

- Cabinet Member Cllr John Burton – “noted”
- Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr Izzi Seccombe
- Chief Executive
- Legal Diane Nation – “fine”
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals All stakeholders

FINAL DECISION **NO**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet Cabinet 3.4.08 for final decision
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee – 19th March 2008

**Change to the Admission Number of
Southam Primary School**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Children,
Young People and Families**

Recommendation:

That the Area Committee considers:

- (1) the proposal to reduce the admission number of Southam Primary School and the responses to the consultation received from stakeholders, and
- (2) any comments it wishes to make to Cabinet.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 6th December 2007, Cabinet agreed to carry out formal consultation on proposals to reduce the admission number of Southam Primary School from 52 to 42 pupils per year with effect from September 2009.
- 1.2 Formal consultations with stakeholders were conducted from 1st to 29th February 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 School capacities and admission numbers take account of both the size of the school buildings and the use made of accommodation, through the 'net capacity' assessment regulations of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). In 2005 Cabinet agreed to promote the use of surplus school accommodation to support other community and educational initiatives such as children's centres and extended services. Any change in the use of accommodation can reduce the number of pupil places and a school's capacity and Cabinet agreed that such reductions in school places should be considered as a contribution to reducing surplus places.
- 2.2 Although the DCSF originally stated that it would not expect Admission Authorities to re-assess the capacity of schools on a regular basis, any

significant changes in school capacities and therefore admission numbers should be updated as part of the annual admission cycle. Any change to the admission number involving a school's capacity is subject to formal consultation with stakeholders including local schools, parents, the pupil school council, staff and governors.

- 2.3 Southam Primary School, along with a Church of England and a Catholic primary school, serves the town area of Southam. Pupil numbers in the area have fallen and the school requires fewer rooms for teaching purposes. The school has also developed a number of extended services making excellent use of its accommodation, including local community facilities, an after school club and providing a music room.
- 2.4 With the agreement of the school, it is proposed to reduce the admission number of the school from 52 to 42 pupils per year. It is forecast that at the lower admission number the school would still be able to meet all demand from within its priority area.

Table 1

Year group	Numbers on roll				Forecast			
	Jan 2005	Jan 2006	Jan 2007	Sep 2007	Sep 2008	Sep 2009	Sep 2010	Sep 2011
Reception	35	31	27	37	40	29	32	33
1	25	36	33	26	32	40	29	32
2	34	26	37	35	27	32	40	29
3	48	33	27	39	33	27	32	40
4	38	48	37	27	37	33	27	32
5	38	38	45	37	27	37	33	27
6	36	37	40	46	37	24	37	33
Total	254	249	246	247	233	225	230	226
Capacity	364	364	364	364	364	364	364	364
Surplus	110	115	118	117	131	139	134	138

3. The proposal

- 3.1 The number of primary school age pupils living in the town has fallen in recent years. With lower numbers of pupils being admitted into the Reception class, it means that Southam Primary School needs fewer rooms in use as classrooms. The school currently has two former classrooms in use by the local community. One room is in use as a 'before and after school' club and the other room is a music room. The number of pupils a school can accommodate is governed by the DCSF 'Net Capacity' regulations. The regulations take into account the number of rooms in use as classrooms. Using these regulations Southam Primary School's capacity is reduced to 294 pupils and an admission number of 42 pupils per year would be appropriate.

- 3.2 A forecast of future pupil numbers, which is given in Table 2 below, suggests that future pupil numbers are unlikely to reach 52 per year. It is considered that with the lower admission number of 42 pupils per year, there would be enough places at Southam Primary School for all of the pupils in its priority area who wish to obtain a place at the school. Currently very few pupils attend Southam Primary School from outside the priority area.

*Table 2
Forecast of Reception pupil numbers at Southam Primary School*

Admission No.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
52	40	31	33	27	30

- 3.3 Forecast pupil numbers up to September 2012 suggest that there would be sufficient school places in the area to meet parental demand.
- 3.4 Parents living outside the priority area of Southam Primary School would still be able to apply for places at the school but under the admissions policy of the County Council would have a lower priority for admission than pupils living in the priority area. Anyone refused a place at a preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals committee.
- 3.5 If the admission number for the school were reduced to 42 pupils per year, the school would be able to keep its current arrangement of classrooms and would keep the additional rooms for community use.
- 3.6 If approved, an admission number of 42 pupils will apply to admissions to Southam Primary School from September 2009 onwards.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 A consultation paper setting out the proposals was sent to all staff, governors, parents/carers and prospective parents/carers of pupils, the pupil school council of Southam Primary School, governing bodies in the area, Diocesan Education Authorities, Parish Councils in the area, admission authorities and neighbouring Local Authorities.
- 4.2 Copies of all the responses received have been placed in the Members' Group Rooms and a summary of all the responses, with comments, is set out below:
- 4.2.1 **Councillor David Wise – Stratford-on-Avon District Council**
- Cllr Wise pointed out that two housing developments were planned for Southam and asked if these had been factored into the calculation that the school could afford to reduce its admission number. There was also a temporary classroom at St. James C of E Primary School that was subject to planning permission which expires in January 2011.

Comment

The only housing development of any size in the Southam Primary School priority area is the Wattons Lane development of 87 dwellings identified by Cllr Wise. The formula for assessing the impact of new housing on pupil numbers suggests that approximately two pupils per year could be expected from a development of this size. It is confirmed that these numbers have been factored into the projected pupil numbers and that Southam Primary School would be able to accommodate the forecast demand for its priority area. There is no intention to reduce the capacity at St. James C of E Primary School.

4.2.2 Stratford-on-Avon District Council

The District Council raises the same issue as Cllr Wise concerning new housing. It also suggests that the school should retain classrooms to allow the school to organise in smaller teaching groups.

Comment:

The school is making optimum use of its teaching areas and resources and the rooms identified are not required as class bases. Additional classrooms require additional teaching staff. School budgets have been based largely upon pupil numbers for nearly 20 years and the reason the rooms are spare is that there are insufficient pupils in the Southam area. The highest unit cost is for teaching staff and fewer pupils mean there is less funding and schools often do not have the funding to organise in additional class groups.

- 4.3 Given the location of Southam Primary School, this report is also being sent to Warwick Area Committee so that it too can forward any comments to Cabinet.

5. Summary

The proposed changes to the admission number of Southam Primary School reflects the current number of classrooms being used for teaching and the intended future use of accommodation. The lower admission limits should help the school to plan future intakes into Reception in classes and still meet the forecast demand for places from its own priority area and will reduce surplus places at the school by 70.

6. Recommendation

The Area Committee is asked to consider the proposal and the responses to the consultation and any comments it wishes to make to Cabinet.

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6th March 2008