	-
General Efficiencies	- 3.3	- 0.2
Supported Living	-1.0	-0.3
Reform Care Grant	-1.5	-
Corporate Procurement		
Contracts	- 1.5	-
Nursing Home Fees	- 1.0	-
LAA Reward Grant	<u>- 1.4</u>	<u>-</u>
Forecast Expenditure	319.0	339.1
Balances	<u>1.6</u>	<u>-</u>
	320.6	339.1
Resources		
Formula Grant	152.7	157.9
Area Based Grant	31.1	41.0
Council Tax	123.2	128.1
Forecast Resources	<u>307.0</u>	<u>327.0</u>
Shortfall	13.6	12.1
Council Tax Increase	4.9	5.1
Efficiencies required	8.7	7.0

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

## **COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) - USE OF RESOURCES**

---

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Audit Commission project brief for the Comprehensive Area Assessment Use of Resources 2009 assessment which covers 2008/09.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Previous reports to Cabinet have outlined the changes in the Use of Resources (UOR) assessment framework in accordance with the move from Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) to the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The CPA assessment covered five general themes shown below which were further sub-divided into key lines of enquiry (KLOE):

<b>CPA</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1	Financial reporting
2	Financial management
3	Financial standing
4	Internal control
5	Value for money

- 2.2 Under CAA, the Use of Resources assessment has value for money at its centre and now comprises three themes. These are further divided into 10 key lines of enquiry.
- 2.3 There is a significant overlap between the old and new Use of Resources KLOES. The new regime however places an increased emphasis on non-financial resources. The most significant changes are separate KLOEs dedicated to natural and workforce resources. The work undertaken on energy efficiency initiatives, in complying with the aims of the 'Nottingham declaration', and on workforce planning will assist in meeting the requirements of these KLOEs. The CAA key lines of enquiry are as follows:

<b>CAA</b>	<b>Managing Finances</b>
1	Planning For Financial Health
2	Understanding Costs and Achieving Efficiencies
3	Financial Reporting
	<b>Governing the Business</b>
4	Commissioning and Procurement
5	Use of Information
6	Good Governance
7	Risk Management and Internal Control
	<b>Managing Resources</b>
8	Natural Resources
9	Strategic Asset Management
10	Workforce (applicable from 2009/10 onwards)

- 2.4 The Use of Resources score will again be based upon a standard four point scale and will again follow the harder test principle with authorities having to improve in order to retain the same level. The new standard scores are also likely to restrict the number of authorities achieving four stars. The table below details the CPA and CAA standard scoring scales.

Score	Standard Scale CPA	Standard Scale CAA
1	Inadequate Performance	'Failure to meet minimum standards'
2	Adequate Performance	'Getting the basics right'
3	Performing Well	'Performing Well'
4	Performing Strongly	'Excellence and genuine leading edge performance'

- 2.5 The Audit Commission issued further guidance to its auditors on the Use of Resources in October 2008 which is available on its website. The Audit Commission project brief is designed to fit in with this guidance.

### 3. **USE OF RESOURCES 2008**

- 3.1 The 2008 UoR assessment will be formally announced on 26 February 2009. Authorities received their 2008 notifications on 8 December 2008. The notification is however embargoed by the Audit Commission until 26 February 2009. Authorities can submit appeals against this initial notification.
- 3.2 The 2008 assessment was based on the 31 March 2008 position. Since this date officers have continued to work on a number of areas to deliver further continuous improvement which will be reflected within future assessments. Improvement have ranged from reviewing and strengthening the Statement of Annual Accounts processes and the production of an Annual Report, to developing the Strategic Asset Review and further development of the procurement strategy and the change programme.



#### **4. AUDIT COMMISSION USE OF RESOURCES PROJECT BRIEF AND APPROACH FOR 2009**

4.1 The Audit Commission project brief highlights a number of developments within the new Use of Resources:

- The KLOEs are more broadly based than before
- There is an increased focus on value for money achievements
- The focus will be on outputs and achievements rather than on processes in place
- The assessment will be more strategically based
- Guidance will include characteristics of performance but these will not be an essential 'must have' list

4.2 The audit approach will use a 'rounded professional judgement' to form an assessment against the key lines of enquiry. The Audit Commission states that this assessment will be on a top down rather than bottom up basis with less prescription and use of checklists. The assessment of risk will also form an important focus. The assessment will also be informed by the outcomes from other audit work and assessments conducted during the year.

4.3 The Audit Commission will undertake its fieldwork between January and April 2009. This will include the review of key documents, interviewing officers and Members and reviews of Authority minutes and agendas. Further investigation and discussion may follow from this.

4.4 The Audit Commission intends to report the Use of Resources score within the Annual Governance Report. This will be reported alongside the value for money conclusion and the opinion on the statement of accounts in September 2009. The final CAA organisational assessment will be reported in November 2009.

4.5 The approach outlined above does seem to provide for flexibility and for the assessment to be based on a rounded view of achievements. The approach however could also involve a greater degree of subjective judgement from auditors.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct financial or staffing implications arising out of this report.

#### **6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**8. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**9. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**10. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**11. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no particular implications for any Members or wards arising out of this report.

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1. Audit Commission Project Brief Wirral Borough Council Audit 2008/09 - December 2008

12.2 Audit Commission Use of Resources Guidance for Councils – October 2008  
<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/useofresources/guidance/index.htm>

12.3 Audit Commission Use of Resources 2008/09 Overall approach and key lines of enquiry – May 2008

**13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That

- (1) the 2009 Use of Resources Project brief be noted;
- (2) regular reports be brought to Cabinet on progress on the Use of Resources.

IAN COLEMAN  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/308/08

# Use of Resources

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## Project Brief

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

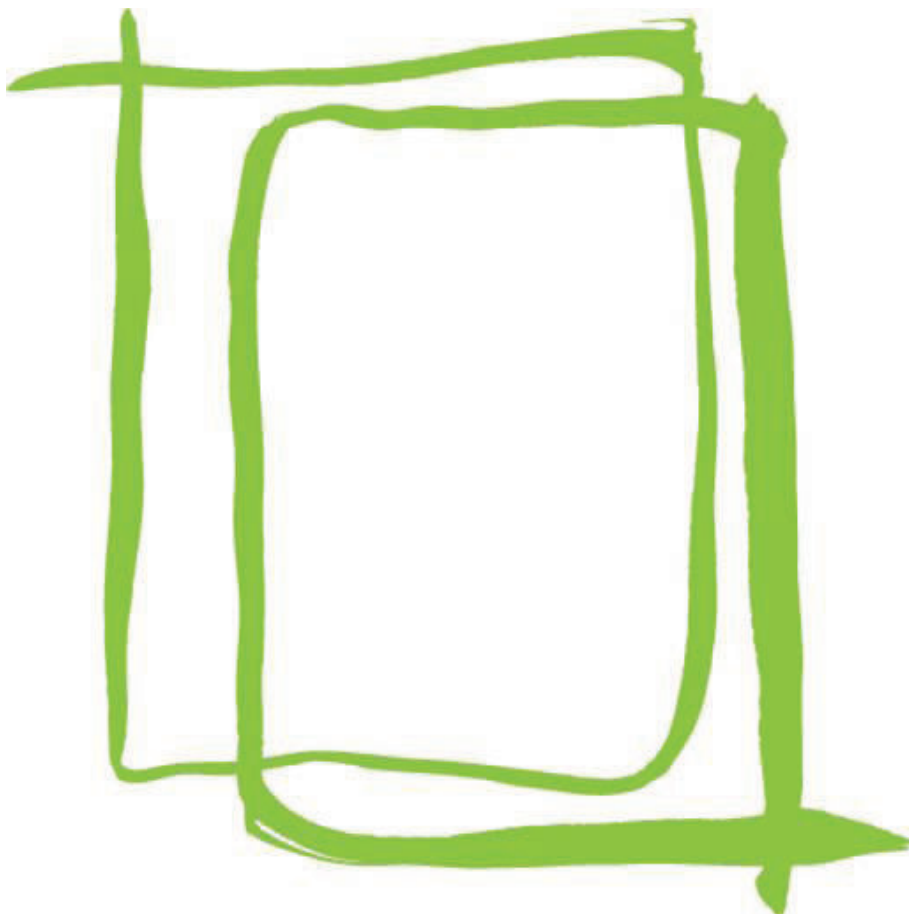
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Audit 2008/09

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December 2008

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## Status of our reports

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors/members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or
- any third party.

# Introduction

- 1 2009 is the fifth use of resources (UoR) assessment to be undertaken at councils but it will be significantly different to the previous approach as it will focus on outcomes achieved. The use of resources assessment forms part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) from 2009 and will also feed into other relevant performance assessment frameworks as appropriate. The use of resources key lines of enquiry will also be the 'relevant criteria' for the value for money conclusion that is part of our work under the Code of Audit Practice.
- 2 This brief outlines the approach we will take to the UoR assessment at Wirral Borough Council, who the key contacts will be and the reporting arrangements. The Audit Commission published the overall approach and key lines of enquiry (KLOE) in May 2009 <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/useofresources/2009kloe.asp>. It has also prepared guidance for auditors to support them in carrying out their assessments and made this available to audited bodies on its website at the following link <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/useofresources/2009guidance.asp>.

# Background

- 3 The Audit Commission review of 2007/08 found that the Council's arrangements had continued to improve during the period of assessment, from April 2007 to March 2008. The overall assessment improved in three out of the five themes. The areas of improvement were in respect of financial management, financial standing and internal control which all scored level 3. Financial reporting and value for money remained at level 2 although there were improvements in arrangements.
- 4 The 2008/09 use of resources assessment will consider how well the Council is managing and using its resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people. It is structured into three themes that focus on the importance of sound and strategic financial management, strategic commissioning and good governance, and the effective management of natural resources, assets and people. It will be applied to all local government bodies, including police and fire authorities, and to primary care trusts in the NHS.
- 5 Many of the new KLOE within the themes are similar to the previous KLOE, although there are some new areas, such as the use of natural resources and workforce planning. The new KLOE within each of the themes are shown in the table below.

**Table 1 Use of resources KLOE 2008/09**

The new use of resources is split into three themes and ten KLOE

Managing finances	Governing the business	Managing resources
1.1 Financial planning & financial health	2.1 Commissioning & procurement	3.1 Natural resources
1.2 Understanding costs & performance	2.2 DQ & use of information	3.2 Asset management
1.3 Financial monitoring & reporting	2.3 Good governance & ethical behaviour	3.3 Workforce planning
	2.4 Risk management & internal control	

Source: Audit Commission

# Scope and objectives

- 6 The 2008/09 KLOE are shown at Table 1 on the previous page. The KLOE are more broadly based than previously and embrace wider resource issues such as the use of natural resources. The KLOE focus more on value for money achievements, outputs and outcomes rather than on processes, and are more strategic and less detailed. They are supported by characteristics of performance, which are used as an aid to the exercise of the auditors' professional judgment. The underlying characteristics are indicative of differing levels of expected performance, and are not criteria to be complied with in all circumstances.
- 7 The KLOE and supporting characteristics are based upon published best practice, standards and professional guidance, where available, and the principles set out in the Commission's publication World Class Financial Management.
- 8 A proportionate approach will be applied to the assessment of the KLOE. The Audit Commission has specified in its annual work programme and fees document which KLOE are to be assessed over the coming year. The specified KLOE differ for each sector in order to reflect sector priorities. In 2008/09, we will assess nine of the ten KLOE at single tier and county councils - KLOE 3.3 on workforce will not be assessed this year. However, arrangements will need to be in place from 1 April 2009 for the 2010 assessment so we have had early discussions with the Head of HR.
- 9 The objectives of our work are to:
  - make a judgement about whether we are satisfied that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources - the value for money conclusion in the statutory audit report that we give under The Code of Audit Practice. We will apply a yes/no judgement against the criteria to indicate whether the Council has proper arrangements in place or not. A 'no' judgement is equivalent to a UoR score of 1 and a 'yes' judgement is equivalent to a score of at least 2;
  - assess how well the Council is managing and using its resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people which is part of the organisational assessment under CAA;
  - inform the managing performance organisational assessment under CAA; and
  - provide intelligence to inform the area assessment under CAA.



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# Audit approach

- 10 The approach for 2008/09 is significantly different. The emphasis of the assessment will be on a rounded professional judgement against the headline key lines of enquiry (KLOE) – ‘top down’ rather than ‘bottom up’ approach. It moves away from a checklist of criteria to illustrative characteristics of performance included within the guidance. Most importantly, there is less focus on prescriptive arrangements and process and more focus on outcomes and what difference the arrangements have made.
- 11 There will again be a four level scoring system, but levels 2 and 3 will be broad descriptions of 'getting the basics right' and 'performing well' respectively. Scores of 4 will be reserved for excellence and genuine leading edge performance. Level 1 represents a failure to meet the minimum requirements at level 2. The Audit Commission is still to determine the approach for arriving at the theme scores and the overall use of resources score.
- 12 Our work continues to be based on an assessment of risk. The approach for 2009 will be supported by evidence gained in previous years and we will update the assessments for any changes and improvements and carry out testing to confirm arrangements and outcomes. The guidance for auditors available to the Council at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/useofresources/2009guidance.asp> sets out the links to the 2007/08 use of resources assessments. For example, the new KLOE 1.1 on managing finances links to the 2007/08 KLOE 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1.
- 13 We will also carry out detailed work on performance management and procurement (separate project briefs will be agreed) and current ongoing work on Ethical Governance, Governance of Partnerships and Improvement through Better Financial Management will inform the assessment. We also plan to hold a workshop for key officers to work through the details of the new approach.
- 14 We will undertake the fieldwork during 2009 and scores will be notified to councils in the autumn of 2009. Key dates for the 2009 assessment are shown at paragraph 17. The key contacts for the audit team and the Council are shown at paragraphs 18 and 20.
- 15 We will carry out the work through:
  - review of key documents;
  - interviews with officers and members; and
  - ongoing discussions and review of minutes and media.
- 16 There is no requirement for a self assessment. However, if a well evidenced self assessment is carried out, formally or informally, it will help us to make a quick and robust assessment and ensure that all relevant information is taken into account.

# Reporting and timescales

17 The use of resources assessment and value for money conclusion 2008/09 will be based on the same KLOE and will be reported in the Annual Governance Report alongside the opinion on the statement of accounts. The deadline for this is 30th September 2009. The following timetable is provisional at this stage and will be kept up to date throughout the audit.

Date	Activity/milestone
January 2009	Agree brief with Lead Director
January 2009	Workshop for key officers
January - April 2009	Fieldwork
May - June 2009	Audit team regional quality assurance (QA) and internal challenge
June/July 2009	Review of reports to members
August 2009	Submission of draft scored judgements for national QA
End August 2009	Agreement of value for money conclusion and scored use of resources judgements
Early September	Draft Annual Governance Report
Mid September	Final Annual Governance Report
Late September 2009	Audit & Risk Management Committee (papers out one week before)
October/November 2009	Draft organisational assessment report shared with the Council
Late November 2009	Final organisational assessments reported as part of CAA reporting. Issue annual audit letter.

# Audit personnel and key contacts

18 The following Audit Commission staff will be involved with the work.

Name	Contact details
Mike Thomas, District Auditor Overall responsibility for the audit	<a href="mailto:m-thomas@audit-commission.gov.uk">m-thomas@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0844 7987043 or 07879 667712
Liz Temple-Murray, Audit Manager Lead contact for UoR Manager for KLOE 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2	<a href="mailto:l-temple-murray@audit-commission.gov.uk">l-temple-murray@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0151 666 3483 or 07769 887358
Dave Wilson, Performance Manager Manager for KLOE 1.2, 2.1, 3.1 Manager for projects on Performance Management and Sustainability	<a href="mailto:da-wilson@audit-commission.gov.uk">da-wilson@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0844 7987333 or 0774 8930598
Dave Catherall, Principal Auditor	<a href="mailto:d-catherall@audit-commission.gov.uk">d-catherall@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0151 6663497
Kath Johnson, Performance Specialist	<a href="mailto:ka-johnson@audit-commission.gov.uk">ka-johnson@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0844 7983579
Rob Metcalf, Principal Auditor	<a href="mailto:r-metcalf@audit-commission.gov.uk">r-metcalf@audit-commission.gov.uk</a> 0151 6663484

19 The following staff will be our key contacts for the use of resources work overall and for the individual key lines of enquiry (KLOE). Ian Coleman and Tom Sault will be lead director and contact respectively, responsible for liaising with the audit team on a regular basis and coordinating the work, feedback and messages within the Council. The Lead Director will keep management up to date with progress on issues through the monthly Corporate Improvement Group (CIG).

20 We have agreed that the three central directors will be responsible for each of the three KLOE themes. Supporting this we have agreed key contacts for each of the individual KLOE. It is the responsibility of each of the key contacts to ensure that their line managers and the responsible Directors as well as the lead Director and Lead contact are kept up to date with issues arising on individual KLOE.

## Audit personnel and key contacts

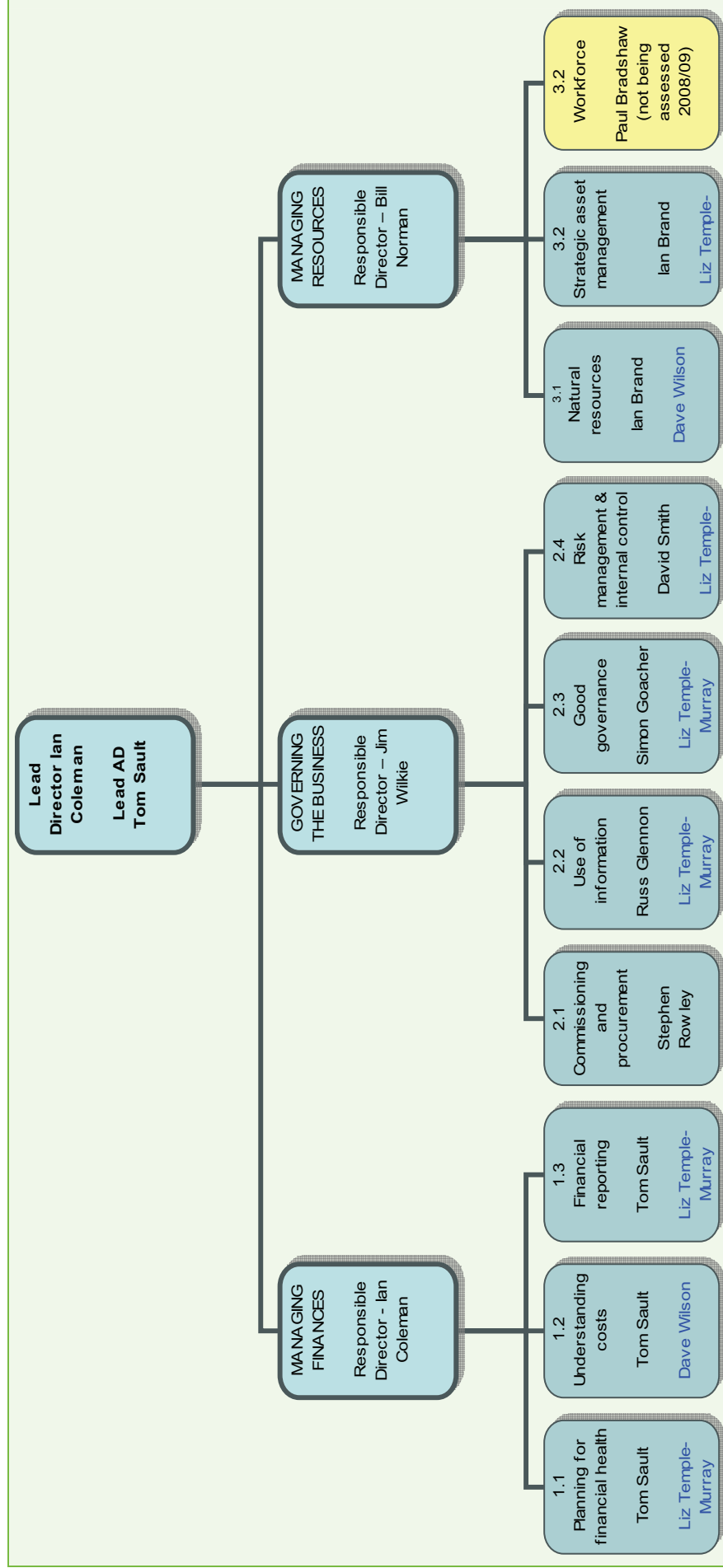
Name	Contact details
<p>Ian Coleman, Director of Finance Lead director for UoR overall Responsible director for 'Managing Finances' (KLOE 1)</p>	<p><a href="mailto:iancoleman@wirral.gov.uk">iancoleman@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 666 3056</p>
<p>Tom Sault, Head of Financial Services, Finance Lead contact for UoR overall Key contact for KLOEs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3</p>	<p><a href="mailto:tomsault@wirral.gov.uk">tomsault@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 666 3407</p>
<p>Jim Wilkie, Deputy Chief Ex and Director Corporate Services Responsible director for 'Governing the Business' (KLOE 2)</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jimwilkie@wirral.gov.uk">jimwilkie@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8183</p>
<p>Bill Norman, Director Law, HR and Asset Management Responsible Director for 'Managing Resources' (KLOE 3)</p>	<p><a href="mailto:billnorman@wirral.gov.uk">billnorman@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8498</p>
<p>Stephen Rowley, Head of Support Services, Finance Key contact for KLOE 2.1</p>	<p><a href="mailto:stephenrowley@wirral.gov.uk">stephenrowley@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 666 3525</p>
<p>Russ Glennon, Head of Policy, Corporate Services Key contact for KLOE 2.2 [also Stephen Rowley]</p>	<p><a href="mailto:russglennon@wirral.gov.uk">russglennon@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8152</p>
<p>Simon Goacher, Head of Legal &amp; Member Services, Dept of Law, HR &amp; Asset Mgt Key Contact for KLOE 2.3</p>	<p><a href="mailto:simongoacher@wirral.gov.uk">simongoacher@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8569</p>
<p>David Smith, Deputy Director, Finance Key contact for KLOE 2.4</p>	<p><a href="mailto:davidsmith@wirral.gov.uk">davidsmith@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 666 3491</p>
<p>Ian Brand, Head of Asset Management, Dept of Law, HR &amp; Asset Mgt Key contact for KLOEs 3.1 and 3.2</p>	<p><a href="mailto:ianbrand@wirral.gov.uk">ianbrand@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8686</p>
<p>Paul Bradshaw, Head of Human Resources, Dept of Law, HR &amp; Asset Mgt Key contact for KLOE 3.3</p>	<p><a href="mailto:paulbradshaw@wirral.gov.uk">paulbradshaw@wirral.gov.uk</a> 0151 691 8590</p>

21 This brief was agreed with the Director of Finance on 17 December 2008.

# Appendix 1 – Document request

To be agreed with key contacts. The following link to the guidance gives suggested sources of evidence for each KLOE <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/useofresources/2009guidance.asp>.

# Appendix 2 – Key responsibilities



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# The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

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[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)



WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/ DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

## **WORKING WIRRAL – WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND**

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### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report advises Members on the current situation with regards to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund resources.

2.1 It also requests authorisation for the appointment of consultants to develop further the Investment Framework to guide the allocation of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund resources when they are confirmed by Government for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

### **2.0 WORKING WIRRAL – WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND**

2.1 The Working Wirral programme includes resources from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) and Wirral has been allocated £28,267,778m of WNF resources from 2008 – 2011 through the Area Based Grant. However, only the first year's allocation was confirmed by Government due to an error that had been made in the original calculation relating to how the funding should be allocated nationally across the local authorities.

2.2 The Government has now announced that following a review of the way in which eligibility for WNF was calculated they have drawn up proposals for revising the criteria and how it will be applied in respect of allocating WNF for 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Government are now consulting on these proposals and it is anticipated that they will confirm allocations for 2009/10 by the end of January 2009.

2.3 The proposed changes would mean that Wirral would receive an increased allocation of WNF and benefit by some £144,581 as follows:

#### **2009/10**

Original allocation: £9,841,046m      Revised allocation £9,879,492m

#### **2010/11**

Original allocation: £10,238,708m      Revised allocation £10,344,843m

### **3.0 WORKING WIRRAL COMMISSIONING – ROUND 1**

3.1 Cabinet on the 13 March 2008 (Item 26 Minute 553 refers) agreed that Working Wirral resources should be used to commission activity to deliver the Investment Strategy priorities of tackling worklessness, improving skills levels and increasing enterprise, business growth and investment. These priorities are also reflected in Wirral's Local Area Agreement and in the Investment Framework for Employment and Enterprise which articulates the outcomes and outputs necessary to deliver the Investment Strategy's overarching vision for Wirral.

3.2 The Investment Framework for Employment and Enterprise was developed by Regeneris Consulting in order to provide the basis for commissioning targeted activity through the Working Wirral programme and it outlines three key priorities:

- Competitive Wirral People (individuals and communities)
- Competitive Wirral Places (locations and sites/premises)
- Competitive Wirral Businesses (start ups and existing firms)

3.3 Based on the Investment Framework a Commissioning brief was developed in June 2008 to commission the first round of Working Wirral activity to support the delivery of outcomes relating to Priority 1: Competitive People and this process has been overseen by Wirral's Economic Development and Skills Partnership. In addition Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> December agreed that resources should be allocated to activity identified by the Investment Strategy Board that supports the delivery of outcomes relating to Priority 2: Competitive Places and Priority 3: Competitive Businesses.

#### 4.0 **WORKING WIRRAL COMMISSIONING – ROUND 2**

4.1 Work is now required to develop detailed commissioning briefs to ensure that further rounds of commissioning can be taken forward that deliver activity against each of the three priority areas once the Government confirms WNF allocations for 2009/10 and 2010/11. This work would build on the Investment Framework to identify how the resources can best be allocated across the three priority areas to add value to other mainstream and regeneration activity and therefore maximise the agreed Investment Strategy outcomes. This work needs to be completed by the end of February 2009 to enable funding allocations for the 2009/10 financial year to be made.

4.2 Since the first round of Working Wirral commissioning was progressed there have been a number of developments in relation to the employment and enterprise agenda. This includes the implementation of the Department for Work and Pensions' and the Learning and Skills Council's ESF Co –financing activity, the North West Development Agency's proposals with regards to the Business Support Simplification Process and the recent Government announcements in respect of additional support to businesses and to Jobcentre Plus to address issues arising from the current economic climate. Further analysis is therefore required to identify how Working Wirral resources should be deployed to ensure that the programme will have the maximum impact for Wirral residents.

4.3 The proposed analysis would flow from the work previously undertaken by Regeneris Consulting to develop the Investment Framework and would build on this to assess where further activity should be targeted, what outcomes and outputs should be achieved and how the resources should be allocated across the priority areas. The work will cost a maximum of £15,000.

4.4 Given the timescales set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report and the detailed knowledge and clear links with the previous work carried out by Regeneris Consulting it is proposed that these consultants should be contracted to carry out this commission. The contract would therefore be progressed as an exception to the procurement procedure in accordance with Contracts Procedures Rules 5.2. This course of action has been agreed by the Council's Procurement Unit.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Wirral has been allocated £28,267,778 of Working Neighbourhoods Fund resources, subject to confirmation of the exact allocations for 2009/10 and 2010/11. The allocation is

paid through the LAA's Area Based Grant. The cost of commissioning Consultants to develop further the Investment Framework will be fully funded from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

## **6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The contract will be managed by existing staff in the Regeneration Department's Neighbourhoods team.

## **7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The implementation of Working Wirral will reflect the Council's commitment to equal opportunities.

## **8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Projects proposed to be funded through Working Wirral are likely to have positive community safety benefits.

## **9.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

## **10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **11.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Working Wirral will have significant future benefits for this area.

## **12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Working Wirral will have significant future benefits for this area.

## **13.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 This report will be of interest to all Members of the Council.

## **14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 The Working Neighbourhoods Fund Statement – DCLG and DWP Paper November 2007

Sub National Review of Economic Development – Report to Cabinet 6.09.07

Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 – DCLG December 2007

Area Based Grant 2008/09 to 2010/11 – Report to Cabinet 10.01.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 23.01.08

European Social Fund Complementary Strand – Report to Cabinet 07.02.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 13.03.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 09.07.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 16.10.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 10.12.08

## **15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the allocation of a maximum of £15,000 for the appointment of Regeneris Consulting to further develop the Investment Framework to enable targeted commissioning of the Working Wirral programme to progress once WNF resources for 2009/10 and 2010/11 are confirmed by Government, be approved.

Jim Wilkie

Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 15 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

## **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND REGENERATION ASSISTANCE POLICY**

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### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to undertake a consultation exercise in relation to the proposed revisions to the Council's Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy. Following the consultation exercise a further report will be presented to Members detailing the final version of the policy, with the intention of implementing the revised policy in April 2009.
- 1.2 The report also requests delegation to use specialist contractors, not registered on the Trading Standards Wirral traders Scheme, in cases involving HRA and Equity Loans for Renewal, where there are specialist building works to be undertaken.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 ("the RRO") gave Local Authorities the power to provide assistance to improve living conditions in their area. This assistance can be in any form and can include such things as advice about property improvements and financial assistance in the form of grants and/or loans. This power cannot be used unless a policy for the provision of such assistance has been adopted. Once adopted, the policy should be monitored, reviewed and amended (if necessary) to take into account changes in local circumstances and government policy. In this way, the policy should evolve over time to meet the needs and aspirations of Wirral residents. Any significant changes should be subject to consultation prior to being adopted and the public should be notified about any revised policy. In addition to the RRO, Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 allows Local Authorities to give financial assistance to any person in order to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of an area. This power supports the use of products aimed at non-residential interests involved in regeneration activity connected to housing schemes. Related products involving non-housing interests are also included in the policy.
- 2.2 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2008 Cabinet agreed to adopt the current Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy which details a range of assistance to support property owners. This assistance has been used to benefit residents and property owners throughout the borough, and particularly those involved in the Housing Market Renewal Initiative.
- 2.3 The current policy introduced a number of new forms of local assistance, including Equity Renewal Loans, Home Repair Assistance Loans, Empty Property Loans, assistance for low income first time buyers via the 'First Homes' initiative, Business Renewal and Relocation Loans and finally the Neighbourhood Facelift Scheme. Since the introduction of the RRO, Wirral's policy has gradually diversified and includes a mix of public subsidy and loan assistance as well as advice.

2.4 As it is now nearly 12 months since the last review was undertaken it is considered appropriate to review the current policy in light of progress with HMRI implementation and the introduction of the new loan based products.

### 3.0 **SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING POLICY**

#### 3.1 Existing Assistance

3.1.1 Wirral's policy is currently split into 3 distinct sections covering:

- Assistance for relocation (in connection with demolition schemes)
- Assistance for renovation
- Other (help for first time buyers, Handyperson Service etc.)

3.1.2 Officers are currently preparing a more detailed document regarding the assistance available, which will incorporate both the suggested amendments and new assistance. This document will be available for the consultation exercise.

#### 3.2 Assistance for Relocation

##### Equity Relocation Loans

3.2.1 The main financial products include equity based relocation loans for both owner-occupiers and businesses. Currently, the limit for both loans is £35,000, however, in the case of relocation loans for owner-occupiers there is a possibility to increase the loan to £45,000 if approved by the Newheartlands Discretionary Panel. The interest shown in the business relocation loan to date suggests that the £35,000 limit may be insufficient to close the financial gap between the compensation paid by the Council and the cost of a suitable, alternative, premises elsewhere. In the current economic climate, and in order to assist businesses to move to meet HMRI objectives, it is proposed to increase the upper limit of the Business Relocation Loan £45,000.

##### 3.2.2 **Business Movers Support**

HMRI clearance schemes involving non-residential interests have different requirements to owner-occupiers and tenants, when moving premises. Traditionally, advice to businesses has been provided on an ad hoc basis and in light of the challenges involved in moving the remaining commercial occupiers in Church Road and commercial occupiers in likely clearance areas in Birkenhead it is considered that there is a need for a specialist advisor to 'hand hold' the businesses through the moving process, similar to that of the Home Ownership Advisory Officers, currently providing the Home movers Service.

3.2.3 It is proposed to develop a business mover's support service over the next few months with a view to introducing a specialist advisory service later this year. It is proposed to discuss this with the Director of Law, HR and Admin and then report back to Members prior to any such role being introduced. The scheme would be along similar lines to the successful H.E.L.P. (Housing and Employment Link Project) project which is run by the Housing Options Team for residents of Wirral. It would also offer support to non-residential movers and link housing and employment agendas into a single project offered by the Housing Division.

##### **Relocation Rent Support**

3.2.4 In relation to moving non-residential interests out of clearance schemes, an issue with rent affordability has been identified. In certain cases, where a non-residential tenant is renting accommodation, the rent paid can sometimes be below that of the market rent for

a variety of reasons. Upon moving, the non-residential interest is likely to be faced with having to pay a market rent which may not be considered affordable to the proprietor.

3.2.5 It is proposed to introduce a new financial product to cushion the increase in rent for a limited period of time, allowing the non residential interest to adjust to the higher rent, or make alternative arrangements. This product is to be known as Relocation Rent Support and is in effect a “parachute” payment running over a 5 year period, with 100% gap funding provided in year 1, 80% in year 2 and so on until the support finishes at the end of year 5. An example is shown below:

3.2.6 Current rent paid: £300 per month  
Market rent for similar premises elsewhere: £500 per month  
Rental gap: £200 per month  
Year 1 Relocation Rent Support: £200 per month  
Year 2 RRS: £160 per month  
Year 3 RRS: £120 per month  
Year 4 RRS: £80 per month  
Year 5 RRS: £40 per month

Total cost of RRS over the 5 year period: £7,200

3.2.7 It is proposed that this product will be provided by the local authority and will be made available from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 in relation to non- residential interests involved in HMRI clearance schemes.

#### 4.0 **ASSISTANCE FOR RENOVATION**

##### Home Repair Assistance

4.1 Home Repair Assistance (HRA) provides up to £5,000 to qualifying residents throughout the borough to deal with a range of urgent minor work affecting the health and safety of the applicant. HRAs are registered as a local land charge and must be repaid when the property is sold. The current HRA's were introduced in April 2008 and, to date, 5 have been approved with 2 of these having being completed. In addition, 192 enquiries have been received about the HRA assistance. It is envisaged that the number of both approvals and completions will increase substantially by the year end. The maximum amount of assistance available through the HRA product has not changed for a number of years and inflation has eroded the ability to maximise the works that can be completed within this limit.

4.2 It is proposed to increase the limit of HRA to £6,000.

##### Equity Loan for Renewal

4.3 The Equity Renovation Loan was also introduced in April 2008 and a decision was taken to pilot these loans initially in the Egremont area of the HMRI. Expressions of interest were received from approximately 30 owner-occupiers and this has resulted in 6 applications being processed. Since the loan was introduced, a Framework for Equity Loans for Renewal has been agreed by the Newheartlands Monitoring and Implementation Group. This framework gives each local authority the discretion to increase the loan level beyond the limit of £30,000, in exceptional circumstances, on the understanding that this is agreed by Cabinet.

4.4 It is proposed that the Director of Regeneration be given the delegated authority to increase the loan above the £30,000 limit, to a maximum of £40,000, in cases where unforeseen works are encountered, in order to ensure the completion of works on site to a satisfactory standard, subject to the agreement of the loan agent (currently ART



Homes Ltd), any mortgagor and the Independent Financial Advisor. In cases not approved by the loan agent, the mortgagor or the IFA, consideration can be given to the use of HRA to enable the completion of works on site. Should the use of a HRA not be agreed then delegated authority be given for the Director of Regeneration to approve the use of a non-means tested grant to enable the completion of the works. The use of a grant to be considered as the last resort. It is envisaged that this situation will only arise in a very small number of cases.

#### Group Repair

- 4.5 Group Repair provides financial assistance to renovate the external fabric of a group of properties. Phase 4 of the Triangles Group Repair Scheme in North Birkenhead will be undertaken on 2009/10 and this is intended to be the final phase. Experience gained during the first 3 phases has identified a number of issues which need to be clarified to assist in the implementation of phase 4.
- 4.6 The clarifications include conditions relating to the payment of contributions upon practical completion of works to individual houses and the collection of any unpaid contribution.
- 4.7 In a very small number of cases on a Group Repair Scheme (which can be upward of 50 to 100 properties or more) a situation may arise where an owner of an individual property cannot fully complete the Group Repair application process before the works on that property have to commence under the contract. Often this is just a timing issue with providing information. Delaying the start of works on that property can incur costs for the Council under the contract and therefore when these circumstances arise it is proposed that the Director of Regeneration be given delegated authority to authorise that works start on that individual property with (1) the owners consent, and (2) following the undertaking of a risk assessment to establish both the risks to the scheme as a whole and the financial risks to the Council.

#### Neighbourhood Facelift

- 4.8 This assistance is similar to Group Repair in that it facilitates the overhaul of the external parts of a group of homes but also combines both environmental improvements within and beyond the curtilage and works to improve the interiors of the houses.
- 4.9 The suggested amendments for Group Repair above should also apply to the Facelift product.

#### Assistance for Empty Properties

- 4.10 A range of assistance is available and will continue to be developed to deal with empty properties.
- 4.11 To maximise the use of limited financial resources to tackle empty properties (which is an increasing issue in the Borough) it is proposed that Landlord properties that are part of a Group Repair Scheme (GRS) or Neighbourhood Facelift Scheme (NFS) do not receive a double financial benefit of the GRS or NFS and the Empty Property Assistance (up to £10,000).
- 4.12 The reason for this is that it is a condition of both the GRS and NFS that Landlords commit to let their property upon completion of the scheme. Therefore, if the property is vacant before the GRS and NFS take place it is the responsibility of the Landlord to undertake the internal improvements required to the property before letting it. The Landlord will recover their investment, over time, through the rental income they will receive from letting the property.

- 4.13 Homeswap and Homesteading have previously been piloted as methods to tackle empty properties and assist with the HMRI programme. Whilst the products were useful they proved to be difficult to sell and in the current housing market there are no proposals to use these forms of assistance during 2009/10

#### Business Renewal Loan

- 4.14 Equity based financial assistance up to the value of £30,000 to enable businesses involved in designated HMRI regeneration schemes to undertake shop fitting and internal improvement works. As with the Equity Renewal Loan mentioned in 4.3 above there may be occasions when it will be necessary to increase the loan beyond the limit of £30,000 to ensure the completion of renovation works to a satisfactory standard
- 4.15 It is proposed to amend the policy to allow the Director of Regeneration discretion to increase the loan up to £40,000 in cases of unforeseen works.

### **5.0 OTHER ASSISTANCE**

- 5.1 In response to a concern about rising personal debt a Service Level Agreement has been negotiated with Wirral Citizens Advice Bureau to provide access to debt and housing advice to residents, accredited landlords and agents living or operating in HMRI areas. Cases referred under this agreement receive attention within a target of 2 weeks of the referral being made. Similar provisions have been made by Wirral's Pathfinder partners. This assistance will be incorporated in the revised policy.

### **6.0 GENERAL**

- 6.1 **Environmental Responsibility**  
In light of the urgency of the climate change agenda it is proposed that the revised policy be reviewed over the next 12 month period to incorporate measures to secure an environmentally responsible assistance policy, that is cost effective, and acceptable to service users. Members should note that the current policy already includes measures to minimise environmental impact, however, it is considered that there is scope to improve the policy further in this area.
- 6.2 **Assistance to Private Sector Landlords**  
Subject to the results of the Wirral Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008 it is intended to review the assistance available to private sector landlords. Any proposed new assistance will form part of a wider strategy to improve conditions in this particular sector and be subject to the approval of Members at the next policy review.
- 6.3 **Monitoring Customer Satisfaction**  
It is proposed to introduce comprehensive customer satisfaction monitoring for all assistance provided in the revised policy. This will be phased in during 2009/10 and results reported back to Members at the next review.
- 6.4 On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2008 Cabinet agreed to the adoption of a preferred builder protocol restricting recipients of both Home Repair Assistance and Equity Renewal Loans to using building contractors registered with the Trading Standards Wirral Traders Scheme.
- 6.5 At the time of writing this report there are approximately 50 contractors registered on the Wirral traders Scheme and they comprehensively cover the range of building works which will normally be undertaken through both Home Repair Assistance and Equity Renewal Loans.

6.6 However, there may be a limited number of cases where specialist works are required (for example to a Listed Building) and these may be outside the scope of a general contractor.

6.7 In these circumstances it is proposed that a specialist contractor is engaged and they are unlikely to be registered on the Wirral Traders Scheme, because the scheme only covers general building works.

## 7.0 **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The policy revisions set out in this report will be subject to public consultation via the Council's website and local press, residents and other stakeholders will be invited to make comments by the end of February 2009. Following the consultation period the revised policy will be submitted to Cabinet for final approval and will come into force in April 2009.

## 8.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The funding of the revised policy will be from HMRI and Housing Capital Programme resources for 2009/10.

8.2 The Council is currently seeking to further support the revised policy through external partner agencies. At this stage there are no guarantees that additional funding will be secured.

## 9.0 **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Existing staffing arrangements can deliver the assistance policy. Should there be any staffing implications, following consultation on the proposals, it is intended to report back to members with further details.

## 10.0 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The revised policy recognises that there will be a proportion of vulnerable owners whom, for whatever reason, will not have sufficient resources to maintain their homes. In addition in relation to clearance action some owners and residents might be unable to fund a move to an alternative property. The revised policy makes provision for such owners and residents, should they approach the Council for assistance.

10.2 The proposals contained within this report will be subject to a period of consultation with potential service users and will include taking advice from the Council's BME Team.

10.3 Service delivery of the revised policy will be routinely monitored in relation to equality and diversity

## 11.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The revised policy does take into account community safety implications, particularly in relation to renovation assistance, as far as possible

## 12.0 **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The revised policy will include measures to both support the improvement of the existing housing stock where this is deemed to be sustainable and assist with the strategic clearance of obsolete housing stock and the provision of new, energy efficient houses for

the future. The policy includes measures to reduce environmental impact and will be reviewed during 2009/10 with the aim of improving environmental responsibility in light of the climate change agenda.

### **13.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Private Sector Housing Renewal supports the Urban Regeneration Strategy outlined in the Unitary Development Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategy. In particular it helps the Council sustain its commitment to protecting the Green Belt

### **14.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 The revised assistance policy targets the majority of it's financial assistance towards low income households. Those applicants deemed to have the ability to afford improvements or relocation by other means will be sign-posted accordingly.

### **15.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 The revised assistance policy will help those members of society least able to afford to undertake improvements or move to alternative accommodation. In addition, it will assist private landlords to improve housing conditions for some of the most vulnerable members of society.

### **16.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 This report affects all wards.

### **17.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17.1 None.

### **18.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That

- (1) the revised Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy be subject to a consultation exercise, as detailed in item 4.0 of this report;
- (2) a further report be submitted to Cabinet in Spring 2009 detailing the final version of the Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy for adoption and implementation from April 2009; and
- (3) Members agree to allow officers the delegation to use specialist contractors, not registered on the Trading Standards Wirral Traders Scheme, in cases involving HRA and Equity Loans for Renewal, where there are specialist works to be undertaken for the reasons set out in the report.

Alan Stennard  
Director of Regeneration

This report was prepared by Alan Lipscombe who can be contacted on 691 8122

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

## **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10**

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### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 In November 2007, the Department for Transport (DfT) approved a Local Transport Capital Settlement for Wirral of £6,507,000 for 2009/10. This report sets out a proposed Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme for approval.

1.2 This is a key decision included on the forward plan.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 Members will be familiar with the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Merseyside, which sets out the transport strategy for Merseyside. The second LTP (LTP2) covers the period between 2006/07 and 2010/11 and contains a 5-year programme and a comprehensive set of performance indicators and targets.

2.2 In November 2007, the Council were given notification of its annual LTP settlements from the Department for Transport for 2008/09 to 2010/11. A full report on the LTP settlement letter was reported to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008.

### **3.0 TRANSPORT CAPITAL SETTLEMENT 2009/10**

3.1 The LTP settlement is made up of two main blocks – the Integrated Transport Block and the Highway / Bridge Maintenance & Strengthening Block. Members will observe from Table 1 below that the total amount to be received in 2009/10 exceeds that in 2008/09 by an additional £448,000, however, it should be noted that this is due to an increase in maintenance funding, not integrated transport.

**Table 1: Summary of Wirral's LTP Settlement**

<b>Wirral LTP Settlement - Capital</b>			
	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
<b>Integrated Transport Block</b>	<b>3,339,000</b>	<b>3,254,000</b>	<b>3,155,000</b>
<b>Highway / Bridge Maintenance</b>	<b>2,720,000</b>	<b>2,992,000</b>	<b>3,441,000</b>
<b>Bridge Strengthening on PRN</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>261,000</b>	<b>1,088,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,059,000</b>	<b>6,507,000</b>	<b>7,684,000</b>

- 3.2 Members will recall that a key aspect of the success of the Merseyside LTP has been the quality of the Partnership that exists between the six Merseyside authorities and the level of joint working that is essential to produce and deliver a strong transport strategy. Funding for this type of work is held in a Joint Working Budget (JWB) that each partner funds as a proportion of the Merseyside total settlement. Members will be aware that the Merseyside allocation is split between the partner authorities using an agreed formula related to the level of need in each authority, and includes criteria such as population and accident data.
- 3.3 Wirral's contribution to the Joint Working Budget for 2009/10 is anticipated to be similar to last year (£130,000) and is separate to Wirral's settlement. The JWB budget is monitored by the Merseyside Strategic Transport and Engineers Group (MSTEG), which reports to the Merseyside Strategic Transport and Planning Committee (MSTPC).

#### **4.0 PROPOSED 2009/10 TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 Wirral Council's total 2009/10 LTP Settlement of £6,507,000 is made up as follows:

• Integrated Transport Block	£3,254,000
• Maintenance Block	£2,992,000
• PRN Bridges	<u>£ 261,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£6,507,000</u></b>

- 4.2 The integrated transport and maintenance blocks form part of the capital single pot. The only element that is ring-fenced is the allocation to undertake strengthening works to bridge structures on the PRN (Primary Route Network).
- 4.3 Members may recall that I had anticipated the 2009/10 programme being informed by a new appraisal criteria, which would have assessed potential schemes against local and regional policies and objectives in order to maximise scheme outcomes and delivery of appropriate targets.
- 4.4 Whilst work has taken place to develop an appraisal criterion, I would advise Members that, in order to complete schemes that are already committed or under construction and to undertake new projects that have either already received Members' approval or are considered key projects for implementation, there is little scope to introduce additional schemes for appraisal. Hence, I anticipate that the appraisal criteria will be utilised to inform the 2010/11 programme, and will be subject of a separate report next year.
- 4.5 **Appendix A** sets out the proposed 2009/10 programme of works for approval. In addition to the regular block allocations, details of which will be reported to Members in February 2009 (e.g. cycling, local safety schemes etc), the integrated transport programme includes funding to:



- Commence Speed Limit & TRO Review (Cabinet 10 December 2008, Minute 315 refers)
- Commence M53 Junction 3 safety improvements
- Implement Speed Barrier works, North Wallasey Approach Rd/Leasowe (Streetscene & Transport Services O&S Committee 19 November 2008, Minute 19 refers)
- Complete Telegraph Road/ Station Road, Thurstaston
- Local Environmental Improvements - Area Forums

The highway maintenance programme includes the following projects, each of which were recently unsuccessful in receiving funding from the Council's capital programme:

- Brimstage Road, Clatterbridge, Resurfacing
- Unclassified Roads Resurfacing - Microasphalt
- Poulton Viaduct/ Dock Link Roads Resurfacing

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Funding levels for transport over the next three years (2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11) are confirmed in the Government's settlement letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007, which also sets out the respective funding mechanisms (Cabinet 23 January 2008, Minute 457 refers).
- 5.2 In terms of revenue implications, there will be increased maintenance costs, or in some instances, savings arising from specific projects. Where these arise, they will be detailed when projects are brought to Members for approval.

## **6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Staff from my Department will continue to provide Wirral's input to the LTP and its strategic development. However, delivery of the Transport Capital Programme will continue to have an impact on staffing requirements, particularly in the areas of work that require detailed accident analyses and public consultation prior to the scheme identification and implementation. It may be necessary, therefore, to appoint consultants to undertake certain categories of work so that I have the necessary capacity to deliver the proposed programme of works.

## **7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no specific ethnic minority, elderly persons or equal opportunities implications arising directly from this report. The transport strategy, which underpins the LTP, includes measures to assist the transport needs of all sections of the community.
- 7.2 In addition, the Accessibility Plan within LTP2 identifies current transport barriers to key destination across Wirral. This work will inform the identification of potential transport proposals to improve opportunities for all people.
- 7.3 Wirral's highway and transport proposals consider the needs of people with disabilities and impaired mobility, as set out in the Merseyside Code of Practice on Access and Mobility, which takes full account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## **8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Most of the schemes in the Transport Capital Programme have positive Community Safety implications, either through improvements in road safety (e.g. introducing physical changes to the highway) or improvements in personal safety (for example, better street lighting).
- 8.2 LTP2 directly addresses the Government's Road Safety shared priority, which links closely with the Council's Local Area Agreement objectives to reduce traffic accidents.
- 8.3 LTP2 also complements many of the Council's corporate objectives, however, it is directly linked to that *'To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment'*.

## **9.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Sustainability and LA21 issues are common threads running through all the transport policies.
- 9.2 Specific elements of LTP2 include:
- Sustainable Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the strategy;
  - Joint working with health authorities and the promotion of walking and cycling;
  - Reduction of transport related emissions;
  - Encouraging greater use of public transport and non-motorised modes of transport;
  - Development of Travel Plans with schools and businesses; and
  - Merseyside 'TravelWise' – the initiative that is specifically helping to make an important contribution to people's behaviour change and the promotion of alternative modes of travel to the private car.

## **10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 In accordance with DfT guidelines, the LTP2 is closely aligned with the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and other strategic and local policies, including the Regional Transport Strategy, Wirral's Tourism Strategy and local environmental, social and economic regeneration strategies.
- 10.2 The Merseyside Authorities are committed to approving a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will improve linkages between land use and transport within the planning approvals' process. Members will note that the SPD was particularly noted by the Government in the settlement letter as "indicative of forward thinking on the links between transport and planning".
- 10.3 This SPD will form an integral part of the Core Local Development Framework (LDF) that is due to be in place in 2009. It is intended that the full SPD be approved and implemented in the near future and will be reported to Members separately in due course.

## **11.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 It is recognised by the LTP partners that the cost of travel by public transport, which has risen out of proportion to the cost of travel by car,

can be a barrier to unemployed people or those on low incomes. Partners will be exploring the use of new powers, introduced in the recent Local Transport Bill, which will give far more local controls over public transport providers.

## **12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Social inclusion is a thread running through the LTP, which aims to provide a fully integrated transport system that is accessible to everyone.

## **13.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no implications under this heading.

## **14.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT**

14.1 No background papers have been used in the preparation of this report.

## **15.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 The LTP contains a Wirral-wide transport strategy and implementation plan.

## **16.0 RECOMMENDATION**

16.1 That Council be recommended that the proposed Transport Capital Programme for 2009/10, set out in this report, be approved.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR  
TECHNICAL SERVICES

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## DRAFT LTP CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10

Scheme	2009/10
<b>ROAD SAFETY</b>	
Schemes to reduce road accident casualties and ensure a safe and well maintained highway asset.	
<b>LOCAL SAFETY SCHEMES</b>	
Local Safety Schemes (Block *)	500
<b>MAJOR SAFETY SCHEMES</b>	
M53 Junction 3	250
Speed Barrier, North Wallasey Approach Rd - Leasowe Rd	50
<b>SCHOOL TRAVEL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
Safer Routes to School / ETP (Block *)	150
<b>ROAD SAFETY TOTAL</b>	<b>950</b>
<b>CONGESTION</b>	
Schemes and initiatives primarily focussed on reducing/managing levels of congestion and the negative impact of the motor vehicle, and/or promoting public transport and the effective movement of freight.	
<b>PUBLIC TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
Bus Priorities - <i>to be agreed with Merseytravel</i>	100
<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT</b>	
UTC / Telematics / CCTV	100
[Speed] Network Management Review	225
<b>CONGESTION TOTAL</b>	<b>425</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT / AIR QUALITY</b>	
Schemes to improve air quality, the quality of life and the environment, and promote healthier communities.	
<b>LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
Telegraph Road / Station Road (Thurstaston Cross-Roads)	500
Local Improvements - Area Forums (to be decided) (Block*)	200
<b>WALKING STRATEGY</b>	
Pedestrian Signals (Block*)	150
Pedestrian Improvements (Block*)	60
Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan	15
<b>CYCLING STRATEGY</b>	
Cycling (Block*)	225
<b>AIR QUALITY / ENVIRONMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>1,150</b>

<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b>	
Schemes to improve access to jobs and education, and promote social and economic regeneration.	
<b>ACCESS TO JOBS &amp; SERVICES</b>	
Accessibility / Community Transport	100
TravelWise (contribution) & Travel Plans	50
<b>ACCESSIBILITY TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION STUDIES</b>	
Funding to ensure effective forward planning and joint working to meet the constantly evolving range of demands linked to LTP delivery.	
<b>ADV. DESIGN, LAND &amp; FORWARD PLANNING</b>	
Advanced Design / Land Acquisition	100
Congestion Corridor (NI.167) - Measures to be identified	34
<b>RESEARCH &amp; MONITORING</b>	
Joint Working, Strategy Development, LTP Monitoring	445
<b>FORWARD PLANNING TOTAL</b>	<b>579</b>
<b>HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE</b>	
Schemes to ensure a safe and well maintained roads and bridges.	
<b>MAINTENANCE - ROADS &amp; FOOTWAYS</b>	
Principal & Non-Principal Roads (Block*)	1,442
Brimstage Road, Clatterbridge - Resurfacing	500
Unclassified Roads Resurfacing - Microasphalt	200
Non-Surfacing Maintenance, e.g. Renewals signs & lines	100
<b>MAINTENANCE - BRIDGES</b>	
Bridge Maintenance / Strengthening - Dell Underpass	250
Bridges Conditions Report - Metal Work	300
Ringfenced funding - PRN Bridge Strengthening	261
<b>MAINTENANCE - STREET LIGHTING</b>	
Street Lighting Improvements	200
<b>ROAD SAFETY TOTAL</b>	<b>3,253</b>
<b>PROGRAMME GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>6,507</b>

(Block \*) - Proposed block allocation subject to further detailed report

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