

For the attention of all respondents to the consultation for the proposed changes to the Admission Policy of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Soham for the Academic Year 2027/28

13 January 2026

I am writing further to my letter dated 19 November 2025 consulting on planned changes to the Admission Policy for St Andrew's Church of England Primary School ("the Academy"). The consultation closed on 5th January 2026.

During the consultation period, we received eleven substantive responses of which two (Soham residents) supported the proposal. Those who did not support the proposal came from the following sources:

1. Cambridgeshire County Council (1)
2. Wicken residents (2)
3. Local Councillors or Parish Councillors (5)
4. Local MP (1)

The original oversubscription criteria for the Academy placed preference on children from Wicken over children from Soham following the closure of the Primary School in Wicken on 31 August 1992. The justification was to provide protection for children from Wicken in having access to school places near to them.

As part of the November 2025 consultation, DEMAT sought to update its Admission Policy to bring it into line with how Soham has evolved since 1992. In doing this, we took into account input from the Academy, Cambridge County Council and our Admissions Adviser. We also acknowledge our handling of admission appeals from parents living in Soham who were not able to secure place at the Academy.

In response to the consultation, Cambridgeshire County Council made the following points in their response:

- While their catchment forecast for the Academy is expected to show a smaller than average reception cohort for September 2027, this is forecast to be above Published Admission Numbers for the subsequent years;
- The Council is expecting a deficit in places in catchment for in-year admissions.

These forecasts will mean that any child moving into Wicken, Upware and Padney would be less likely to secure a place at the Academy should the proposed changes be implemented.

*Love
Community
Respect
Trust
Ambition*

The Council provides transport for children residing in Wicken, Upware and Padney to the school. This is justified by the Council by the higher priority of children in these areas within the over-subscription criteria in the Academy's current Admission Policy. Given the forecasted data on which the Council is relying, the Council considers that the proposed change would result in an increased cost or a single but less efficient route to bring children to school leading to greater travel time and disruption for children affected by the change should it come into effect.

For this reason, the Council does not accept the proposed change, placing preference for pupils applying to the school from Soham over pupils from Wicken, Upware and Padney.

Other arguments were provided by other respondents in opposing the proposed change. While these are acknowledged, DEMAT recognises that it is not in a strong position to roll out the proposed changes of oversubscription criteria giving Soham children preference over Wicken children without support from Cambridgeshire County Council.

For this reason, the Trustees have decided to continue with the current admissions oversubscription criteria and not implement the changes proposed in the consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Downing".

Adam Downing
Head of Governance