

The meeting

- Short presentation about:
 - The Review process
 - The Options which affect this school
- Your comments

The Primary Places Review:

September 2004
Audit Commission report on Surplus Places

October 2004
Council begins Primary Places Review

December 2005
Children's Services inspection says

- there are too many surplus places in the primary sector
- progress in reducing surplus places has been slow, but a clear strategy is now being implemented which is likely to involve some school closures

This has resulted in a number of closures and amalgamations

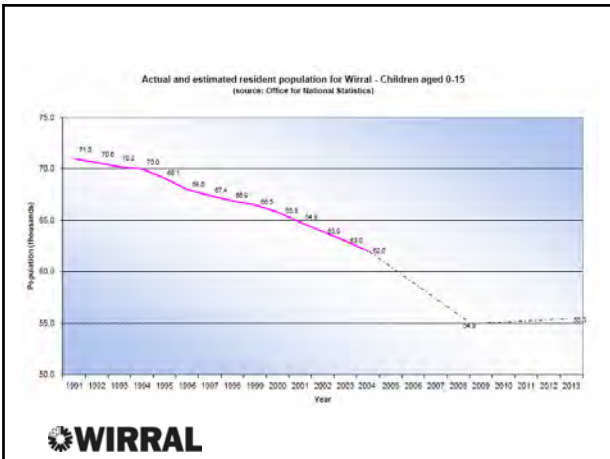
The Primary Places Review

October 2008
Council begins reviewing North Birkenhead, Beechwood, South Birkenhead, Central Birkenhead, Noctorum and Prenton

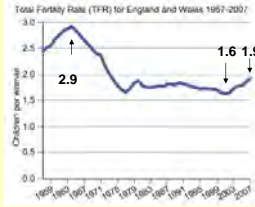
June 2009
Consultation begins on options for North Birkenhead

Important to:

- Focus on the needs of current and future children not schools
- Use the opportunity to further improve learning environments, teaching and therefore standards
- Base decisions on clear evidence that is openly shared
- Trust that we all have the best interest of students at the heart
- Determine what will work, what is or isn't sustainable and what will not work



Birth rate - Nationwide



The average family should settle at 1.8 children

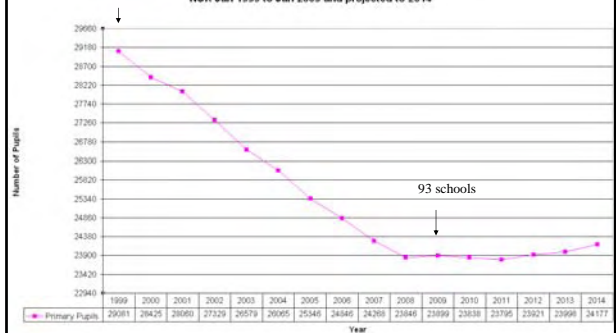
Right now, a third of 30-35 yr olds have no children

1981	2008
Average age to have first child	
24	30
Women who never have children	
10%	19%



Source: Office for National Statistics

Wirral Primary Schools



Surplus places in Wirral

In 2009

13% empty places

- By 2014 if we do nothing
 - **11% surplus places**
 - **1 in 4 schools will have more than 25% surplus places**



Surplus places – why do we need to act?

- Audit Commission says **surplus space** in schools should be **between 5% and 10%**
- Above 10%, wasting money supporting empty classrooms
- 4%-5% allows degree of parental choice
- No school should have more than 25% surplus – annual return to Government



Creative removal of surplus

LA and Schools have created:

- ICT suites
- Libraries
- Parents rooms
- Pre-school playgroups
- Afterschool/Breakfast clubs
- Adult Learning facilities
- Bases for other services
- Children's Centres

And removed:

- Temporary mobiles



Many complicated factors

- Surplus places
- Small schools
- Standards
- Location
- Where parents choose to send their children
- Value for money
- Catchment zones
- Housing changes
- Traffic and transport
- Denominational issues



How small is small?

- School Organisation Plan (2003) says under 210
- Wirral Policy (2005) says under 180
- DCSF (2005) says under 150



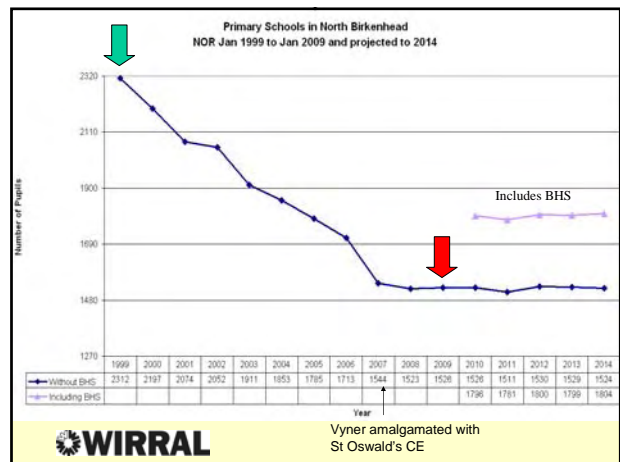
Small Schools

- Financial – maintaining small school is at the expense of all children
- Organisational issues – mixed age classes
- Additional burden on staff
- Curriculum issues



North Birkenhead

Bidston Avenue Primary
 Cathcart Street Primary
 Cole Street Primary
 Portland Primary
 The Priory CE (Aided) Primary
 Holy Cross Catholic (Aided) Primary
 Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic (Aided) Primary
 St Laurence's Catholic



Surplus places in North Birkenhead Area

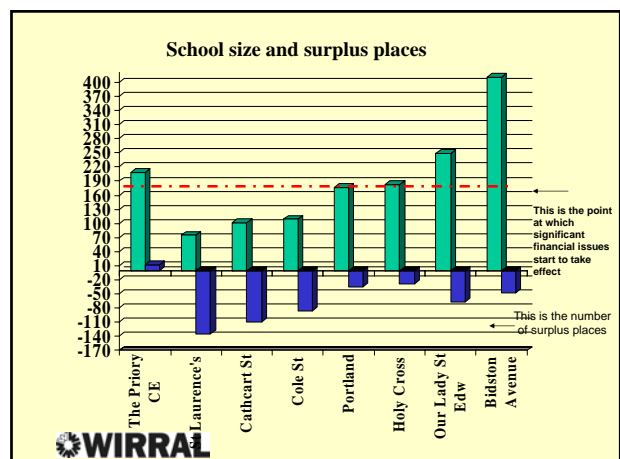
In 2009

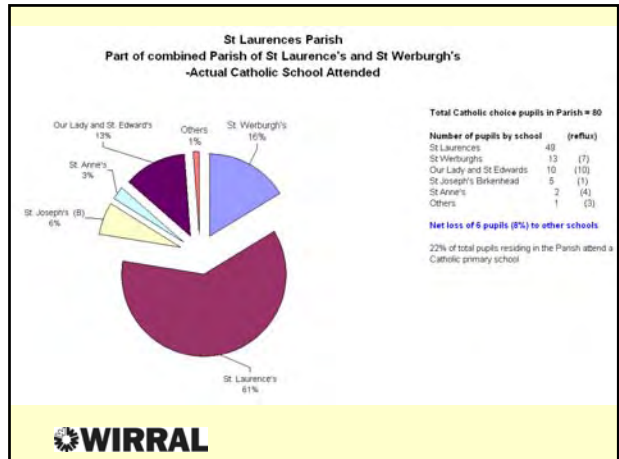
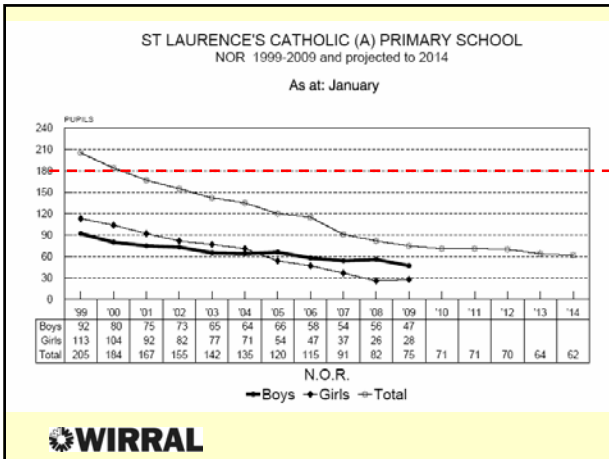
20% surplus places

By 2014

20% surplus places

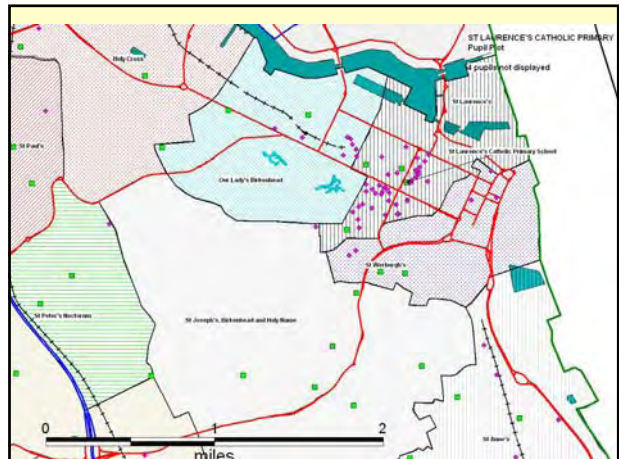
We must act to reduce surplus places





What Ofsted Said (2008)

- We are not making these proposals because the school is failing; we are very aware of the many strengths of the school
- For example the last inspection report included statements like:
 - This is a good school in which pupils achieve well both academically and in their personal development. Pupils feel safe, secure and happy in school.
 - From starting points generally well below expected for their age children make good progress in Foundation. Nonetheless, at the start of Y1 pupils' skills and knowledge remain below national expectations.
 - The good start pupils make in F2 is built on satisfactorily in KS1. By the end of Y2 standards remain below average.
 - Pupils make good progress in KS2.
 - Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their class-mates.
 - Pupils' personal development is good.
 - Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and behave well in and around school.
 - The good academic progress most pupils make in KS2 helps to raise their self-esteem and confidence, which sets them up well for later life.
 - The school has many initiatives in place to promote attendance, which has been stubbornly low for several years. Despite a small improvement, this remains inadequate.
 - The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
 - Extensive attention to the individual needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
 - The quality of teaching and learning is good.
 - Leadership and management is good quality.
 - Governance is satisfactory in ensuring statutory requirements are met, but governors have still to fully develop their role as critical friends to the school.

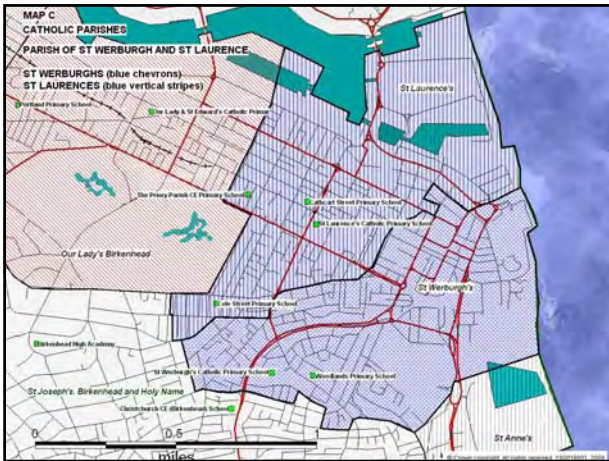


Possible options for North Birkenhead

- A1: Closure of Cathcart Street Primary
- A2: Closure of Cole Street Primary
- A3: Amalgamation of Cathcart Street and Cole Street Primary on a single existing site, or on a new site
- B: Closure of St Laurence's Catholic Primary School



B – Closure of St Laurence's Catholic Primary

- Small school
- High surplus places
- High expenditure
- Parish catchment also served by St Werburgh's
- 28 primary schools within 2 miles, 6 Catholic
- Building improvements made to receiving schools
- Children's Centre satellite to be relocated





A1 – Closure of Cathcart Street Primary

- Small school
- High surplus places
- 59% of children in the catchment already attend other schools, mainly The Priory CE
- Cathcart and Cole Street 0.5 miles apart
- 28 other primary schools within 2 miles
- Building improvements would be made to receiving schools
- Catchments rezoned


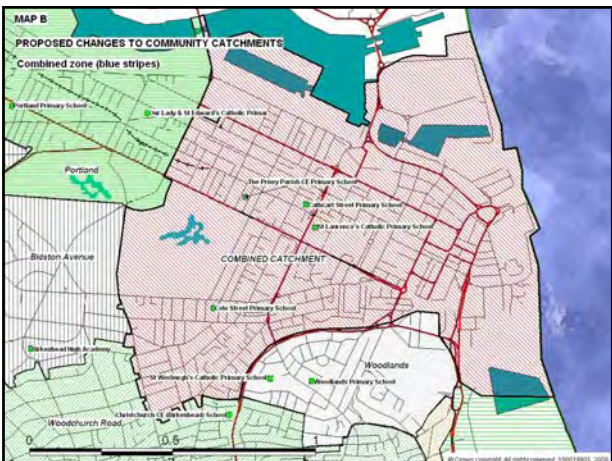
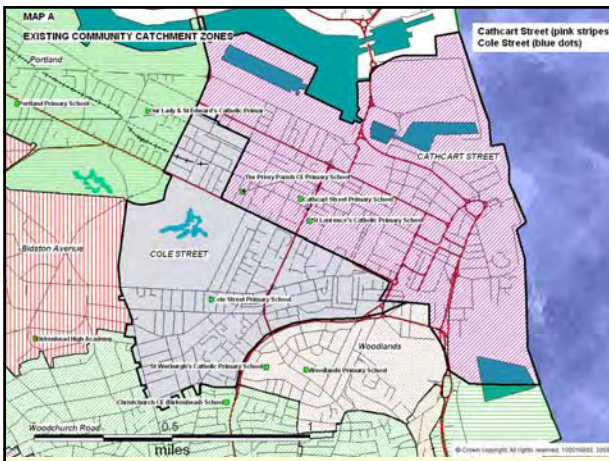
A2 – Closure of Cole Street Primary

- Small school
- High surplus places
- 75% of children in the catchment already attend other schools, mainly The Priory CE, Cathcart St, Woodchurch Rd and Christ Church CE
- Cathcart and Cole Street 0.5 miles apart
- 31 other primary schools within 2 miles
- Building improvements would be made to receiving schools
- Catchments rezoned

A3 – Amalgamation of Cathcart St and Cole St

- Combined school at either site – 1 form of entry
- Pupil populations overlap
- Two sites 0.5 miles apart
- Building improvements would be made
- Catchments rezoned

What happens next?

July 31st 2009

Consultation ends

September 2009

Recommended options report goes to Cabinet

October 2009

Statutory notices published, representation period begins OR

Competition process begins (for an amalgamation)

January 2010 or May 2010

Proposals to Council's Decision making body and/or to School's Adjudicator

OR

May 2010 if a Competition has been held

Note that if decision is for amalgamation to form a new school – this adds approx 6 months to the process as will likely require a statutory competition



If any option for change is approved:

- Places for all the children in local schools
- Parents say which school they would prefer their child to attend
- Admissions criteria place the children
- Children move together so will have friends in their new school
- Enhancements to receiving schools
- Community/controlled catchment areas revised
- Staff redeployed
- Council decide future of any closed community site

Earliest date for any option is September 2010



Remember:

- The Council must address these issues
- A decision has not yet been made
- This is not about saving money for taxpayers
- We must ensure schools are sustainable in order to secure the best in teaching, learning, curriculum and standards
- It is about spending money more wisely
- We must find sensible and effective solutions based on all the factors involved.

