

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	SEACOMBE
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 3rd February 2011, the outcomes of the consultation process which took place in the South Wallasey planning area, as agreed at Cabinet on 24th June 2010, were reported to Cabinet. The recommendations included the publication of statutory proposals for the closure of Kingsway Primary School from August 2012, which were the subject of discussion. Cabinet resolution 3) says:

“no other decisions be made in respect of primary school places until an investigation has been undertaken and further information is presented to the Cabinet, as soon as possible in respect of the growth bid and the implications of the Wirral Waters planning application.”

This report updates Cabinet on the demographic projections for primary age pupils in Wirral, with particular reference to South Wallasey, and provides further information on potential impact of Wirral Waters on the pupil population locally.

- 1.2 School re-organisation fits into the Council's Corporate Objectives: “to help children and young people achieve their full potential”; and “create an excellent Council”. The outcomes of school re-organisation meet the Council's Aim to “Close the attainment gap where poverty and disadvantage affect achievement” by removal of surplus places to ensure public money is spent to maximum effect in all our schools.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Kingsway Primary School be subject to a review commencing in Autumn 2013.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 There are four elements in looking to plan future primary school requirements across the Borough. These are, firstly, the numbers of children expected to enter school over the next five years; secondly the capacity of the current stock of primary schools, individually and in areas, thirdly the impact of school size on

standards, and finally a series of factors with implications for place provision. These include developments within the Education System: for example, those arising from the Children Act and Extended Schools, availability of capital funding and the need for diversity in school provision, the duty to respond to parental preference, and external factors which impact on secondary school numbers; for example, Housing Market Renewal and new housing developments.

- 3.2 The consultation options for schools 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 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.

- 3.3 Demographic changes indicate that the primary school population is rising, although this is equivalent to just 993 more primary pupils spread across Wirral in 2016 than in 2011, compared with 3,367 fewer pupils in 2016 than in 2001. The extent of the rise varies from area to area, and from school to school. On average across the Wallasey area, a 5% rise is expected in pupil numbers between 2011 and 2016 (although 13% below the number in 2001).
- 3.4 Within the South Wallasey small planning area which includes Kingsway Primary School, a 14% rise in pupil numbers between 2011 and 2016 is expected, although this is still 19% fewer pupils than in 2001. Surplus places in South Wallasey are expected to fall to 11% by 2016, which is just above the Audit Commission recommended upper limit of 10% surplus places.
- 3.5 The outcome of the Phase 6 consultation on options for change in South Wallasey was reported to Cabinet on 3rd February 2011, recommending the closure of Kingsway Primary School. At that time Cabinet asked for a further report on the implications of the growth bid and the Wirral Waters development.
- 3.6 The scheme as currently published indicates that there will be a maximum of 13,521 new dwellings, accommodating up to 30,000 residents over the 30 year life span of the project. The project is not expected to start on site until 2012 at the earliest, however the International Trade Centre development may take precedence in the early years of the project.
- 3.7 Assuming that 451 dwellings are built each year of the 30 year Wirral Waters development up to the maximum, and assuming a similar occupier profile to the already completed East Float Quay, this could be expected to generate between 3 and 6 resident pupils per year group, which equates to 21 to 42 primary age pupils each year across the full age range.
- 3.8 On the basis of 3 to 6 "new" pupils entering Foundation 2 every year from 2012 onwards, and at maximum all of those pupils were to exclusively attend South Wallasey primary schools, if Kingsway Primary School closed there would still be sufficient vacant F2 places in South Wallasey primary schools to absorb the projected children generated by the Wirral Waters development for at least the next 6 to 12 years.

3.9 However, given the rising roll in the South Wallasey area, the levels of uncertainty regarding the speed of residential development in Wirral Waters and the potential impact on inward migration and residential growth of the International Trade Centre, it is recommended that Kingsway Primary School be reviewed again in Autumn 2013.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Primary Places Review Phase 6

At its meeting of 16th October 2008, Cabinet instructed that Phase 6 of the Primary Places Review should comprise South Wallasey, North Wallasey, Leasowe, Moreton, Upton and Greasby. At its meeting of 19th March 2009 Cabinet made an allowance for an amendment to Phase 6:

(404, item 4) Should the Joint Church school be approved and implemented as in (2), the Leasowe area be moved from Phase 6 of the Primary Places Review to Phase 8 accordingly.

4.2 As in previous phases, the first stage of the Review was to conduct a process where, on a confidential basis, meetings took place with key stakeholders in each of the areas under review. These stakeholders included Ward Councillors as well as officers of the Diocese of Chester and Shrewsbury, headteachers and chairs of governors of schools potentially affected by the Reviews.

4.3 Following these confidential discussions, recommendations were made for options for consultation in the next stage of the review process in the Cabinet report of 24th June 2010.

Following consideration of that report, Cabinet agreed that no options would be brought forward for the North Wallasey, Moreton, Upton and Greasby 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 South Wallasey area.

4.4 In relation to community school provision in South Wallasey, the options were:

- A – Closure of Kingsway Primary School
- B- Closure of Kingsway Primary School and Riverside Primary Schools in order to open a new establishment on the Riverside site (B1) or on the Kingsway site (B2)
- C – Closure of Brentwood Early Years Centre, to be converted to Early Years provision governed by Somerville Primary School either in situ on the Brentwood site (C1), or in new accommodation on the Somerville site (C2).

These options were approved for consultation. In the final documentation, the options were renamed as follows: A became A1, B1 became A2 and B2 became A3. As a result, C1 became B1, and C2 became B2.

4.5 The detailed outcomes of the consultation were reported to Cabinet on 3rd February 2011 and will not be repeated here.

5.0 PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The PCP was the sister programme to the secondary Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. It shared many similarities in terms of aims and objectives in that it sought the transformation of education leading to increased attainment, the development of state of the art modern learning environments and extended schools. However, the PCP differed in that it was not a competitive bidding programme and local authorities received an annual allocation of capital investment.

On 22nd May 2008, Council's Cabinet approved the Primary Capital Strategy. The aims of the Strategy reflect those of the Children and Young People's Plan. These include *"Public money is spent to maximum effect in all our schools"*, and *"Best match of provision to need is achieved by reviews of primary place provision continuing on a small planning area basis, once the first four year cycle of reviews is completed in Summer 2008. Focus to be on those small planning areas with the highest number of surplus places and those individual schools with more than 25% surplus places"*.

5.1 The funding priorities for the first four years of the PCP were:

- Major schemes arising from the on-going Wirral Primary Review, involving the building of new schools and refurbishment as part of a rationalization process to remove surplus places, achieve a better match between provision and need, both overall and at individual school level and provide high quality, flexible environments for learning.
- Replacement of the final three 1940's HORSAs kitchen dining units (one now remaining)
- Replacement of temporary accommodation at schools which are predicted to remain at or near capacity alongside additional provision as required and agreed.
- Projects resulting from changes in special needs provision in mainstream and special schools.

5.2 The 2011/2012 schools capital funding programme was announced on 13th December 2010. Wirral's capital funding programme for 2011/12 was approved by Cabinet on 17th March 2011. The vision, aims and priorities established by the PCP remain Council policy in prioritising major capital works in primary and special schools.

6.0 PROJECTIONS

6.1 The projection method for primary schools is as follows. In order to calculate the Foundation 2 intake for each future year, the actual number of live births within the Wirral area is provided by the Primary Care Trust. This is multiplied by a factor (currently 0.979) to reflect a historical difference between live births and the number of pupils entering maintained schools, due to pupils entering the private sector. Individual school Foundation 2 intakes are then based on the previous three years pattern of Foundation 2 intake figures. Years 1 to 5 are simply rolled forward.

	Year	Primary	Change
ACTUAL	2001	28322	
	2002	27587	-735
	2003	26839	-748
	2004	26315	-524
	2005	25592	-723
	2006	25078	-514
	2007	24478	-600
	2008	24049	-429
	2009	23899	-150
	2010	23903	+4
	2011	23961	+58
PROJECTED	2012	24204	+243
	2013	24350	+146
	2014	24700	+350
	2015	24923	+224
	2016	24955	+32

The numbers set out above are for primary age pupils in mainstream schools, e.g. not including nursery age pupils, pupils in special schools or independent school provision. Actuals are as at the January 2011 Census. Academies are included in all years including backdated data for Birkenhead High School Academy (BHSA) Junior Division.

- 6.2 The above figures illustrate that the long-term falling primary school roll across the Borough lasted until 2009, followed by a partial recovery. However, there are still expected to be 3,367 fewer primary age pupils in 2016 than in 2001. The rise in roll is not evenly distributed between areas, or between individual schools within areas. The table below shows primary numbers on roll at January 2001, January 2011, and projected to 2016, by area.

	2001	2011	2016	% Change 2011 to 2016	% Change 2001 to 2016
Birkenhead	7969	6543	7064	+10%	-10%
Wallasey	7731	6389	6705	+5%	-13%
South Wirral	5046	4830	4883	+1%	-3%
West Wirral	7104	6199	6329	+2%	-11%

- 6.3 Pupils attending Wirral primary schools over the next five years have already either been born or attend Wirral primary schools. Migration is minimal, and while individual school rolls may vary, it seems reasonable to conclude that by 2016 at least 3,300 fewer pupils will require primary mainstream school provision than in 2001. The rising roll is equivalent to just 993 more primary pupils spread across Wirral in 2016 than in 2011.
- 6.4 In the period since 2001, the process of school re-organisation has reduced the number of schools and school places in some parts of Wirral. The following table shows the 2016 projected number on roll in primary schools by Wirral area, the current capacity of those schools (taking into account previously approved school closures) and the projected proportion of surplus places in 2016.

	2016 roll	Capacity	% Surplus
Birkenhead	7064	7805	10%
Wallasey	6705	7508	11%
South Wirral	4883	5195	6%
West Wirral	6329	6672	5%

- 6.5 Despite the projected rise in primary roll and school re-organisation proposals, surplus places remain proportionately higher in Birkenhead and Wallasey than in South and West Wirral. The Authority aims to reduce surplus places below the Audit Commission guideline of 10% above which resources are being wasted funding empty places, ideally aiming for between 4% and 5% to allow for maximum efficiency and a degree of parental choice.
- 6.6 The South Wallasey small planning area is a sub-area of the wider Wallasey planning area. The following table shows primary numbers on roll in the four sub-areas of Wallasey at January 2001, January 2011 and projected to 2016.

	2001	2011	2016	% Change 2011 to 2016	% Change 2001 to 2016
North Wallasey	3363	3118	3174	+2%	-6%
South Wallasey	2242	1590	1817	+14%	-19%
Leasowe	505	422	444	+5%	-12%
Moreton	1621	1259	1270	+1%	-22%

- 6.7 From this it can be seen that while the overall primary roll in Wallasey is projected to rise by 5%, the percentage rise is expected to be higher in South Wallasey than in any of the other sub-areas. It also demonstrates that compared with 2001, the number of primary age children is expected to be significantly lower, with the greatest reduction in South Wallasey. The following table shows the projected primary number on roll in 2016, with the current Net Capacity of all schools in each sub-area, and the projected surplus place percentage in 2016.

	2016	Capacity	% Surplus
North Wallasey	3174	3292	4%
South Wallasey	1817	2043	11%
Leasowe	444	595	25%
Moreton	1270	1578	19%

6.8 Projections indicate that even with the projected rise in roll, surplus places are likely to remain above the Audit Commission guideline of 10% in three of the four sub-areas, including South Wallasey.

7.0 **Impact of Wirral Waters regeneration scheme**

7.1 Wirral Waters was instigated by Peel Holdings in 2006. On 29th November 2010, the scheme was formally approved by the Secretary of State, having received outline planning permission from the Council on 3rd August 2010. The planning application reference is OUT/09/06509.

7.2 The scheme as currently published indicates that there will be a maximum of 13,521 new dwellings, accommodating up to 30,000 residents over the 30 year life span of the project. The project is not expected to start on site until 2012 at the earliest.

7.3 In March 2011, the Government established the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone, which spans the Mersey including both Peel's Wirral Waters and Liverpool Waters developments. The benefits for the business elements of the development include business rates discounts, simplified planning requirements and funding for superfast broadband.

Pupil population

7.4 For projection purposes, the Audit Commission formula of 4 pupils per year group, per 100 homes, is used to generate future pupil numbers from any development. The number per year group is far lower for flats and retirement housing than for family homes. If all 13,521 dwellings were houses, this would be expected to generate 541 pupils per year group, or 3,786 primary age pupils. Spread evenly over the 30 year period, assuming that 451 dwellings would be built each year of the development, this could be expected to generate an additional 18 pupils per year group, or 126 primary pupils per year.

7.5 However, as residential apartments, the number of pupils expected to be generated is far lower. The fully operational East Float Quay apartment development comprises 179 flats, of which 111 (62%) were occupied according to the electoral roll as updated on 4th May 2011. Of the 111 occupied apartments, 76 were occupied by sole adults (68%), 35 by two or three adults (32%). According to Children and Young People's Department pupil records, 11 apartments were home to at least one child aged between 3 and 16 (10%), the maximum being two at any one flat, 15 children in total, representing 10 year groups. The existing apartment development, excluding vacant apartments, therefore generates 1.3 children per year group for every 100 occupied apartments. Including vacant apartments, this reduces further to 0.8 children per year group for every 100 total apartments.

7.6 Assuming again that 451 dwellings are built each year of the 30 year Wirral Waters development up to the maximum, and assuming a similar occupier profile to East Float Quay, this could be expected to generate between 3 and 6 resident pupils per year group, which equates to 21 to 42 primary age pupils each year across the full age range.

7.7 Another factor is that only half of the primary age pupils currently living at East Float Quays attend schools in the wider Wallasey area, and none of those attend schools in the South Wallasey sub-area. Older children moving

into Wirral Waters may continue to attend their existing school, as is the case for 50% of the primary age pupils currently residing at East Float Quays. It is too soon to tell whether parents of the small number of preschool age pupils living at East Float Quays will take up places at local South Wallasey schools.

- 7.8 There were 35 vacant places in Foundation 2 classes in primary schools in the South Wallasey area in 2011, 11 of these at Kingsway Primary School.

Taking into account current trends, on average there are likely to be 36 vacant places in Foundation 2 classes each year in South Wallasey over the next five years.

On the basis of 3 to 6 “new” pupils entering Foundation 2 every year from 2012 onwards, and at maximum all of those pupils were to exclusively attend South Wallasey primary schools, if Kingsway Primary School closed there would still be sufficient vacant F2 places in South Wallasey primary schools to absorb the projected children generated by the development for at least the next 6 to 12 years.

- 7.9 In September 2011, the Council approved plans for a £200m International Trade Centre (ITC) on the West Float docks site as part of the £4.5bn Wirral Waters regeneration scheme. A series of multi-purpose buildings will be constructed in phases providing a total floor area of approximately 230,000 square metres. The early focus on the ITC may mean that significant residential development on the Wirral Waters sites will not take place until later phases of the development.

Recommendation

- 7.10 In January 2011, Kingsway had 90 pupils on roll, a further reduction from 99 pupils in 2010, and less than half the number on roll in 2000 (189). In Autumn 2011, this had fallen further to 83 pupils on roll. The capacity of the school has already been reduced “on paper” from 210 places to 177 places, however 53% of places in the school are now empty.

The most recent projection indicates a small increase in roll to 110 pupils by 2016, but the school will remain both small, and with high levels of surplus places for the foreseeable future.

- 7.11 However, given the rising roll in the South Wallasey area, the levels of uncertainty regarding the speed of residential development in Wirral Waters and the potential impact on inward migration and residential growth of the International Trade Centre, it is recommended that Kingsway Primary School be reviewed again in Autumn 2013, when the position of the school should be clearer.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 8.1 Kingsway Primary will remain a small school for the foreseeable future, and both Kingsway and Riverside will continue to operate with high levels of surplus places. The Council’s Primary Capital Strategy for Change (PCS) identifies four key priorities. This includes “*Improving value for money in services*”.
- 8.2 The PCS also identifies four key aims in line with the Children and Young People’s Plan. The first of these is that children and young people “*attend*

educational settings that are viable, inclusive and cost effective". Indirectly, the removal of surplus spaces and school rationalisation leads to revenue savings to be redistributed amongst remaining schools. Failure to address high levels of surplus places and the issues faced by small schools results in a high risk of wasting resources; consequently less funding would be spent directly on children's education, which could impact on standards. This is at risk if the school remains open.

- 8.3 The legal decisions to re-organise school provision must be made before any decisions to allocate capital funding can be taken. Failure to address surplus places may result in projects not meeting the criteria in order to draw on future central government or other funding sources.

9.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Other options arising from consultation are considered within the 3rd February 2011 report.

10.0 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The consultation methodology was reported in the 3rd February 2011 report.

11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 11.1 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.

- 11.2 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.

12.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 12.1 To date the Borough-wide primary school review process has generated and redistributed over £0.75 million of revenue savings into schools following closures and amalgamations. In addition, changes to the Wirral Funding Formula over the 2008-2011 period have increased funding to schools serving more deprived children and increased the proportion of expenditure in the primary phase. The resultant increases in funding at schools serving areas of high deprivation will contribute to narrowing achievement gaps.

- 12.2 The closure of Kingsway Primary School, excluding those pupil led elements which follow pupils to their destination schools, would release approximately £88,617 annually (on 2010/2011 figures) into the individual Schools Budget as a whole.

13.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Key points of the legal guidance and a commentary in relation to Phase 6 options for South Wallasey is included within the 3rd February report at Appendix 4. Full guidance is available on line (See Reference Material).

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

14.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
(a) Is an EIA required? No.

15.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

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

16.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Available on request from the Children and Young People's Department unless otherwise stated.

Annual Supply of School Places Return, July 2010

- <http://tinyurl.com/6h7yfa8>

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

- <http://tinyurl.com/35vpt3v>

Consultation Documents

- <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces>

Decision Makers Guidance

- <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg/guidance.cfm?id=4>

Extract from School Organisation Plan

- <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/CABecs050718app1a.pdf>

Extract from LA document "In Pursuit of Excellence: Primary Education in Wirral" 2004.

- <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=9321>

Primary Capital Strategy 2008

- <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/PrimaryCapitalStrat.asp>

School pupil number returns, January 2010 (Annual Census return to Government).

- <http://tinyurl.com/6jnuu9b>

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

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	3rd February 2011
Cabinet	24th June 2010
Cabinet	1st October 2009
Cabinet	19th March 2009
Cabinet	16th October 2008