

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

OPTIONS FOR SOUTH WALLASEY

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Introduction

The Council is rightly proud of education in Wirral. Teachers, governors, parents and pupils all play a part in making schools successful. The Council must make sure money spent on education is used in the best possible way. This means spending money on real children, not on empty places.

The Council has to review its school places to make sure that across Wirral, empty or surplus places stay below 10%. It also has to consider what action to take when a school has 25% or more surplus places.

It is right that there should be some surplus places for parental choice. However, in Wirral the number of primary age children is falling. This means that some schools are getting smaller, producing a significant number of empty places.

Also, each school needs enough pupils to pay its costs in full. When pupil numbers become too low, the school is at risk of financial problems, and may have to cut back spending on staff and other resources. Even if the school avoids going into debt, each teacher in a small school has a more demanding and stressful workload than a teacher in a larger school.

It is important to remember that any savings that may be made as a result of any of these options would be re-invested in the remaining schools. This means increased funding for real children, rather than supporting empty space.

Where high surplus has developed and numbers continue to fall, we must take action and make changes. This consultation is for you to help decide what changes should be made to reduce surplus places at schools in this area.

Why is the Review necessary?

There are fewer primary age children in Wirral because fewer children are being born. This is happening in many parts of the country, not just in Wirral. It is clear that new families coming to live in Wirral and new housing developments will not make a significant difference. This is supported by discussion with colleagues involved with housing market developments in this area.

There are currently around 13% surplus places in the primary system. These places are not spread evenly but are concentrated within some areas and in some schools. The overall primary roll in Wirral has fallen for a number of years. There has been a small increase in the birth rate recently, and this is predicted to mean a rise from 23,903 primary pupils in 2010 to 24,537 by 2015, which would result in about 10% surplus places across Wirral if no action is taken. The small rise in pupil numbers is very welcome but it is too soon to tell whether this trend will continue, and in some areas surplus places will still be far too high.

The Primary Places Review

The Local Authority (LA) divides Wirral into Small Planning Areas. Each area contains schools that serve related communities and geographical areas. Small Planning Areas are not the same as electoral wards or constituencies.

This is the sixth phase of a Primary Places Review which has looked at the whole of Wirral over the last few years. This consultation concerns schools in the small planning area of **South Wallasey**. These are:

- Egremont Primary School
- Kingsway Primary School

- Park Primary School
- Riverside Primary School
- Somerville Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey

There is also a nursery school in this area, **Brentwood Early Years Centre**.

Why reduce school places in South Wallasey?

There are 2,043 pupil places in the six primary schools. At the school census in January 2010, there were **1,552 children** in the six schools.

491 surplus places = about 16 empty 30 place classes
 = more than two standard one form entry primary schools
 = **24% surplus places**

Our target is to manage surplus places at **below 10%**.

Predictions have been made about how this situation might change over the next five years. These predictions are based on the number of children in schools now, and how many children have been born.

Over the next five years the number of pupils in South Wallasey schools is predicted to rise to **1,633 pupils in 2015**. This means if nothing changed, in five years time there would still be **20% surplus places**. This is double our 10% or less target. We must act to reduce the number of surplus places in South Wallasey.

Small schools

Reducing surplus places is the main reason for the review. However, the Council has considered many other factors before choosing which options would work best in this area. The number of pupils on roll was one of these factors.



The Authority and school representatives spent a year discussing the relationship between number of pupils on roll and quality of education. The Wirral policy document "In Pursuit of Excellence" says that in order for a single form of entry school (one class per year) to be viable and efficient, the number of pupils on roll should be within the range of 120 and 210. It also says that when a school goes **below 180 pupils on**

roll, the financial and organisational situation of the school becomes more difficult to manage. 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".

There may be local factors why a small school should be maintained: a small remote rural school may serve a very wide area, for example. It may also be argued that in areas of high deprivation it is more difficult for parents and children to travel to alternative schools.

Where school rolls are falling, small schools face the following problems:

- They have to spend more and more of their budget to pay staff and the fixed costs of running the school, like cleaning and rates. Small schools spend more than 90% of their budget on staffing, leaving far less for equipment, books, additional support assistants and so on.

- The Authority has been able to re-direct money from other schools to protect the small school for a while to protect it while rolls fall. This extra money does not last forever. If the numbers on roll keep falling, the school could go into debt. Small schools continue to receive some additional money, however, giving extra money to a smaller school also means that all the other schools have less money to spend on their own pupils.
- Because the school has less money, eventually the school has to start making teachers redundant.
- With a smaller group of teachers, each teacher has to take on additional responsibilities to cover all the subjects of the national Curriculum, as well as issues such as special educational needs and assessment. This increases the workload on teachers.
- With fewer teachers, organising the classes can be awkward. As the pupil numbers fall, class sizes stay about the same, but different age groups have to be taught together.
- Small schools can be successful – but this success relies on a small number of teachers. When teachers move to another school or retire, this change can have a significant effect on the quality of the school.

Larger schools:

- have more flexibility in their budget. Because they spend less in percentage terms on administration and fixed costs, larger schools have more money to spend on resources such as equipment, books, and additional support staff to meet children’s needs.
- Additional responsibilities need to be covered in a large school just as in a small school, but they can be shared between a larger group of teachers. This gives teachers a more reasonable workload. Teachers then have more time to plan, and develop their skills.
- A larger pool of staff means the school can offer a broad range of resources and skills across subjects and key stages, including well-resourced pastoral care to create a caring ethos.
- They provide more opportunities for staff development enabling them to develop and 'grow'. This helps explain why large stable schools can cope better with staff turnover.



There are many **other factors** that the Council has considered before choosing to consult on these options in this area. Here are some of them.

Pattern of parental choice	Distance between schools
Pupil mobility	Class sizes
Catchment zones	Special Educational Needs
Educational standards	Early Years education
Value for money	Implications for staff
Traffic and travel	Building work and expenditure
Housing changes	Other users of school buildings
Church school issues	

Questions to be asked of all Options

In considering options for this area, there are many factors to bear in mind. Here are some suggestions.

Demographics

- Population predictions for 2015: how many children will there be?
- Surplus place percentage at the local level predicted for 2015: how does this compare with the Audit Commission's recommended 5 to 10%?

Pattern of choice

- Current parental preferences: where do the children live, and where do they go to school now?
- Pupil mobility: do children move school during their primary education?
- Allocation of school zones: do schools have an appropriate zone?
- Are there enough places for all parents who want a Denominational education for their child? There are two kinds of church school. "Aided" schools are the property of trustees, and their admission arrangements are the responsibility of their Governing bodies. "Controlled" schools have a religious ethos, but the Authority controls their admission arrangements.

Standards

- What are the standards of education like?
- Will children's education be enhanced?

Traffic and housing

- Traffic implications: how will children travel to school?
- Will the option take into account forthcoming housing developments?
- How many schools are there within a 2 mile radius? The Authority must provide transport for under 8's if there is no school within two miles of their home. For 8's and older, this distance is 3 miles.

Building and site

- Will internal changes be required to return classrooms into use?
- Alternative uses of the buildings and site: would it be practical or cost-effective to re-use the building for another purpose?
- Effect on other users of the building: what happens to existing pre-schools, nurture groups and so on?
- Is any new building work required?
- Is the building suitable for use as an extended school?

School organisation

- How is it likely to affect class sizes overall?
- Can infant class sizes be maintained under the statutory limit of 30 pupils without unacceptable impact on other classes or budget requirements?
- What are the implications for staff? Are there opportunities for redeployment or early retirement?

- Will changes in admission number be required? This is the number of children that a school can take in Reception each year.
- What effect might there be on early years education, childcare or nurture groups?
- Has special educational needs provision been taken into account?

Financial

- What will happen to any financial savings made?
- What capital expenditure is needed? For example, for new buildings or refurbishment of existing buildings, or purchase of sites.
- If a school closes, what will happen to the site? Can it be sold or leased?
- Where will the money received from site sales or leases go?

Definition of terms

Closure means ceasing to maintain a school.

Amalgamating or merging two schools involves closing both schools, then opening a single school with one budget, governing body and headteacher. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, new schools will normally be “foundation” schools established by a body separate from the Local Authority. The LA would commission a new school after holding a competition to invite applications to operate the school.

Federation can only be proposed by governing bodies. Federated schools keep their separate budgets, but have one governing body, and often a single headteacher.

Extended schools provide a range of activities and services for their communities, such as adult education, childcare or ICT facilities, outside school hours.

FTE - Full time equivalent. This is used when referring to early years places and pupils. A single part-time pupil in an LA designated Foundation 1 (nursery) class attending 5 sessions a week, equals 0.5 FTE. In pre-school playgroups, the actual number of sessions is used to determine the FTE, as children may attend anything from 1 session to 10 sessions a week.

Value Added (VA)- Raw test results tell us whether pupils have scored above or below expected national levels. They do not tell us whether a pupil has made more progress than expected from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. VA measures use individual pupils prior attainment at Key Stage 1 to allow more relevant comparisons between schools. If the VA score is between 99 and 101, then pupils in the school are making progress in line with national expectations.

Contextual Value Added aims to take account of various factors which might have an impact on pupil progress. This includes not only prior attainment but also gender, special needs, first language, mobility, age, in care status, ethnicity, free school meal eligibility and deprivation (IDACI).

RAISE on-line – RAISE gives individual schools an overview of the schools performance using data from Ofsted, the DfE and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The reports are designed to support schools in their self-evaluation and feed into the inspection process.

Foundation schools – These are state funded non-religious schools. Like an Aided school, the governing body is the employer of the school staff, and determines the schools admission arrangements. The school's land and buildings are either owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation.

The Options

Currently, there are 24% surplus places in South Wallasey. **By 2015 this is projected to remain high at 20% surplus places if the Council does not act.** The Council proposes reducing surplus capacity in these areas. There are several ways this could be done, and we are consulting you about the following options.

Option A1: Closure of Kingsway Primary School

Option A2: Amalgamate Kingsway Primary School and Riverside Primary School onto the Riverside site

Option A3: Amalgamate Kingsway Primary School and Riverside Primary School onto the Kingsway site

Option B: Closure of Brentwood Early Years Centre as a separate school and either:

B1 – Keep the Brentwood site as the Foundation 1 provision for Somerville Primary School OR

B2 – New Foundation 1 provision on the Somerville Primary School site

The A and B options are not directly linked – this means that if an A option goes ahead, it does not stop a B option going ahead as well, and vice versa.

Actual pupil numbers in the Options section of this document are from January 2010 unless stated otherwise.



Option A1: Closure of Kingsway Primary School



This option involves ceasing to maintain Kingsway Primary at the end of summer term 2011.

Consideration of Factors

Kingsway Primary School

Kingsway Primary has 99 pupils.

Kingsway Primary has 44% surplus places (78 places), the highest percentage in the South

Wallasey small planning area. This is projected to decrease slightly to 39% (69 places) by 2015.

If the school is closed, all children currently and projected to attend Kingsway Primary could be accommodated at surrounding local schools without building any additional accommodation, although depending on parental preferences, some internal alterations may be required at Somerville Primary School.

Improvements would be made in order to ensure that accommodation at the schools to which the pupils transfer is of a high standard, taking into account the opportunity for extended schools.

Map 1 shows the existing catchment zones of Community schools in the area. The Kingsway catchment zone would be reallocated to Somerville Primary School and Riverside Primary School, with a small portion to Park Primary School. **Map 2** shows how this could be achieved.

This option would remove 141 surplus places.

The effect of this option would be to reduce the projected surplus capacity in 2015 from 20% to 14%.

Finance

The Council must provide education in a cost-effective manner. Small schools, and those with large numbers of surplus places are relatively expensive to maintain. Expressed as total expenditure per pupil, in 2010/2011:

- Kingsway Primary School spent £4,538

This was the third highest expenditure per pupil of any Wirral primary school. For comparison, the Wirral average for the same period was £3,169 per pupil.

The closure of Kingsway Primary would result in some revenue savings in the schools budget, which would be recycled through the budget formula into increased funding for pupils at Wirral schools.

Effect on Standards

Data from the 2009 RAISE report shows that average point scores at Key Stage 1 are below national averages in all subjects.

The 2009 RAISE overall contextual value added score of 100.7 indicates that pupils at Kingsway Primary School are making the expected rate of progress. Pupils are making the

expected rate of progress in maths and science, and above the expected rate of progress in English.

Special educational needs

The next paragraph contains OFSTED judgements from the 2009 RAISE report.

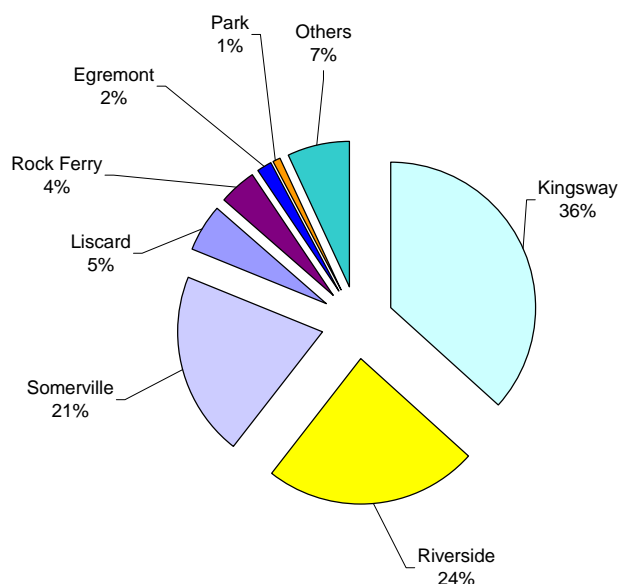
Kingsway Primary

The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements is 26.2%, compared with the national average of 19.7%. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is 0%, compared with the national average of 1.4%.

The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, would continue to be met at the schools to which they transfer.

Parental choice

Kingsway Catchment zone - Actual school attended



Total Community/CE pupils in catchment = 117

Number of pupils by school	(Reflux)
Kingsway	43
Riverside	28 (16)
Somerville	24 (30)
Liscard	6
Rock Ferry	5
Egremont	2 (10)
Park	1 (14)
Others	8 (3)

Net loss of 1 pupil (>1%) to other primary schools.

23% of total pupils attend a Catholic primary school

Only schools sending/receiving 5 or more pupils are shown separately.

Catchment zone analysis demonstrates the choices that local parents make.

Excluding Catholic choice pupils, 64% of pupils in Kingsway's zone (75 pupils) do not attend the zone school.

A quarter of children who live in the Kingsway zone attend Riverside Primary School. There is an overlap with Somerville, from which the school has a net gain, although overall there is a net loss of 1% of pupils to alternative Church of England and Community primary schools.

Pupil mobility

This is a measure of pupil movement between local primary schools after initial registration. Local means the South Wallasey planning area. We looked at where pupils were first registered in Foundation 2, and compared this to where pupils were registered in January 2010. As would be expected, all schools showed pupil mobility within the local area.

For example, if 10 pupils left, and 20 pupils arrived, this would be a net gain of 10 pupils. If 20 pupils left and 10 pupils arrived, this would be a net loss of 10 pupils. For a school with a total of 200 first registered pupils, a net loss of 10 pupils is equivalent to 5% net loss.

Mobility within South Wallasey

In this period Kingsway Primary had a small net loss of pupils (6%, 7 pupils) to alternative local schools before the end of primary phase. The highest net gaining school in the planning area received 8% (23 pupils) from other local schools (Somerville Primary).

Mobility within Wirral

Across Wirral, in net terms one-fifth of pupils who were first registered at Kingsway attended a different Wirral primary school in 2010 (22%, 25 pupils).

Community cohesion

Kingsway Primary School has an LA designated Foundation 1 class which in January 2010 was attended by 10 children. A full nursery class would have 52 pupils.

The Council would make sure that there would not be less Early Years places within the area if Kingsway Primary School were to close. For example, nearby Somerville Primary School could provide a new LA designated Foundation 1 class by extending the existing age range.

Travel and traffic

Inevitably, the closure of a local school means that some parents and pupils, though not all, will have to travel further. However, a significant proportion of parents already take their children to one or other of the alternative local schools.

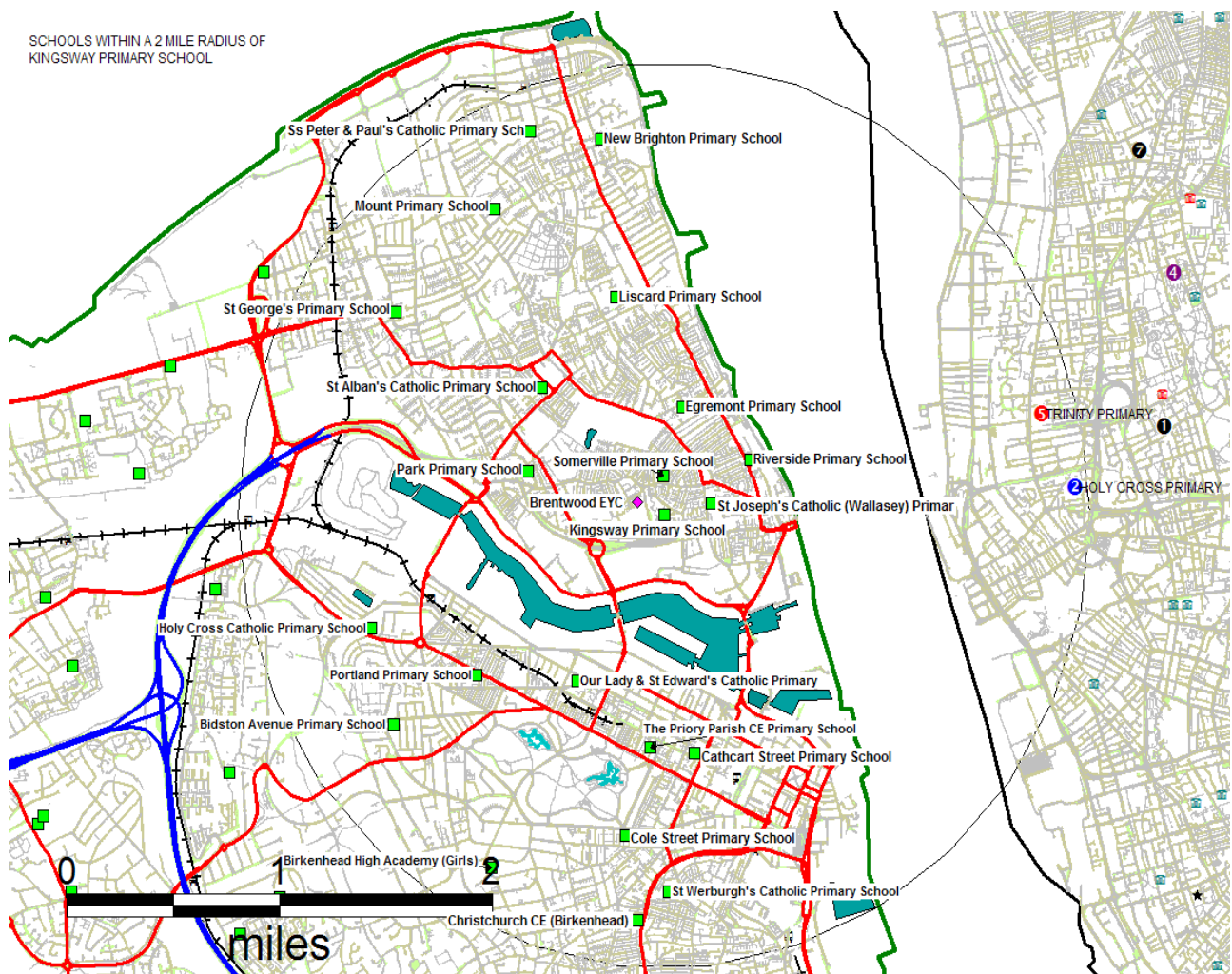
There are 24 other primary schools within a 2 mile radius of Kingsway Primary, two of which are in Liverpool.

The following table shows places expected to be unfilled by year group at primary schools within 2 miles – this excludes the Liverpool schools. Numbers on roll for years 1 to 6 are from the January 2010 census, F2 is places allocated for entry in September 2010.

September 2010 number on roll at Kingsway by year group and places expected to be unfilled within 2 mile radius

Year	F2	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Kingsway Primary	18	15	14	13	11	13	17	101
TOTAL SURPLUS PLACES (ALL)	90	146	133	183	199	183	166	1100
COMMUNITY	74	102	95	108	150	110	113	752
CATHOLIC	14	32	34	54	38	61	44	277
CHURCH OF ENGLAND	2	12	4	21	11	12	9	71
WALLASEY SCHOOLS	54	84	71	100	99	88	98	594
SOUTH WALLASEY SCHOOLS	45	77	56	77	67	55	77	454

There are more than enough empty places in local primary schools to accommodate former Kingsway pupils.



Conclusion

The degree of surplus places, the small size of the school, and the inefficient use of resources this creates, are our reasons for proposing this option.

There are places at local primary schools for all the children currently at and projected to attend Kingsway Primary. Depending on parental preferences, the admission number at Somerville Primary could be raised from 69 to 75. No new classrooms would need to be built although enhancements would be made to the remaining schools. Extending the age range at Somerville Primary School could offer a replacement for the part-time Foundation 1 (nursery) provision at Kingsway.

Closing the school would allow the Authority to use its resources more efficiently for the benefit of all pupils.

Option A2 and A3: Amalgamation of Kingsway Primary School and Riverside Primary School



It is proposed to cease to maintain both Kingsway Primary School and Riverside Primary School at the end of summer term 2011. A new all-through primary school would then open, using one of the existing buildings.

Consideration of Factors

Kingsway

Kingsway Primary has 99 pupils.

Kingsway Primary has 44% surplus places (78 places), the highest percentage in the South Wallasey small planning area. This is projected to decrease slightly to 39% (69 places) by 2015.

Riverside

Riverside has 194 pupils.

Riverside Primary has 37% surplus places (113 places). This is predicted to rise to 47% (143 places) by 2015 (164 pupils on roll).

The Amalgamated School

The new school's capacity, regardless of which site it was on, would be about 300 pupils, with an admission number of 42.

Existing buildings

All the children currently and projected to attend Kingsway and Riverside in 2015 could be accommodated at Riverside (A2) without building any new classrooms.

In order to accommodate all the children at the Kingsway site, two internal alterations and two new classrooms could be required (A3).

Alterations and enhancements would be carried out at either site, whichever was chosen.

New building

After amalgamation takes place, if capital funding can be found, there could be a longer term opportunity for a new 300 place primary school to be built on one site, whilst children are educated at the other existing site in order to minimise disruption and noise.

Catchment zones

The catchment zones would largely be combined to form a single zone for the amalgamated primary school, with some minor additions to Park Primary's zone. **Map 3** shows how this could be accomplished.

These options would remove 177-190 surplus places.

These options would reduce projected surplus capacity in 2015 in South Wallasey from 20% to 12-13%.

Finance

The Authority must provide education in a cost-effective manner. Small schools, and those with large numbers of surplus places are relatively expensive to maintain. Expressed as a cost per pupil, in 2010/2011:

- Kingsway spent £4,538
- Riverside spent £3,957

For comparison, the Wirral average for the same period was £3,169 per pupil.

Costs associated with maintaining separate institutions would be saved, with the savings being fed into the overall schools budget for the benefit of all Wirral pupils.

Effect on Standards

Data from the 2009 RAISE report shows that average point scores at Key Stage 1 are below national averages in Reading and Mathematics at both schools, while Writing is similar to the national average at Riverside, and below the national average at Kingsway.

The 2009 RAISE overall contextual value added scores indicate that pupils at Kingsway Primary and Riverside Primary School are making the expected rate of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In both schools, pupils are making the expected rate of progress in maths and science. In English, pupils are making above the expected rate of progress at Kingsway, and below the expected rate of progress at Riverside.

Standards at the two schools are not significantly different, and amalgamation will allow staff to pool their expertise to benefit a larger group of pupils.

Special educational needs

The next paragraphs contain the OFSTED judgements from the 2009 RAISE report.

Kingsway

The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements is 26.2%, compared with the national average of 19.7%. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is 0%, compared with the national average of 1.4%.

Riverside

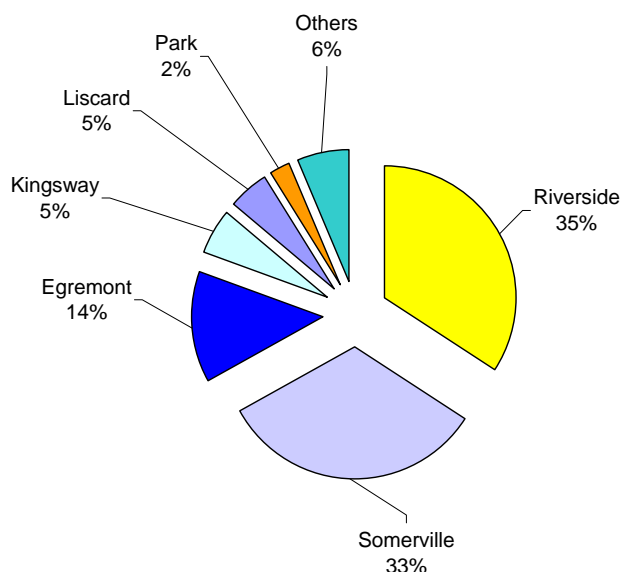
The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements is 34.5%, compared with the national average of 19.7%. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is 0.9%, compared with the national average of 1.4%.

The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, will continue to be met at the new school.

Parental choice

Catchment zone analysis demonstrates the choices that local parents make in relation to Riverside Primary School (see also Option A1 for Kingsway analysis).

Riverside Catchment zone - Actual School attended



Total Community/CE pupils in catchment = 293

Number of pupils by school	(Reflux)
Riverside	100
Somerville	96 (23)
Egremont	40 (29)
Kingsway	16 (28)
Liscard	15 (3)
Park	7 (4)
Others	19 (10)

Net loss of 96 pupils (33%) to other primary schools.

21% of total pupils attend a Catholic primary school

Only schools sending/receiving 5 or more pupils are shown separately.

Riverside

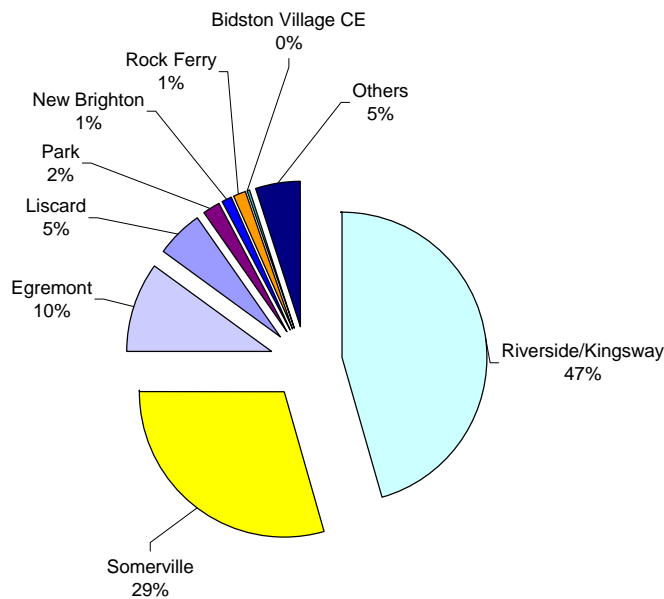
Excluding Catholic choice pupils, 65% of pupils in Riverside's zone (193 pupils) do not attend the zone school.

Almost as many pupils attend Somerville (33%) as attend Riverside (35%). There are overlaps with Egremont, and from Kingsway, from which Riverside has a net gain, although overall there is a net loss of 33% of pupils to alternative Church of England and Community primary schools.

Kingsway and Riverside combined

As a combined catchment zone, excluding Catholic choice pupils, around 47% of pupils attend one of the two existing zone schools.

**Kingsway and Riverside combined Catchment zone
- Actual school attended**



Total Community/CE pupils in catchment = 410

Number of pupils by school	(Reflux)
Riverside/Kingsway	187
Somerville	120 (53)
Egremont	42 (39)
Liscard	21 (3)
Park	8 (18)
New Brighton	5
Rock Ferry	5
Bidston Village CE	1 (4)
Others	21 (6)

Net loss of 100 pupils (24%) to other primary schools.

26% of total pupils attend a Catholic primary school

Only schools sending/receiving 5 or more pupils are shown separately.

Overall there is a net loss of pupils from the combined catchment zone to other primary schools (24%, 100 pupils).

Pupil mobility

This is a measure of pupil movement between local primary schools after initial registration. Local means the South Wallasey planning area. We looked at where pupils were first registered, either in January 2000 or at first registration in Foundation 2, and compared this to where pupils were registered in January 2010. As would be expected, all schools showed pupil mobility within the local area.

For example, if 10 pupils left, and 20 pupils arrived, this would be a net gain of 10 pupils. If 20 pupils left and 10 pupils arrived, this would be a net loss of 10 pupils. For a school with a total of 200 first registered pupils, a net loss of 10 pupils is equivalent to 5% net loss.

In this period both existing schools had a net loss of pupils to alternative local schools before the end of primary phase (6% Kingsway and 10% Riverside), which included 5 pupils who transferred between the two schools mid-phase.

Community cohesion

In January 2010, the two schools had a combined total of 47 pupils in their Foundation 1 (Nursery) classes. A full nursery class would have 52 pupils, and a single nursery class would accommodate the F1 pupils from both schools.

The new amalgamated school would maintain an LA designated F1 class.

The considerable expertise of teachers and assistants from the former schools will be used to develop a high quality personal and social education curriculum. The new school would be expected to support all the activities identified in the Wirral Education Inclusion Plan and the Children's Service Plan.

Travel and traffic

These two schools are very close together, and the distance between the existing sites is not great at 0.6 miles (about 10-12 minutes walk). Actual travel distance for individual pupils would depend on their home address.

Conclusion

The combined number on roll at these two schools equates to a 1.5 form of entry primary school, which would be viable in Wirral terms. The small size of the two separate schools, the degree of surplus places, and the inefficient use of resources this creates, is our reason for proposing this amalgamation.

Both existing schools would close, and a new all-through primary school would open in an existing building. All former pupils of the two schools would be guaranteed places at the new school, although parents may of course choose to apply for transfer elsewhere in the event of amalgamation.

Either building can be adapted to accommodate the pupils of both schools through a combination of new building work and internal alterations. After amalgamation takes place, a totally new school building could be constructed on an existing or new site if funding becomes available.

The requirements of the new Education and Inspection Act mean that any new school would normally be a “foundation” school, established following a competition by a body other than the Local Authority, although the Local Authority can apply for permission to submit an application to establish the new school as part of the competition. This will need to be taken into account when considering this option.

The pupil populations have some overlap and the two schools are closely located. The option would allow the Authority to use its resources better for the benefit of all pupils.

Option B: Closure of Brentwood Early Years Centre



This option involves ceasing to maintain Brentwood Early Years Centre as a separate school at the end of summer term 2011.

Consideration of Factors

Brentwood Nursery School

Brentwood Nursery has 52 pupils.

The official definition of Net Capacity used by the Government does not apply to Nursery schools, however, the school has 80 places for F2 children. Numbers on roll vary throughout the year, but in January 2010, this meant that 35% of F2 places were empty.

Brentwood is also registered with Ofsted to provide:

- 20 full day care places for children aged birth to 5 years, 48 weeks of the year from 8 am to 6 pm
- 10 out of school places for 3 to 5 year olds attending the “main” F1 provision
- 12 term-time only crèche places.

Option B1 – Retain Brentwood site as part of Somerville Primary School

In this option, while the Nursery school would cease to exist as a separate institution, the Brentwood site and building would continue to be used for Foundation education and day care as part of Somerville Primary School.

This means that children would continue to attend the same building for their nursery education, but would be governed by Somerville Primary School.

Option B2 – Build new Foundation 1 provision at Somerville

In this option, the Brentwood site would close and the Foundation 1 provision would transfer to newly built accommodation on the same site as Somerville Primary.

Why consider change at Brentwood?

Just as in primary schools, the number of nursery children attending Brentwood has also been falling. In January 2010 there were 52 part-time nursery age pupils attending. This is the same size as a nursery class attached to a primary school.

In 2000, the Foundation Stage curriculum was introduced nationally for children aged 3 to 5. Continuity between Foundation 1 (nursery) and Foundation 2 (reception) is important. Across Wirral, just over half of all infant and primary schools have a Foundation 1 class which allows the Foundation curriculum to be managed and eases the change from nursery into “big school”. Many other schools have private pre-schools on site, which while not part of the school, allows a close working relationship between staff and pupils to develop.

There are two other Early Years Centres in Wirral – both of these are now SureStart Children’s Centres for their area. The Children’s Centre in this part of Wirral is Seacombe Family Centre, and Brentwood is now the only nursery school in Wirral not to have become a Children’s Centre.

This option would not necessarily remove surplus places, but when we are thinking about changes to primary school education, it is reasonable to think about whether childrens and families needs currently served by Brentwood as a Nursery school could be equally or better met by an Early Years class belonging to a primary school.

Finance

The Council must provide education in a cost-effective manner. Nursery schools are relatively expensive to maintain compared with nursery classes attached to primary schools. In 2010/2011:

- Brentwood Early Years received £5,045 per pupil
- School nursery classes received £2,546 per pupil

The closure of Brentwood as a separate institution would result in some revenue savings in the schools budget, which would be recycled through the budget formula into increased funding for pupils at Wirral schools.

Effect on Standards

Ofsted inspected the day care in December 2007, when the quality and standard of care was judged to be satisfactory.

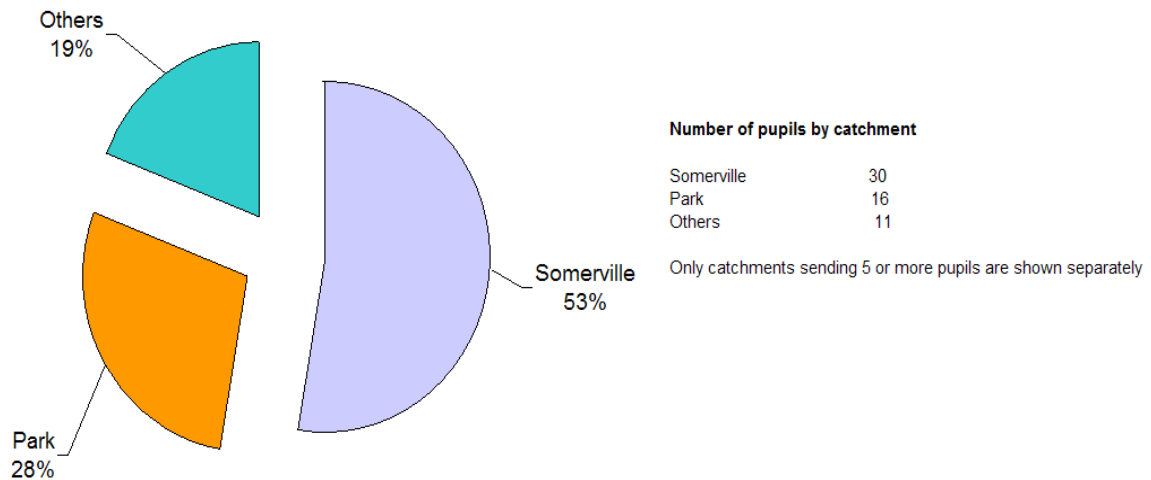
In February 2008 Ofsted inspected the nursery education provision which was judged to be good with outstanding features.

The quality of the nursery and daycare provision would not be lost in the new provision, regardless of location.



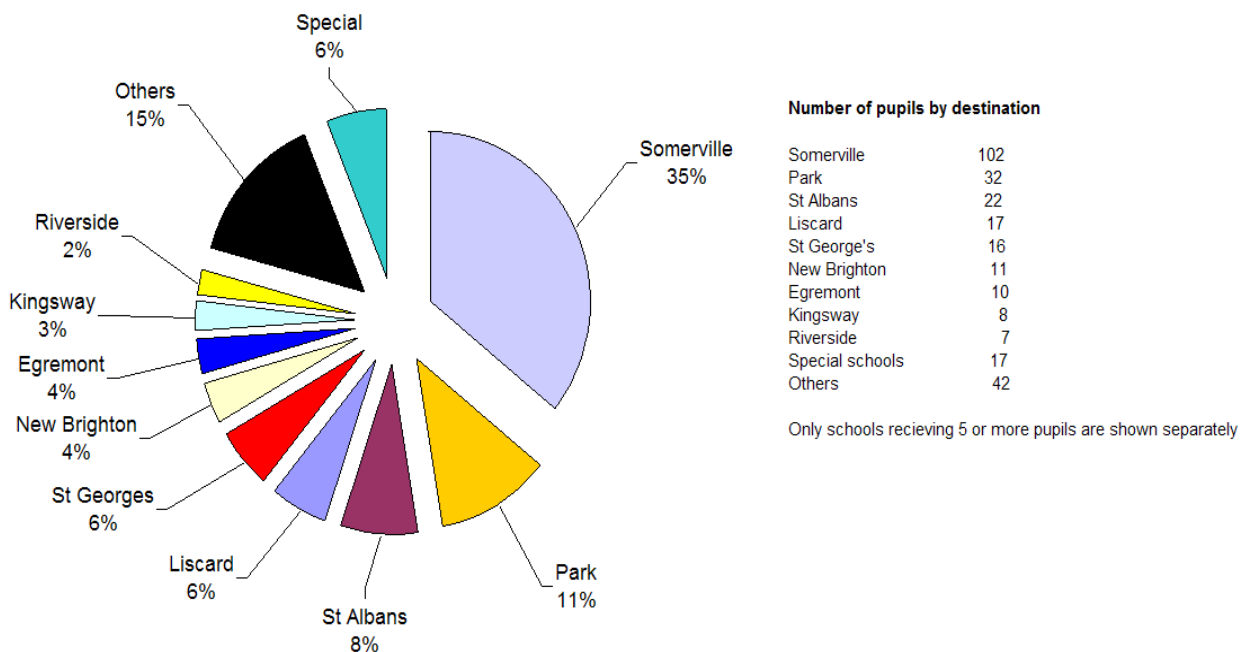
Parental choice and destination in Foundation 2

**Brentwood
Community Catchment Zone of residence**



Over half of the pupils who attended Brentwood Early Years Centre in 2009 lived in the primary school zone of Somerville Primary School. Almost a third live in the zone served by Park Primary School, with the rest living elsewhere, mostly within Wallasey.

Brentwood - Destination school as at January 2010

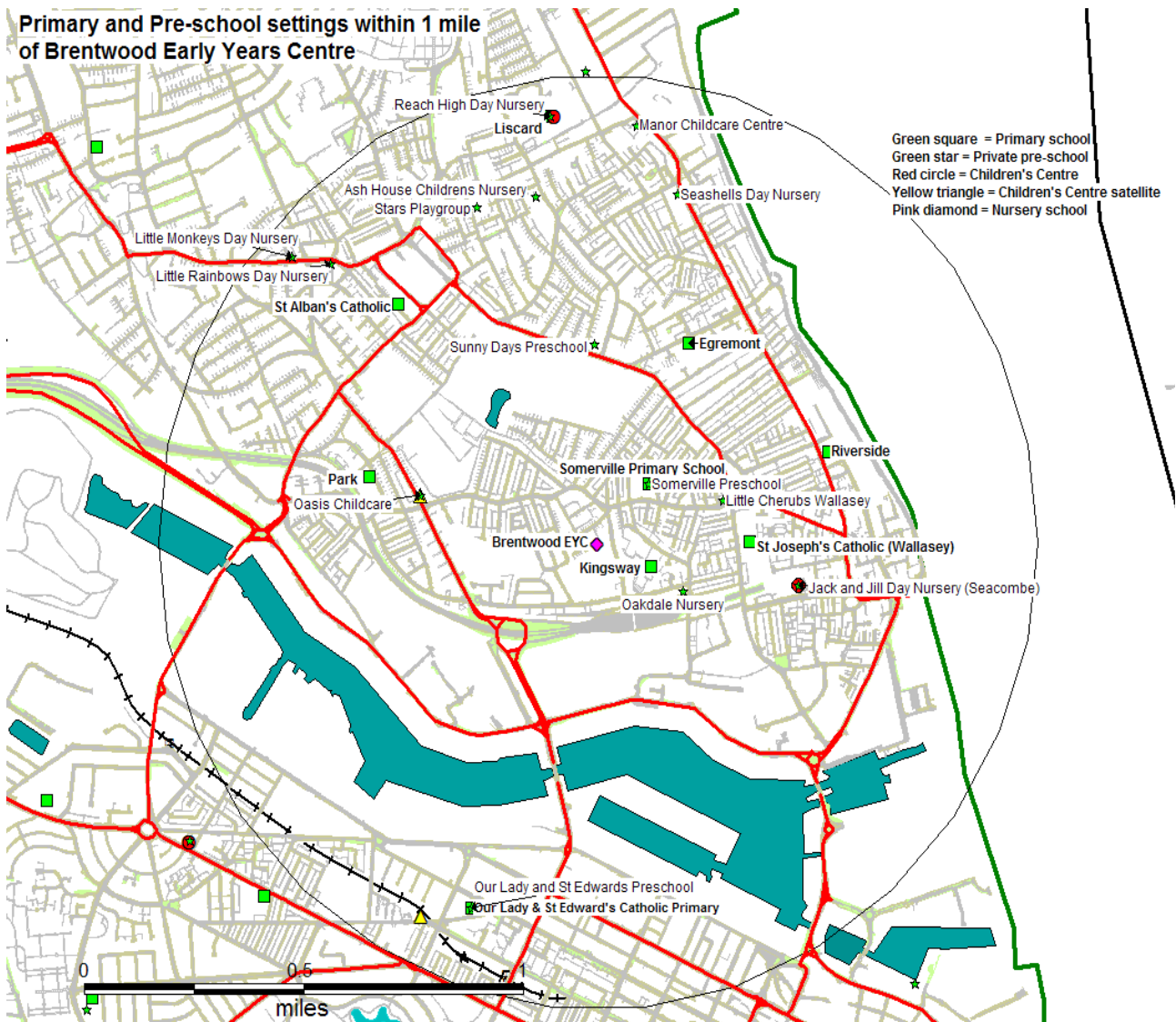


The existing relationship between Brentwood and Somerville is further reinforced by the fact that a third of former Brentwood pupils were attending Somerville Primary School at the most recent census.

Community cohesion

Since the introduction of state-funded part-time pre-school education for all 4 and most 3 years olds in 1997, the options for parents of nursery age children have increased, and the South Wallasey area is well-supplied with pre-school places.

There are six school-based nursery classes within 1 mile of Brentwood, and 15 private pre-school providers, three of which are part of Children's centres and their satellite sites.



In January 2010, at the 6 school-based nursery classes there were 63 empty places, not including the 28 further vacant places at Brentwood. In Summer 2010 at the 15 private pre-school providers, there were another 256 vacant places.

We understand that the day care, crèche and after school facilities provided at Brentwood are highly valued by local parents, and if any change is made, these facilities will continue to be provided as long as there is demand.

Travel and traffic

Option B1 would retain nursery provision on the Brentwood site with no change to existing travel arrangements for parents.

Option B2 could mean that parents and their children may have to travel further to school, depending on their home address. However, the distance between the Brentwood and Somerville sites is just 0.3 miles, which is about 500 metres (a five minute walk).

Conclusion

The importance of continuity in Foundation stage education, the number of empty places, the small size of the school, and the inefficient use of resources created by maintaining Brentwood as a separate school, are our reasons for proposing this option.

Option B1 retains Foundation 1 provision on the Brentwood site as part of Somerville Primary School.

Option B2 requires Foundation 1 provision to be constructed at the Somerville site, which could form part of a longer term plan for redeveloping the Somerville site, for example, to replace the existing mobile classroom accommodation.

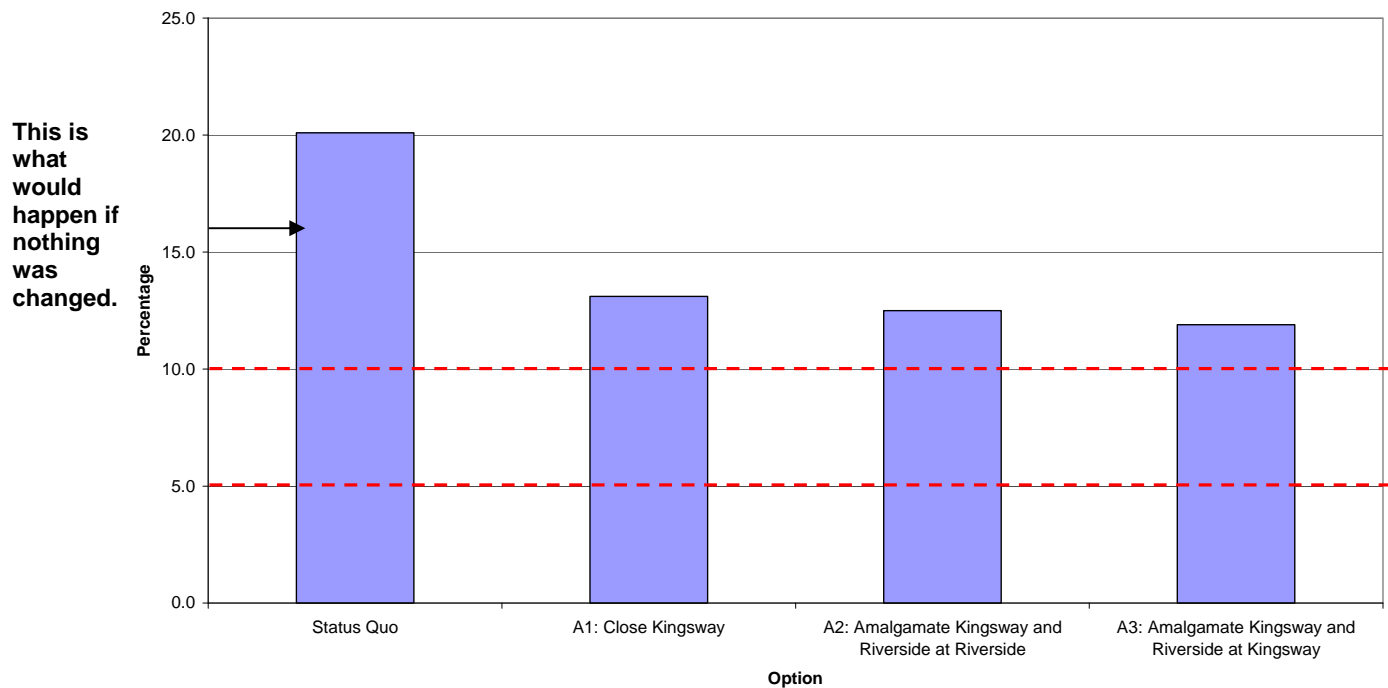
Closing the school as a separate educational institution would allow the Authority to use its resources more efficiently for the benefit of all pupils.



The Consultation

This graph shows how the A options are projected to change the percentage of surplus places in primary schools by 2015. The B options would have little impact on surplus places in primary schools and are not shown separately on the graph.

Percentage surplus places in South Wallasey projected to 2015 by option



Notice that all the A options for change would reduce surplus places. We understand that amalgamating or closing a school is a difficult and sensitive issue for the whole community. Detailed community, transport and personnel matters will need to be considered before any option could be put into practice.

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.

What the options would mean for children

The main concern would be to place the children in their new schools with as little disturbance to their education as possible. Parents will be asked to say which local school they would prefer to send their child to. The usual admission criteria will be used to allocate places. If two schools amalgamate, all the children who want to could move together to the same school. This has the advantage that children move with

their classmates. In all the options, because children will move at the same time to local schools, they will have friends in their new school.



Children would be entitled to free transport if they live further than statutory walking distance from the nearest appropriate school. This is 2 miles for children aged under 8, and 3 miles for children 8 years old and above.

What the options would mean for Early Years provision (Nursery or Foundation 1)

In any option, the Council would make sure that there would not be less Early Years places after the reorganisation.

In the B options (Brentwood), early years provision would be maintained under the governance of Somerville Primary School, either on the Brentwood site (B1) or on the Somerville site (B2).

What the options would mean for staff

If a school closes, all the staff would be made redundant and can be redeployed to other schools.

If two schools amalgamate, both schools close and then a new school opens on one site. This means all the staff at both schools are made redundant and can be redeployed. The new school will of course need staff, and it is up to the new governing body to make appointments.

All staff on the redeployment register would be given preference when appointments are made. Teachers would not be “lost”. Wirral Council has an excellent record on redeployment both for teachers and other school staff. Wirral Council has agreed a Code of Practice on school re-organisation designed to support staff through the process of change.

What the options would mean for school sites

If a community school were to close and the site was no longer required as a school, the future of the site would be determined by the Council. The Council could decide to use the site for another purpose, such as a community centre. If a site was sold, the receipt

would be invested in the Council's facilities, including schools. The Government usually has to approve the sale of school playing fields.

There are no plans or planning applications for any of the school sites. No decisions have been made about the future of any site at this stage.

The Consultation

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/primaryplaces, and click on South Wallasey. You will find:

- The full Consultation document
- A Review pack of background information about all the schools in the area
- The Cabinet report and resolution
- 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 full Consultation document and the Review pack are also available for you to read at **your school**, and at the following places:

Libraries	Community Centres	Children's Centres and Satellites
Seacombe	Manor Trust	Liscard Primary
Wallasey Central	Seacombe	Seacombe Family Centre

You can also look at these documents at Wallasey Town Hall and at the One Stop Shop in the Conway Centre.

If you want a printed copy, please contact the Asset Management Team, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD, 0151 666 4351, or by e-mail at primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk.

What are the next steps?

Step 1. The first step is to distribute the options and ask for views and comments. There will be a **Consultation meeting** at Kingsway, Riverside and at Brentwood Nursery School. The meetings will start at 7 o'clock in the evening.

Riverside on Tuesday, 2nd November 2010

Kingsway on Wednesday, 3rd November 2010

Brentwood on Wednesday, 10th November 2010

The meeting is an opportunity for parents, staff, governors and other people directly related to the school to have their views heard and noted by senior staff from the Department of Children's Services and a member of Council's Cabinet.

People associated with other local 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 meetings will be combined into 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 an option at this stage. Members might make changes to the options, 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 an option, what happens next depends on the option that is chosen to go forward. Some options can go straight to a formal proposal notice, while some have an extra consultation period before the notices can be published. If the proposals require a new school to be established, for example, as a result of an amalgamation, the Authority will usually be required to hold a competition to determine who will establish the new school. The competition process includes further consultation and is likely to add at least six months into the process of establishing a new school. The provider could still be the Local Authority, but other bidders may come forward, for example a business, college, university or another local school.

In any case, after the statutory notices are published, there are six weeks when formal written objections and comments can be sent to the Director of Children's Services.

Step 3. After the 6 week representation period ends, a decision will be made either by the Local Authority or in certain circumstances by the independent School's Adjudicator.

The decision can be to:

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

Step 4. If the proposal is approved, either by the Authority or by the Adjudicator, it will be put into practice. **The earliest any proposal could take place is September 2011.**

Some proposals could take longer – they might need building work, for example. If the proposals require a new school to be established, for example, as a result of an amalgamation, the Authority will, in most circumstances, be required to hold a competition to determine who will establish the new school. The competition process includes further consultation and is likely to add at least six months into the process of establishing a new school.

HAVING YOUR SAY

What do you think? Please make sure your response is received by **Friday 3rd December 2010**.

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, through the 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-mbc.gov.uk/primaryplaces.

The postal address for return of questionnaires or written comments is:

Primary Places Review

***Primary Places Review
Director of Children's Services
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 1FD***

Or by e-mail to primaryplaces@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.



South Wallasey Consultation Feedback Form

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

<i>School</i>	Parent	Member of staff	Governor	Other person
Brentwood				
Kingsway				
Riverside				
Somerville				
Other (please say which one)				

Comments

Please use this space for your comments. You can write more on another sheet if you need to.

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

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

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: Primary Places Review
Director of Children's Services
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD

Make sure your response is
received by:

FRIDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2010

E-mail primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk