

Report to: Children and Young People's Panel Cabinet

Date: 6 March 2008 13 March 2008

Subject: Primary Strategy for Change: Response to Consultation on Draft Strategy

Report of: Director of Children and Young People's Services

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Purpose / summary: To report the results of consultation on the policies and principles underpinning the draft Primary Strategy for Change.

To seek Cabinet's view on the responses in preparation for the final Primary Strategy for Change, including the first five years' investment priorities. This will be presented to Panel and Cabinet prior to submission to DCSF in June 2009.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: These are contained within section 3 of the report.

Recommendation / decision: That Cabinet:

- determines whether any changes are required to the draft Primary Strategy for Change as a result of the consultation responses;
- notes that further changes to the draft Primary Strategy for Change will need to be made to reflect feedback and recent updated guidance from DCSF and the results of parallel work being undertaken on curriculum and attainment issues.

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be

actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 25 March 2008

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No. A full impact assessment will be undertaken prior to implementing any proposals emerging from the consultation.
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications– Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council's asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
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Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
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Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No
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* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	
Discussion leading to a decision	X
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
06.03.08		13.03.08	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection
Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings	2007/2008		Progress House Westwood Park Drive Wigan WN3 4HH

Proper Officer



Date

February 2008

1. Background

- 1.1 The Primary Strategy for Change is the means through which the LA is able to access additional capital funding to transform primary school provision. The Strategy must demonstrate how the funding will tackle deprivation, address demographic change and raise attainment, in addition to improving school premises. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will not approve those strategies that fail to address these issues.
- 1.2 On 13th and 20th September 2007, Panel and Cabinet respectively considered a report on all key elements of the draft Primary Strategy for Change apart from the first five years' investment priorities. Cabinet gave approval for consultation to be held on this portion of the draft Strategy, which is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The document was distributed to all schools; primary school governors; diocesan authorities; early years' providers; Elected Members; MPs; trade union and professional associations and was available to the general public on the Wigan Council web site. Consultation was also held with two primary school councils. The consultation was held during the Autumn term 2007.

2. Consultation Responses

- 2.1 A total of twelve written responses were received as follows: eight from primary school governing bodies; three from individual primary school governors and one from the Liverpool Archdiocese.
- 2.2 The response from the Liverpool Archdiocese is copied in full at Appendix 2 and the notes from the two school council meetings are provided at Appendix 3.
- 2.3 The responses from the governing bodies and individual school governors are summarised at Appendix 4. Five of the governing bodies raised concerns surrounding policy on school size, particularly in areas of deprivation. This was reflected in two individual governor responses, both of whom were members of the governing bodies that had responded with similar comments. In summary, the concerns related to the possible closure of small schools in deprived and other areas.
- 2.4 Other responses included the identification of schools for capital investment across all capital funding routes; issues to be addressed at particular schools; and the prioritisation of individual schools in the Primary Strategy for Change.

3. Comments

- 3.1 Many of the comments of the Liverpool Archdiocese can be accommodated within a redraft of the Strategy as they reflect the framework within which negotiations on school place planning have been conducted between the LA and the Archdiocese in the past.
- 3.2 The DCSF is clear that the Primary Strategy for Change must transform primary school provision. A rebuilding and refurbishing programme of existing schools will not meet with approval. The LA must demonstrate that it is

addressing demographic change by putting in place appropriate solutions that also address deprivation and raise aspirations and attainment.

- 3.3 There is no research or evidence that demonstrates that small schools serving deprived areas are able to deal more effectively with pupils' needs than larger ones. The pastoral care, support and guidance of pupils rely on the arrangements within each school rather than the size of a school.
- 3.4 Both Platt Bridge Community School and Westfield Community School are two larger schools that have been established through the closure of smaller schools in deprived communities. Both schools are performing well in terms of contextual value added results and OFSTED has recognised the high quality of care, guidance and support for pupils at both schools.
- 3.5 From the school level information collected and shared with schools as part of the prioritisation exercise for the Primary Strategy for Change, there is no evidence that attainment in small schools is any better than in large schools. This also applies to those serving deprived communities.
- 3.6 The draft Strategy does not suggest that the LA has a 'one size fits all' approach to primary school provision, nor that this size is two form entry schools across the Borough. The draft Strategy recognises, however, that schools below one form of entry can quickly become unviable if pupil numbers continue to fall and for the sake of future stability and the ability to recruit and retain high quality staff and leaders, the LA would need to consider forming one larger school from two smaller schools where local circumstances permit.
- 3.7 The funding drawn down from the Primary Strategy for Change is intended to be sufficient to rebuild 5% of school buildings in the worst condition and remodel / refurbish 45% of the remaining schools. It is impossible for all schools to derive major benefits from the programme. However, other significant sources of capital funding such as that received on a formulaic basis will be used to address premises issues at schools in need. This includes consideration of those that do not fit the criteria for Primary Strategy for Change funding.

4. Development of the Primary Strategy for Change

- 4.1 It is intended to redraft the Primary Strategy for Change to take account of:
 - Cabinet's comments as a result of the consultation exercise with schools and partners, as outlined at 2 above and detailed in Appendices 2,3, and 4;
 - The comments received from DCSF on the LA's draft Strategy;
 - Recently received updated guidance from DCSF on the expected scope and content of the final Primary Strategy for Change; and
 - The work currently being conducted on curriculum and attainment and the linkages to the vision for the future.
- 4.2 In accordance with the report submitted to Panel and Cabinet on 8th and 15th November respectively, consultation is currently being carried out on the

proposed first five years' investment priorities. This consultation ends on 14th March 2008.

- 4.3 If Cabinet proposes a substantial alteration to the criteria for prioritising schools and areas for investment, the priorities already identified and currently being consulted on may alter.
- 4.4 The redrafted document will be presented to Panel and Cabinet in May ready for final submission to DCSF by mid June 2008.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that Cabinet determines what, if any, amendments it wishes to make to the draft Primary Strategy for Change as a result of feedback from consultees.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Capital funding under the Primary Strategy for Change provides an opportunity for the LA to make radical changes to school provision to transform the life chances of those living in deprived communities, as well as providing investment across the school estate to keep pace with modern technology and Central Government initiatives. It is important that this opportunity is not lost and that existing models of good practice, such as those outlined at 3.4 above, are built upon wherever possible.

Appendix 4

Summary of responses from primary school governing bodies and individual school governors

Comments: General

Support the plans

Highly commendable in terms of values and principles

The language of the document needs to be amended to engage with the general public / jargon needs to be explained.

Comments: School Size

Has a hard nosed approach to a school's existence based upon economic imperatives. Need to provide facilities and opportunities to communities where economic viability has become subordinate to needs of community.

As a small school, concerned that school will be subject to closure. Recognize drain on resources and difficulties in appointing leaders and retaining staff.

Small schools in deprived areas can be very successful and increase children's life chances. Able to be more inclusive and nurture pupils 'lost' in larger settings.

Federating schools would be a better option than closure.

Small schools in areas of high deprivation add significantly more 'value added'.

Best way to develop services is not always to close two neighbouring schools and create a new single establishment – need to have greater flexibility to address local need.

Schools have their own unique identities that local people feel passionate about – don't destroy them.

Refute suggestion that 2 fe is ideal model for the future. Parents are drawn to school because of its smaller size allowing a personalised education and close personal attention.

Consider success of existing schools before tearing them down to build larger ones.

Strategy is short sighted to close small schools in favour of larger ones. Small schools make it easier for staff and pupils to know each other in a caring and supportive atmosphere. Larger schools do not have same quality atmosphere as smaller ones and have more problems with discipline.

Document had a negative appraisal of character, role and future of smaller schools. In deprived areas, small schools are able to offer more personal attention.

Hope that more than economic criteria and one size fits all approach will govern decisions on education provision in deprived communities, where larger does not mean better.

LA should consider pockets of deprivation and think how changes can prosper these areas. Concerned that closures will increase barriers in these areas.

Small schools can be more effective for pupils with Special Educational Needs, especially those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Comments: capital allocations

Perceive a threat from the Primary Capital Programme because of where the school is located – schools in more affluent areas also have capital investment needs.

Be creative in the approach to allocating capital.

Capital investment needs measurable returns – need to expect excellent returns.

Comments: other

The Government's focus on diversity in terms of governance is not addressed.

Agree that there is a need to review premises.

Agree that kitchens need to be fit for purpose.

Agree that extended services are vital to work in the community.

Each area needs to be treated individually.

Need to say more about building design – producing buildings that are innovative and practical but with diversity being preferable to uniformity.

From an Infant school – we fulfil the criteria to become a full primary school. The school is oversubscribed, has good standards, parental involvement, is inclusive, works collaboratively etc.

From two primary schools – summarising the issues with their current buildings and requesting capital investment.



Primary Capital Programme

Strategy for Change

Draft for Consultation

Children and Young People's Services
School Places
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH

September 2007

Forward

The Government is committed to a programme of long term strategic capital investment in primary schools beginning in 2009 and continuing for up to 15 years. Full details of the scope and purpose of the Primary Capital Programme are available on www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9606.

The Government aims to do more than simply provide modern primary school buildings through this programme. The wider purpose is to support the national policy aims of fair access to quality school places, tackling deprivation and raising standards. National research has demonstrated the strong link between attainment at Key Stage 2 and the likelihood of attaining 5 A* - C grades at GCSE and, subsequently, economic well-being in later life. The stark message is that if children fail to reach their full potential whilst they are in primary school, the loss of opportunity is likely to affect them well into their adult lives with all the attendant problems of poverty, ill-health and social disadvantage that this brings. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority, schools, parents and associated agencies to ensure that children get off to the best possible start in life.

Wigan Local Authority, as commissioner of local services, is responsible for preparing and maintaining the Primary Strategy for Change, which is the document that sets out our plans for the Primary Capital Programme. The Strategy provides contextual information on current primary school provision, what we want it to look like in future and how we will make this happen. It prioritises the areas for expenditure over the first five years of the programme and explains what we aim to achieve with these projects.

The Strategy aims to reflect local needs and aspirations and provide a plan that details how the capital investment will improve outcomes for all primary age children attending Wigan schools. In the tradition of excellent working partnerships built up over a number of years, schools, diocesan authorities, local organisations and all those with an interest in the well being of children will continue to be fully consulted and involved throughout the life time of the programme. By working together, we can make a real difference to the futures of our children.

We are confident that this much needed capital investment will provide the catalyst for a step-change improvement in outcomes for primary age children, that will better equip them for a more successful and satisfying adult life, and will ultimately lead to better quality lives for all Wigan residents.

Brian Wilson
Cabinet Member for
Lifelong Learning

Nick Jarman
Director of Children and
Young People's Service

1. Local context

- 1.1 Wigan is the largest of the ten Boroughs in Greater Manchester in terms of area and has the second highest population, at around 305,000 residents. In common with many neighbouring authorities, Wigan has an ageing population and, until recently, the birth rate has been falling rapidly. Over the past three years there has been a slight upturn in the birth rate but it is still much lower than it was in the early to mid 1990's.
- 1.2 There are concentrations of significant deprivation in some parts of the borough, but the general picture is one of small pockets located in each of its twelve principal towns and communities. Wigan is ranked the 54th most deprived local authority on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Some 50% of super output areas in Wigan fall within the 30% most deprived in England.
- 1.3 In recent years, the Borough has responded energetically to the challenges posed by the decline of its traditional industries. Children and young people in Wigan perform well against the five key outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda, but when viewed against deprivation levels it is to the credit of all service providers that this is so. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to ensure that deprivation is eliminated and the well-being of all the Borough's communities secured.
- 1.4 Around 2% of the pupil population is of minority ethnic heritage, which is well below the national average of 11.7%.
- 1.5 Wigan maintains 134 schools as follows: 2 nurseries, 104 primary phase, 20 secondary schools (2 of which have sixth forms) and 8 special schools. There are 3 pupil referral units and 9 Children's Centres are currently in operation with a further 13 planned by 2010. All education provision within Wigan is within the local authority (LA) maintained sector and a high proportion of schools are voluntary aided.

2. Primary school provision

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 There are around 24,000 children currently attending Wigan primary schools and a further 930 are enrolled in LA maintained nursery units or nursery schools. 33 are community schools, 8 are voluntary controlled, and 63 (60%) are voluntary aided (35 Church of England, 28 Catholic). The LA liaises with five different Diocesan Authorities in addition to the Methodist and Unitarian Churches.
- 2.1.2 Most parts of the Borough are served by at least one community, CE and Catholic school and access to schools is relatively easy, with the vast majority of children making journeys of less than two miles. However, Leigh and Aspull have very few or no community schools respectively.

2.2 Demography

2.2.1 Due to the fall in the birth rate and consequent reduction in primary school pupil numbers, there has been a rolling programme of primary school reviews in Wigan. Over the past 8 years, 5 schools have closed, 6 schools have 'amalgamated' to form 3 new ones and 9 schools have had a significant reduction in their accommodation and admission number.

2.2.2 Despite this action, Wigan still has an unusually large number of schools that are below one form of entry when compared with national, regional and 'statistical neighbour' LAs' school sizes. Primary school sizes at January 2007, including Infant and Junior schools, were as follows:

2 form of entry (fe) and above (420 + pupils)	5.71%
Between 1 fe and 2 fe (210 – 419 pupils)	35.24%
Between 180 – 209 pupils	29.52%
Between 150 – 179 pupils	17.14%
Between 120 – 149 pupils	3.81%
Less than 120 pupils	8.6%

2.2.3 The number of small schools in Wigan means that the delegated schools budget has to be spread thinly in order to maintain financial and educational viability across all schools. Small schools face particular challenges, such as the ability to attract and retain high quality staff; increased staff workloads; the ability of staff to maintain morale, motivation and inspirational delivery; and the ability to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. The national shortage of Headteachers will make it particularly difficult for small schools to attract and retain the right calibre of individual to lead a school in these challenging circumstances, particularly if it faces additional complexities such as high levels of deprivation, high rates of pupil transience or a disproportionate number of children with English as a second language. School federations can be a solution to these issues in some circumstances.

2.2.4 Whilst the birth rate has increased in recent years, it is not consistent across the Borough. Parts of the Borough have experienced dramatic fluctuations in the birth rate and others appear to be on an upward trend. It is expected that some parts of the Borough need additional temporary or permanent school places in the future, whilst other areas still require some form of rationalisation in order to stabilise provision. Consultation is currently being held in those parts of the borough and with schools where additional places are needed. Capital funding is in place to support premises alterations.

2.2.5 Almost a quarter of primary schools in Wigan were oversubscribed for the 2007 reception intake. The oversubscribed schools are generally, though not exclusively, in the more affluent areas of the Borough and generally have higher standards of attainment when compared to other local schools.

2.2.6 New housing in Wigan is currently being built at the rate of around 1,000 units per year but developments are not spread evenly throughout the Borough. It

is estimated that a maximum of 30 children per school year group will be generated from new housing.

- 2.2.7 In recent years, Wigan has experienced an increase in mainly Eastern European migrants and the proportion of children with English as a second language is increasing. Again, this tends to be concentrated in certain communities of the Borough, such as Leigh and the south and west of Wigan Town Centre.

2.3 Premises

- 2.3.1 Due to action by the LA and its Diocesan partners, and schools' use of accommodation for community activities, surplus places in Wigan are under control. In January 2007, gross surplus places stood at 9% and the number of schools with over 25% surplus places was just over 8% (9 schools). One of these schools closed at the end of 2006/07; accommodation at another school is in the process of being rationalised; two schools will be working collaboratively for a temporary period whilst options for a long term solution are being investigated; and two further schools need to retain their accommodation for the moment in order to cater for a temporary increase in pupil numbers in the area. However, a further two schools are expected to have more than 25% surplus places next year so the pressure to keep surplus places under control is constant.
- 2.3.2 A number of schools are overcrowded and five are more than 10% overcrowded. In these schools the overcrowding combines with poor suitability of internal spaces and makes the teaching and learning environment very challenging.
- 2.3.3 Whilst there has been significant investment in the school building stock over recent years, there remains a £23 million backlog of condition items in primary schools, with £7.5 million being in the more urgent and severe categories. The vast majority of schools have suitability issues of varying degrees and some buildings and sites seriously hinder curriculum delivery and management.
- 2.3.4 Ten schools have been completely rebuilt over the past decade with a further two scheduled for completion by September 2009. Eight schools have had more than half of their premises remodelled or refurbished and a further four are either scheduled or are in the process of building work. Two of three planned resourced schools have been opened using the three area inclusion model that is used by the Council and other partners. The recent opening of two primary schools that are co-located with other community services in deprived areas of the Borough demonstrates Wigan's commitment to tackling social and economic disadvantage.

2.4 Standards

- 2.4.1 In 2006, results at Key Stage 1 were at or above national and regional averages.

- 2.4.2 At Key Stage 2, pupil performance in English, mathematics and science has generally improved so that it is either in line with or above the national average. In English, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above has increased from 67.2% in 1998 to 79.2% in 2006. In mathematics the increase has been even greater with the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above increasing from 62.2% in 1998 to 78.5% in 2006. Science results have stayed consistently good with 88% of pupils achieving level 4 or above, which is above the national average. The DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) table that records aggregate performance across the three core subjects show that Wigan has above national average levels of pupil performance from 2003 to 2006.
- 2.4.3 Five schools performed below floor target levels (less than 65% of pupils achieving Level 4+ at Key Stage 2) in both English and mathematics in 2006 and around 17% of schools consistently perform below floor target levels in either English or mathematics each year. Whilst some of these schools are in deprived areas, many schools serving deprived areas consistently perform well above floor targets.
- 2.4.4 Whilst there is a range of IT equipment available in schools, there are constant challenges to keep pace with technology and enable schools to take full advantage of products such as video conferencing and remote learning. More and updated equipment is needed to match the opportunities offered by the Learning Platform.
- 2.4.5 By utilising the BECTA procurement framework, the LA has identified a supplier for a Learning Platform to be installed in all schools to support collaborative and partnership working within and across schools and sectors. The service will be installed and ready to use by schools by Spring 2008 and will facilitate a transformation in teaching and learning.

2.5 Deprivation

- 2.5.1 Some 40 schools have pupil populations that reflect the 20% most deprived super output areas in England. These schools and areas tend to be located in the more central areas of Wigan, with the outer edges of the Borough generally being more affluent. The proportion of children in Wigan schools eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.

2.6 Healthy schools

- 2.6.1 There have been significant changes to the food that is served to pupils in Wigan in line with the revised standards for school lunches. In the primary sector, fresh food production has increased from 45% to 84% over the past two years.
- 2.6.2 There are 14 dining centres where food is transported in from other kitchens and meal uptakes at these schools is significantly lower than in those that have full cooking kitchens.

- 2.6.3 The majority of school kitchens are not fit for purpose in that kitchen equipment is dated or obsolete leading to difficulties in utilising different cooking methods and production techniques to support the revised menus. Dining room environments are often not conducive to promoting the whole meal experience and service counters are often not appropriate for the numbers of pupils or the types of food on offer.
- 2.6.4 Some 30% of primary schools have halls that are below the minimum required size for delivery of the PE curriculum. Others are above the minimum size but a shortage of storage means that equipment needs to be stored along the edges of the hall, again restricting PE delivery.
- 2.6.5 Whilst the majority, but not all, schools have playing fields and marked out pitches on site, significant numbers of fields have poor drainage and cannot be used during the winter months. In addition, some schools are on confined sites and lack sufficient hard surfaced play space.

2.7 Extended services

- 2.7.1 One quarter of all primary schools have achieved extended school full core status. 40% of schools offer full access to childcare provision either on site or at a neighbouring location and a further 26% offer partial access.
- 2.7.2 The vast majority of schools offer a range of extended school activities, including community use of facilities and parenting support, and almost all schools offer families swift and easy referral to support services and other agencies.

2.8 SEN provision

- 2.8.1 There are around 670 pupils on roll in special schools maintained by the local authority, which is just less than 1.5% of the total school population. Within this total, 235 are primary age pupils (0.98% of the primary school population). A further 32 pupils are on roll at specially resourced provision within mainstream primary schools.
- 2.8.2 The LA is in the process of reviewing special school provision and improvements to provision have already been made, with more planned for the near future. There is a commitment to providing mainstream school places for children with special needs and there are resourced primary schools in the Borough that are able to cater for children with a wide range of needs. Further resourced provision within an existing primary school is planned for the East of the Borough in the near future. The number of children placed in special schools will continue to decline as more children are included within mainstream settings in the future.
- 2.8.3 There has been a significant amount of capital funding injected into the special school sector over recent years and by the time that the process is complete all buildings for special provision will be of good or excellent quality

and be appropriate for the needs of the pupils. In addition, all new build mainstream schools and those that have had significant remodelling are all DDA compliant. Strategic use of access funding means that there is a geographical spread of mainstream schools that are able to cater for children with a wide range of special needs.

3. Long term strategic vision for primary education

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The Council's vision and high level objectives link to the Corporate Plan and national shared objectives. One of the three key objectives is to enable people to reach their full potential by providing a good start in life for every child and young person and by aiming for high achievement through education, training and skills. These measures help to provide the means by which residents are able to gain employment and achieve economic and social well being.
- 3.1.2 Children and young people are the future of Wigan. The Primary Strategy for Change is the vehicle through which children's futures can be substantially improved. It represents an opportunity to be innovative, tackle under performance, and provide a robust and responsive primary phase that places the well-being of children at its heart. It provides the chance to create safe environments where children have genuine ambition, aspirations and achievement, so that they have every chance of inclusion and success in life.
- 3.1.3 The aims of the Strategy, which reflect those of the Children and Young People's Plan, are to ensure that all children and young people:
- attend educational settings that are viable, inclusive and cost effective;
 - are not disadvantaged in their education by the educational setting they attend or the area in which they live; and
 - reach levels of attainment at least in line with their potential ability.
- 3.1.4 In prioritising schools for the primary capital programme, the emphasis will be on those schools and areas with highest need as determined by demographic change, the state of school premises, educational standards and levels of deprivation. In addition, initiatives that benefit all schools will be progressed, such as improving dining, kitchen, sports and ICT facilities.
- 3.1.5 The Primary Strategy for Change will form part of a whole service change programme across the Borough. In making proposals for change, the LA will take a long term system-wide view as to how they will complement current and future Children's Centres and early years provision; current and future changes to secondary schools as a result of the secondary school review and Building Schools for the Future; and the on-going Inclusion Strategy. The aim is to maintain and enhance the transition between different education phases

and ensure that community identities and cohesion survive intact at the end of the process.

3.1.6 Each year, Children and Young People's Services produces a document 'Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings' after consultation with schools and partners. The document contains relevant statistical information to inform school organisation and asset management and incorporates agreed policies and procedures for both areas of work. Within the document there is a protocol for consultation and communication with primary schools during school reviews and a decision making model that is a transparent and objective process for selecting schools for review. Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Primary Strategy for Change builds upon this document and it is envisaged that both documents will continue to develop and complement each other as the Strategy moves forward.

3.2 Aspirations

3.2.1 Wigan's vision is that all primary schools will be transformed to:

- be effective, inclusive and offer extended services that meet the needs of the community;
- meet the needs of all learners by facilitating personalised learning and teaching;
- be self evaluating, self managing and self determining, whilst acting in the best interests of the wider community and Borough as a whole;
- provide pupils with enhanced life chances, including the adoption of healthy life styles;
- promote citizenship, life skills, self worth and self discipline;
- form part of a collaborative working partnership with other schools and partner agencies;
- become centres for the provision of other services for young people and their families;
- reflect population diversity in the local area and provide equal opportunities for all;
- have a distinctive ethos that embraces the local community;
- effectively respond to changes in the curriculum and changes in society; and
- be educationally and financially viable.

3.3 Location, size, diversity and age ranges of schools

- 3.3.1 Primary schools should wherever possible be sited in the community they serve, within walking distance of home and giving maximum opportunity for strong home school relationships. Children living in geographically isolated areas and those wishing to access only a faith or community school may have to travel further to school.
- 3.3.2 Primary schools will be designed and maintained to be at the heart of their communities and to support economic and community regeneration. Community needs will determine which services will be co-located with schools.
- 3.3.3 In its role as commissioner of school places, the LA will seek to make capital investment decisions that increase parental access to popular and successful schools.
- 3.3.4 To absorb the continuing decline in the birth rate in some areas of the borough and to continue to be able to offer the current diversity of provision the minimum size of Wigan primary schools should be at least one form of entry (30 children per year group, 210 children on roll). However, to minimise future risks from fluctuating populations, the LA will seek to establish larger schools up to two forms of entry wherever local circumstances permit. This policy will ensure future stability in school structures as larger schools can be reduced in size, if necessary, and still have a long term future. Such an approach will also provide parents with an element of choice between larger and smaller schools. Hard federations of schools in the same locality will also be considered.
- 3.3.5 The Council, through its Strategy Document for School Places and Buildings, has committed to maintaining the current denominational balance of school places across the Authority which includes the provision of a Catholic school place for all Catholic children living in the feeder parishes. In order to maintain viable provision in some areas of the Borough, the LA, together with its Diocesan partners, will consider the creation of joint faith schools by bringing together Church of England and Catholic schools. Other options to maintain diversity, denominational balance and parental preference, whilst securing stability in provision will be considered, including those suggested through consultation with stakeholders.
- 3.3.6 The vast majority of schools in Wigan cater for the full primary phase of education, with just five schools in Leigh being Infant or Junior schools. Over the lifetime of the project, and subject to local consultation, the aim will be to combine these schools to become primary schools.

3.4 Accommodation

- 3.4.1 The LA believes that the quality of school buildings plays a key part in raising educational achievement. Its vision is that all primary school buildings and sites will be in good physical condition and be of appropriate design to promote a transformation of learning with a modern and inclusive curriculum.

Buildings will have sufficient flexibility to accommodate future developments and innovations.

- 3.4.2 Decision making on new build, remodelling or refurbishment options will concentrate on reducing the backlog of condition items, improving the suitability of premises and keeping surplus places under control.
- 3.4.3 The LA will aspire for all schools to be fully equipped for 21st Century learning, with indoor and outdoor recreational spaces for pupils; wide circulation spaces; room in teaching areas for more than one adult to work; modern ICT infrastructures and flexibility to allow community and out of school hours use of the building.
- 3.4.4 Kitchen and dining facilities will be upgraded to increase the uptake of healthy school meals and we will aim for all schools to have on-site kitchen facilities. Good quality indoor and outdoor sports facilities will be provided on school sites to the maximum level of opportunity afforded by site and building restrictions.
- 3.4.5 Premises will inspire learning; promote good behaviour and be flexible to encourage learning at times which suit users and their families.
- 3.4.6 The aim will be for all buildings to be physically accessible for pupils and adults. Sites will, wherever possible, be designed to allow pupils, staff and visitors with mobility restrictions access to the school entrance. All new builds and major remodelling projects will ensure full DDA compliance and will be able to cater for children with a range of special needs.
- 3.4.7 Any re-organisations will take into careful consideration the distances to be travelled by pupils accessing the schools, together with safe travel routes along footpaths and cycle routes.
- 3.4.8 New buildings and refurbishments will be designed to require low maintenance, be energy efficient and use renewable energy systems, and have a minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

3.5 Curriculum

- 3.5.1 Wigan's primary schools already practice personalised learning. There will be greater emphasis on personalisation and the tailoring of the curriculum to meet specific needs. Schools will use every opportunity to inspire creativity in children through an exciting curriculum, thus increasing engagement, confidence and ambition.
- 3.5.2 Schools will retain their commitment to collaborative working, for example, through cluster groups in order to share good practice. Federations of schools may be considered, in appropriate circumstances, to increase collaborative working.

- 3.5.3 ICT rich environments will be used to transform curriculum delivery; encourage imaginative and innovative learning; impact on standards of attainment; encourage diverse learning and teaching styles; and to support access to the curriculum for children with learning or physical difficulties.
- 3.5.4 ICT provision will meet the needs of the Every Child Matters agenda; support personalisation of the curriculum; and will be planned at an authority wide level to support value for money, single log on to all services, sharing of information and the integration of services into the wider community.
- 3.5.5 As new technologies are introduced, the local authority will assess their contribution to the curriculum and management and incorporate them as appropriate in new build and refurbishment projects. The LA will play a lead role in enabling schools to make wise investment decisions in appropriate ICT equipment and in training staff to optimise its usage.
- 3.5.6 A range of solutions will be considered to support those schools that consistently perform below floor targets. This could include collaborative arrangements or federations with higher achieving schools, intensive LA support or intervention and options around re-organisation of school provision.

3.6 Deprivation

- 3.6.1 Along with the need to respond to demographic change, raise educational standards and address the condition and suitability of school premises, one of the key priorities will be to investigate options for schools in deprived areas to make a dramatic improvement to the life chances of children and young people living in these areas. This will include strategies for engaging parents and the wider community in the welfare and education of children and adults alike.

3.7 Healthy schools

- 3.7.1 The Strategy aims for all primary schools to achieve National Healthy School Status. By achieving the status, schools will ensure that:
- the school's climate for learning is inclusive;
 - pupils have the opportunity to explore healthy lifestyles and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to make informed choices;
 - provision is consistent with curriculum delivery, for example, the promotion of good health messages, access to nutritious meals, healthier food and drink options in breakfast clubs;
 - pupils have access to a range of physical activity opportunities and are encouraged to take part in physical activity and school sport;
 - there are mechanisms in place for pupils to have a voice in school, for example, through the School Council;

- policies are developed in wide consultation with the school community and reflect their circumstances and needs; and
- the emotional health and well-being of pupils is supported and strategies are in place to support vulnerable individuals and groups.

3.8 Extended schools

- 3.8.1 The Strategy recognises that there is no one model for an extended school. What children, young people and their families need in one community will not necessarily be the same in another. Extended schools will remove barriers to learning by providing appropriate services and access to opportunities therefore raising the aspirations and achievement of everyone concerned. Through promoting equality and diversity across all activities, extended schools have a fundamental role to play in encouraging respect between community members.
- 3.8.2 Many of Wigan’s primary schools are already providing high quality services for families, children, young people and the local community. To support and sustain these developments schools will continue to be encouraged to work collaboratively, in clusters and in conjunction with Children’s Centres.
- 3.8.3 The local vision for an ‘Extended School’ is based on a partnership approach which involves consulting with children, young people, their families and the community in which they live. By working collaboratively and sharing facilities, the use of high quality multi purpose learning environments and specialist provision will be maximised and individuals can be more effectively sign posted to other facilities and services. At the same time the learning environments will promote learning as exciting, stimulating and inspirational and help to promote community development.
- 3.8.4 Current mechanisms to ensure that opportunities for co-location of services are taken when schools are being rebuilt or remodelled will continue to be used. This includes both external agencies such as Health and Police, as well as other Council services such as Leisure and Adult Services. It is expected that these services will fund their elements of the premises in terms of both capital build and on-going revenue costs.

4. Achieving the vision

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 Wigan LA, as commissioner of local services, is responsible for preparing, maintaining and implementing the Primary Strategy for Change.
- 4.1.2 The Corporate Plan is clear that the role of the Council is to ‘listen, lead and perform’. The delivery of the Strategy for Change will be conducted by using the guidelines contained within the Corporate Plan. Children and Young People’s Services will:

- 'Listen to local people, understand what affects the Borough and use the information to prioritise what to do';
- 'Lead the community by helping people and organisations to work in partnership for the good of the whole Borough'; and
- 'Perform to the high standards people expect of us and make sure that excellent services are available to meet local needs'.

4.2 Communication

4.2.1 Like any change management programme, the Primary Strategy for Change will rely heavily on a sharing of aims and objectives by all stakeholders. Furthermore, the commitment to change will need to be robust enough to carry school staff, governors and parents through processes that can be painful and disruptive in the short term. Put simply, the individual 'best' or preferred option of each school may not be the optimum solution for all schools in the area.

4.2.2 In conducting reviews of provision and undertaking major building projects, all those involved will need to keep the focus on change and innovation. Compromised solutions leading to 'satisfactory' projects will not be good enough if Wigan is to maximise the opportunities afforded by the programme.

4.2.3 In order to achieve the vision and maintain staff morale and parental confidence, the local authority recognises that it needs to generate trust and credibility with its stakeholders. It proposes to do this by:

- Raising awareness of , and securing commitment to, the strategic vision with all stakeholders and decision makers by holding training and development sessions for school staff, governors, Elected Members and LA officers;
- Endeavouring to have clear lines of communication at all times by allocating a named lead officer for the review and / or project;
- Sharing school level information with the schools concerned prior to forming options and proposals for consultation so that progress is made on the basis of robust and agreed information;
- Providing a clear timeline for processes and aiming to complete transitional phases as quickly as possible;
- Being forthright, honest and open in communications with all stakeholders so that they are made aware of realistic probable outcomes as early as possible;
- Resourcing communication at LA level to ensure the timely release of appropriate information; management of the media and support for schools in keeping parents and the local community informed;

- Ensuring that prioritisation of projects is based on transparent criteria as published in this document and reviewed on an annual basis; and
- Sharing positive experiences from earlier reviews and projects and building up expertise across the LA and its partners in order to successfully transform education.

4.3 Consultation

4.3.1 Comprehensive consultation on options and proposals will be achieved in a variety of different ways including face to face, written documentation and web based applications. A two way dialogue will be maintained throughout the consultation period with all stakeholders and local communities will be fully involved in the decision making process through township forums and other communication channels. The protocol that already exists on primary school reviews will be developed and updated after consultation with schools and partners. The protocol includes a list of consultees and stages in the consultation process.

4.3.2 On new build projects and major remodelling and refurbishment schemes, measures are already in place to ensure that the end users, including the pupils, are fully consulted and engaged in design. This is done through a variety of methods such as workshops, focus groups, regular newsletters to parents, utilising school councils, as well as the pre-planning meetings that involve parents and local communities. This process will continue to be developed and refined throughout the lifetime of the programme.

4.4 School design

4.4.1 Wigan has model designs for new build primary schools of various sizes. The models were developed by a working party consisting of primary school advisers, headteachers, architects, quantity surveyors, capital project and asset management officers. These models have proved to be an excellent framework for the significant numbers of new schools that have since been built and they also provide a good benchmark against which option appraisals of existing premises can be conducted.

4.4.2 These models will continue to be refined and updated to take account of curriculum developments; new premises guidance from the DCSF, new guidance on sustainability, environmental and health and safety issues; and evaluation of the performance and suitability of recent new build schools, both locally and nationally.

4.4.3 All major projects will have an independent design champion and principles around this role will be drawn up prior to the start of the programme. The Partnership for Schools framework will be utilised to fulfil the client design advisor role. These measures are part of a package to ensure that quality buildings are provided.

- 4.4.5 Headteachers of schools that are identified for new build or substantial remodelling will be encouraged to take part in the programme being developed by the National College of School Leadership to aid more effective communication between headteachers, building professionals and architects on school design. School advisers will also be involved in developing individual school designs in line with the model design.
- 4.4.6 The current system of monitoring projects initiated by schools will continue in order to ensure that buildings are properly maintained. This includes community and voluntary controlled schools requesting permission from the LA before starting projects and voluntary aided schools following a similar system with their Diocesan Boards. In addition, the LA will continue to hold Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) for community and voluntary controlled schools and voluntary aided schools will require permission from their Diocesan Boards before utilising DFC. The strong working relationship between the LA and Dioceses ensures that other funding streams, such as LCVAP, are spent appropriately according to priorities detailed in 'Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings'.

4.5 Funding

- 4.5.1 Capital funds from all available resources will be joined together to maximise results from the programme. In addition to various funding streams from DCSF and capital receipts, the LA will utilise funds from partner agencies wherever appropriate to provide community facilities on school sites. It is intended to prioritise major rebuilds in the Primary Capital Programme, with remaining modernisation funding being utilised to remodel and refurbish schools as stand alone projects that also contribute toward meeting the targets outlined in 4.8.1 below.
- 4.5.2 The LA is conscious that all schools need to benefit from the programme and will work with its Diocesan partners and schools to seek solutions to funding the 10% statutory contribution toward voluntary aided projects.
- 4.5.3 As the programme moves forward, it should become easier for schools to purchase equipment and fund activities to help to transform learning. This is due to the delegated schools budget being shared amongst fewer schools and a reduced need to spend budgets on condition and suitability items.

4.6 Capacity to deliver

- 4.6.1 Wigan has experience of co-operative working across agencies to deliver imaginative projects to meet the needs of the community. Two new primary schools have recently been built in collaboration with partners using joint capital and revenue resources of Children and Young People's Services and the Leisure and Health Trusts. Services for children and young people are provided in venues that are accessible to them and their families.
- 4.6.2 An effective system for succession planning for Headteachers will be developed in order to minimise the risks to standards that the national

shortage threatens. Headteachers in the future will require different preparation in order to deliver the 2020 vision and a working group will be established to consider leadership issues and make recommendations to Cabinet.

4.6.3 It is essential that high quality teaching and learning is maintained throughout transition phases. To assist this, the Schools Forum will be asked on an annual basis for funds to be top sliced from the delegated schools budget in order to build capacity to deliver at school level. This could be done by:

- bringing in expertise to schools to manage the change process and act as liaison officer on building projects, thereby allowing Headteachers to continue in their day to day management roles; or
- freeing Headteachers to perform the above roles and bringing in leadership support for day to day issues.

The latter approach would provide opportunities for succession planning for Headteachers as outlined in 4.6.2 above.

4.7 Procurement

4.7.1 Wigan has a strategic partner, NPS (North West) Ltd, that provides full design and quantity surveying services. A mix of traditional procurement methods for construction is currently utilised, including tendering and partnering arrangements through OJEU, which have proved to be very successful. As the programme is phased over 15 years, one of the options for procurement is to continue with this process.

4.7.2 Wigan is joining with Salford City Council in contracting for a Local Education Partnership to deliver Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in the secondary sector. This presents a further option for the procurement of the Primary Capital Programme. A decision as to which of these procurement routes will be used will be taken over the next few months.

4.7.2 As the majority of Wigan's schools are voluntary aided, the procurement of these projects will be negotiated with the relevant Diocesan Board and school governors.

4.8 Evaluation

4.8.1 Evaluation of key outcomes will be undertaken by measuring progress at annual intervals across all schools in Wigan, and focusing particularly on those that have been either directly or indirectly affected by the Primary Capital Programme. By the end of the 15 year programme, Wigan hopes to have achieved the following:

- a decrease in the proportion of primary schools below one form of entry to below 40%; and no primary schools with less than 120 pupils on roll;

- no school with over 25% surplus places, unless the places are anticipated to be needed in the near future;
- no school with more than 10% overcrowding;
- a reduction in condition backlog to below £15 million;
- no school with a suitability impact score of above 1.25 per pupil and a reduction in schools with suitability impact scores of 1.0 and above to below 10%;
- an improvement in educational standards across all schools and no schools consistently performing below floor target levels; and
- all single phase (junior and infant) schools to be reorganised to form primary schools.

WIGAN COUNCIL

PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

DRAFT CONSULTATION

The paper sets out a clear statement of the Authority's vision of primary education in Wigan for the next 10-15 years and provides a good strategic fit against Government targets for the Primary Capital Programme. The Liverpool Archdiocese would support this vision, but would want to make the following suggestions for inclusion in the final document:

- 2.2.3 The Authority's concerns about small schools are recognised, but the Archdiocese would wish to state that it may be necessary to consider the unique circumstances in certain situations, where it may be important to maintain the presence of a Catholic school to serve that local area. There would need to be some flexibility across the borough.
- 2.2.7 It would be important to recognise that of the increasing numbers of migrants from Eastern Europe, many of whom are Catholics and would be looking for places in Catholic schools for their children. This factor needs to be taken into consideration in the projection of future numbers.
- 3.1.5 Whilst recognising the need for proposals to complement current and future Children's Centres it is important to ensure that, since these are mainly located within or near community schools, the voluntary aided sector does not suffer as a result of any proposals made to achieve this intention. In fact, the Archdiocese remains ready and eager to see further Children's Centres located within our voluntary aided schools, where they would happily and ably serve the wider community.
- 3.2.1 Bullet point 2 needs to recognise that Catholic schools as well as acting in the best interests of the wider community and borough as a whole also has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the Liverpool Archdiocese.
- 3.3.1 Whilst recognising the fact that children may have to travel further to school it is important that due regard is given to the right of parents to have their child educated according to their religious beliefs and that any travel involved should not be unreasonable for a primary aged child.
- 3.3.4 The Authority's wish to have a minimum size of one form of entry is acknowledged but the Archdiocese would wish to state that in certain local situations it may not always be possible to meet this and maintain the presence of a Catholic school to serve that area. There would need to be some flexibility across the borough. The Archdiocese is willing and is already involved in discussing the use of federations.

- 3.3.5 The Archdiocese is pleased to see the Authority's commitment to maintaining the current denominational balance of school places and the provision of a Catholic school place for all Catholic children living in the feeder parishes.
- 3.8.2 The Archdiocese would support the intention to encourage schools to work collaboratively to meet the requirements of Extended School provision. However, it is equally important to recognise the specific distinctive ethos of each school and the needs of each local area, which will not all be the same.
- 4.4.1 Whilst acknowledging the Authority has its own model designs, the Archdiocese would wish to be involved in any new design of its school. The Archdiocese, like the Authority, has its own models for the provision of new schools and would wish to have the freedom to use its own design teams for any work undertaken, even though it may mean utilising the model designs as a guidance/baseline tool.
- 4.5.2 The Archdiocese is pleased to see the commitment from the Authority to work with it to seek solutions to funding the 10% statutory contribution and looks forward to working together to resolve this important aspect of the capital programme. The Archdiocese would like to see the wording of this section changed to read "The LA is committed to the principle that all schools need to benefit from the programme and....."
- 4.7.2 The Archdiocese welcomes the commitment from the LA to negotiate with them the various procurement routes.

ICT is mentioned in a number of areas and is obviously a key driver in the proposals. The Archdiocese would welcome early discussion to agree the nature of ICT, for example whether ICT provision is wireless, non-wireless, or a mixture of both; whether off-site access will be possible; whether a managed service will be sought through PCP.

The Archdiocese will continue to co-ordinate and direct the use of all appropriate capital funds (including LCVAP) to support the maintenance of high quality buildings for Catholic schools across the Borough of Wigan. The Archdiocese will seek, wherever possible, to align expenditure through the LCVAP programme to the key strategic drivers agreed for the Primary Capital Strategy for Change in Wigan. It is anticipated that Catholic schools in Wigan will be allocated a proportionate amount of capital funding across the lifetime of the Primary Capital Programme and the Archdiocese will seek to utilise all capital resources available to it in a coherent and strategic manner.

Tony Charnock
Schools Officer
Liverpool Archdiocese
19.12.07

Primary Capital Programme Draft Strategy

Consultation with pupils

Ince C E Primary School 29 November 2007

Meeting with 12 members of the School Council from Year 2 through to Year 6

Size of schools

- Like large a large school because there is more space
- When there are 2 classes in each year group you can get more help
- It is good to have big classrooms – there is more display space
- We have two halls – one for the infants and one for the juniors and this is good
- There is room for an ICT suite

What would you like to change about your school building?

Pupils would like:

- changing rooms for PE, especially in year 6.
- bigger gates for better security to prevent vandalism
- shutters on the windows as they keep getting broken
- more cloakroom space – coats are always falling onto the floor and get trampled on
- lockers
- a swimming pool
- more toilets so there is less queuing
- bigger doors on the toilet cubicles, especially for older children so other pupils can't see over them
- a music room so people can practice their instruments without disturbing others

Outdoor areas

Would like:

- a lot of playground equipment
- to divide the playground into different areas for noisy or quiet play
- a park with swings etc
- more equipment on the school field
- sheltered areas for when the weather is bad

Dining

- Its very busy getting school dinners – would like more space
- Would like picnic benches with shelters outside

ICT

- Do have an ICT suite but need more computers
- Laptops would take up less space

Getting to school

- About half the council members walk to school and half come by car
- It is very busy outside school and drivers ignore the yellow lines – something should be done about this
- It would be good to have a school bus that picks up everyone who can't walk to school
- Pupils would like a secure bike shed with a helmet store so people can cycle to school
- All pupils should learn cycle safety

Primary Capital Programme Draft Strategy

Consultation with pupils

Leigh C E Junior School 23 November 2007

Meeting with 24 members of the School Council from Year 3 through to Year 6

Size of schools

- Some of the younger pupils (year 3) preferred a smaller school:
 - it's easier to find your way around
- The older pupils preferred a bigger school:
 - there are more children
 - there is more space both inside and out

Separate infant and junior schools

- Only one pupil had attended an age 5-11 primary school before. They would prefer to stay at one primary school throughout

What would you like to change about your school building?

The things pupils particularly liked about the current building:

- big classrooms with lots of room for displays
- a big hall which can accommodate all the pupils for assembly
- the balcony in the hall where parents can sit
- the stage which is used for plays and so on
- the school is different and special – it is 106 years old
- the memorial garden for a former pupil

The things they would like to see changed:

- improve the outside appearance of the school
- have a new building because this would be more modern and also give pupils a new experience
- change the staff room which is very small and dull
- lockers for year 5 and 6 pupils
- new toilets
- nicer interior decoration
- fewer doors in the corridors as they make it more difficult to get around

Outdoor areas

Would like:

- bike racks so people can cycle to school
- a softer surface on the playground
- better gates and fences to stop vandalism

- a grass area where pupils could play football at play and lunch times
- the memorial garden fenced off so people can have a quiet space and not be disturbed by those playing games
- somewhere for people to park as it can be dangerous when parents are dropping pupils off

Dining

- The hall is used for dining and there is plenty of room
- Sometimes PE lessons have to be shorter so the hall can be set up for dinners or cleared afterwards
- There is not much room to queue in the corridor outside the hall so there is a lot of pushing
- Those bringing packed lunches can eat outside in good weather but they have to sit on the ground – would like picnic benches

ICT

- Would like more computers – currently share 1 computer between 2 or 3 pupils
- Would like new computers – there are some old and some new in the IT suite – everyone tries to get the new ones
- The ICT suite needs renovating – there are lot of wires which are all tangled
- Wireless connections would be better
- Laptops would be better than pcs as they take up less space and can be moved about
- Would like bigger desks in the ICT suite as it is difficult to use books or make notes when using the computers

Getting to school

- About two thirds of the school council members walk to school. The others travel by car.
- Quite a few would like to cycle to school because it is quicker and good exercise but there is nowhere to keep bikes.
- The roads around school are clogged up and there is no parking.
- It would be good to have cycle lanes.
- It would be good to have an eco-friendly bus that could pick up all the children who live too far away to walk or cycle.