



Relocating Gilbrook School to the former site of Arrowe Hill Primary School

Re-locating Gilbrook School to the former site of Arrowe Hill Primary School Consultation

This leaflet

- **describes the option**
- **outlines the timetable for consultation and possible implementation**
- **tells you how to respond to consultation**

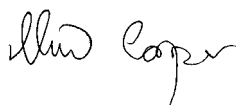
Dear Consultee

Some of you may be aware that the Council has been carrying out a review of primary schools across Wirral over the last few years. One of the outcomes of this review process is that Arrowe Hill Primary School in Woodchurch will close as a primary school from 31st August 2009. The Governing body of Gilbrook School had asked the Council to look at moving Gilbrook to a larger building with more outdoor space. The possibility of relocating Gilbrook to the former Arrowe Hill site has now been discussed between the Local Authority and the Governing body of Gilbrook School, and so far all are agreed that relocation would be beneficial.

Because the proposed site is more than 2 miles away from Gilbrook's existing site, we are consulting more widely with parents, staff, governors and other people related to Gilbrook School in order to help decide whether Gilbrook should relocate to the former Arrowe Hill site.

Your views are important to us. Please take this opportunity to have your say.

Yours sincerely



Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

The Consultation

We have tried to think of questions you may have about the option to relocate Gilbrook School. We are also sure you will have plenty more! Please ask your headteacher, or write to the Local Authority at the address at the end of this leaflet.

What is Gilbrook School?

Gilbrook School is a local authority maintained community special school with 50 places for boys and girls aged 5 to 11, who have statements of special educational needs because of emotional or behavioural difficulties. Some have additional learning needs, such as ADHD, Autism, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Specific Learning Difficulties.

Gilbrook is located on Pilgrim Street, Birkenhead, but serves the whole of Wirral.

Pupils are admitted at different times during the school year, sometimes with a history of non-attendance and extreme behaviour, which in some cases has led to exclusion from their mainstream school. Consequently, many learners have considerable gaps in their skills and knowledge, particularly in terms of communication, language and literacy. When pupils reach the end of Year 6, some return to mainstream secondary education every year.

The school also provides an Outreach Service offering advice and training for teaching and non-teaching staff in mainstream primary schools.

When last inspected by Ofsted in 2007, Gilbrook was found to be an “outstanding” school.

Why move? What are the benefits?

At present, Gilbrook occupies a single storey school with six teaching rooms, an assembly hall and a sports hall.

Arrowe Hill’s building is two storey, with eight teaching spaces in the main building, an assembly hall, and a linked single storey building currently used as an ICT, community and before/afterschool club facility.

Relocating to the former Arrowe Hill building would increase the net floor area available to Gilbrook by a third, and although the school would no longer have access to the Sports Barn, the total site area available to the school would triple including a substantial increase in hard and soft play area. The Authority would retain the former Infant building for storage purposes.

The Governing body believes that the benefits would be as follows:

- More classrooms, which should help reduce class sizes even further
- Better quality accommodation for the exclusion base
- More meeting spaces for various agencies including social care, health, education and parents, as well as one to one sessions with pupils

- More capacity to provide extended services – parents weekly workshops, for example
- More car parking and a larger staffroom
- More space to carry out additional behaviour support training and advice to mainstream schools

Would any building work be needed?

The Arrowe Hill building has very recently been renovated, but there are likely to be changes needed to the building and site, and on this basis the Local Authority has already set aside £200,000 of capital funding in this years budget to assist with the move to Arrowe Hill, if the final decision is that the relocation is the best way forward.

Exactly what would be required would be worked out after the final decision is made but could include an extension to the existing car park, some new windows, making a safe drop-off for the minibuses and installing a panic alarm system.

This work would be carried out before Gilbrook move in, so that there is no disruption to children and staff.

What is the legal process?

By law, a school can't relocate more than 2 miles in a straight line from the original site without publishing a "prescribed alteration" notice. The legal process involves a consultation with stakeholders before a decision is made whether to publish the legal notice for the transfer of site.

After the legal notice is published, at both sites and in local newspapers, there is another 6 weeks for people to make comments about the proposal to relocate the school.

This means that the final decision would be made by Council's Cabinet during the Autumn term. The earliest a move could take place would be Easter 2010.

Would admissions change?

The process for admission to Gilbrook would be the same as now. The new buildings would be bigger, but there is no intention to create additional places, so there would be about 50 children at any time, just as now.

Travel to school arrangements would continue as specified in the Authority's information booklets for parents, which are that the Authority would pay the travel costs of children attending Gilbrook either by providing a travel pass for pupils able to travel by public transport, or by arranging travel on the Authority's own or contracted vehicles, including providing an escort if necessary.

Would the school have a new name or uniform?

No, not unless the Governing body decide to do so.

What about existing staff?

As a relocation, all existing staff would transfer to the new site, unless they move to another school or retire, just as in any other school.



The Consultation

It is important for you to understand that a decision has not already been made. The Council's Cabinet will want to see the comments made during consultation before making any decision about what happens next.

Finding out more

If you want more information about the options, you can find out more on the Internet. Go to www.wirral-abc.gov.uk, and click on **More Information** under Latest News in the **Special School Review** box (purple). You will find:

- This consultation leaflet
- Site and building information on Gilbrook and Arrowe Hill
- How to send your comments to the Director

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you can go to your local library where staff will help you log on and print out the information.

The Consultation leaflet will also be available to read at the following places:

Libraries

Woodchurch

Birkenhead Central

Wallasey Central

Community Centres

Woodchurch

The Lauries

One Stop Shops

Conway Centre

You can also look at the documents at Wallasey Town Hall. If you want more printed copies, please contact the Asset Management Team, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD, 0151 666 4351, or by e-mail at specialreview@wirral.gov.uk.

What are the next steps?

Step 1. The first step is to distribute the consultation leaflet and ask for views and comments.

There will be a session at Gilbrook School on Wednesday 24th June at 10 o'clock in the morning.

The meeting is an opportunity for parents, staff, governors and other people directly related to the school to find out more information and talk to representatives of the Children and Young People's Department.

People associated with other local or special schools, and members of the public who want to, can write in with their views. **Anyone who wants to can write and say what they think.**

When the Consultation ends, all the views and opinions received in writing and at the consultation meeting will form part of a report to the Council's Cabinet. Cabinet members will read the report and decide what to do next. They may decide not to go further with this option at this stage. Members might make changes, consider other options put forward as part of the consultation, or they could decide to do more consultation.

Step 2. If Council's Cabinet decides to go ahead with this option, the Local Authority will publish a prescribed alteration notice. This notice is followed by six weeks for formal written objections and comments to be sent to the Director of Children's Services.

Step 3. After the six week representation period ends, the proposal, with the objections and comments, is sent to the Council's decision making body, which is Council's Cabinet. Cabinet can decide to:

- Approve the proposal
- Approve the proposal with changes
- Approve the proposal subject to other factors, such as obtaining planning permission
- Reject the proposal.

If Cabinet can't agree a decision, the Schools' Adjudicator will make the final decision. The Adjudicator is independent, and is appointed by the Government to make decisions on school proposals.

Step 4. If the proposal is approved, either by Cabinet or by the School's Adjudicator, it will be put into practice.

HAVING YOUR SAY

What do you think? Please make sure your response is received by **Friday, 31st July 2009**.

You can write on your own, or you can join together with other people to write a joint letter.

Your comments can be sent by post, by handing them in at your school or by e-mail. If you

find it helpful you can complete and return the **feedback form** on the next page. There is

also a feedback form on the Consultation website: www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/primaryplaces/

The postal address for return of feedback forms or written comments is:

Gilbrook Consultation

Director of Children's Services

Hamilton Building

Conway Street

Birkenhead

CH41 1FD

Or by e-mail to specialreview@wirral.gov.uk

Please note: To make sure the Consultation is fully open and transparent, all the responses to this consultation will be made available for inspection.

Gilbrook Consultation Feedback Form

Please let us know the main relationships you have with the school by putting a tick in the appropriate box or boxes. You might be a parent and a member of staff, for example.

School	Parent	Member of staff	Governor	Other person
Gilbrook School				
Other (please say which one)				

Do you agree with the proposal to relocate Gilbrook School to the former Arrowe Hill site? Tick one box only.

YES

NO

Comments

Please give your reasons or comments in the box below. You can write more on the back of the form, or on another sheet if you need to.

Please tell us your name and address, and e-mail address if you have one. We will not use your personal information for anything other than this consultation.

Name

Address

Postcode

e-mail

Please note: In order to ensure that this process is fully open and transparent, other people will be able to read all the responses to this consultation.

Address: Gilbrook Consultation
 Director of Children's Services
 Hamilton Building
 Conway Street
 Birkenhead
 CH41 4FD

Make sure your response is received by:

FRIDAY 31st JULY 2009

E-mail specialreview@wirral.gov.uk