

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 2.00PM

COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 10.00AM

SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2017/18

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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Executive Member:- David Williams, Enterprise, Education and Skills

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek Members' approval to a proposal to retain the County Council's existing procedures with regards to 'Relevant Areas', as detailed within the report; and admission arrangements and schemes of co-ordination for 2017/18.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 ("the Regulations") place a responsibility on Local Authorities to determine "Relevant Areas", after due consultation. The purpose of these areas is to ensure that all admission authorities are properly consulted about the admission arrangements which affect them and the communities they serve. "Relevant Areas" are reviewed every two years and consulted upon. Consultation on Relevant Areas are currently being undertaken with a closing date of 31 January 2016. An analysis of current responses is attached at Appendix A to the report.
- 2.2 The County Council determines on an annual basis the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary schools in Hertfordshire and the coordinated schemes of admission to all maintained schools and academies in the County. Cabinet agreed on 2 November 2015 to retain existing admission arrangements and public consultation, therefore, was not required for 2017/18.

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Local Authorities must consult all community and voluntary controlled schools where it is proposed that PAN's (Published Admission Numbers) are maintained or increased. This consultation is currently underway, closing on 31 January 2016.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Enterprise, Education and Skills Cabinet Panel will consider a report on this item of business at its meeting on 4 February 2016. The Panel will be invited to note and comment upon the report and recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet recommends to Council that:-
- (i) subject to the completion of the current Consultation and a final analysis of the results, the County Council's existing "Relevant Areas" should be retained;
 - (ii) the County Council's existing admission arrangements and schemes of coordination are retained for 2017/18; and
 - (iii) PANs (published Admission Numbers) are retained for all schools except 7, where increases are required to meet local demand.
- 3.2 The Panel's recommendation/s to Cabinet will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.
- 3.3 Cabinet's recommendation/s to Council will be reported to Council in the Council Order of Business sheet.

4. Background

Relevant Areas

- 4.1 Section 88C(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the Act") requires the admission authority for every maintained school to consult as prescribed in regulations before determining the school's admission arrangements for a school year.
- 4.2 The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 (the Regulations") details who should be consulted and these are the following:-
- (a) every neighbouring local authority;
 - (b) every other admission authority for a local school;
 - (c) insofar as not falling within paragraph (a) or (b), every other admission authority for a school situated (wholly or partly) within any relevant area which the local authority propose to determine; and

- (d) insofar as not falling within paragraphs (a) to (c), every other admission authority for a school outside the [local authority 's] area which is situated –
- (i) in the case of a primary school, not more than 1.6 kilometres, or
 - (ii) in the case of a secondary school, not more than 4.8 kilometres, from the border of the [local authority 's] area”

In addition, the Regulations make provision for the relevant areas to be determined by local education authorities and, in certain cases, redetermined by the adjudicator.

4.3 There are currently twenty Relevant Areas within Hertfordshire (see Appendix B to the report). These were developed in 2003 and updated in 2006 in accordance with the following principles:

- they should reflect the pattern of allocation from primary to secondary school
- they should reflect travel to school patterns and geographical proximity
- they should be as small as practicable in order to reduce bureaucracy on schools
- they should not cut across urban areas

4.4 There have been 14 responses to the consultation; 11 in favour and 3 against. However, 2 negative responses have misunderstood the consultation proposal and appear to believe the proposal is directly linked to the admission arrangements of individual schools. On the basis of current responses, there is no indication that admission authorities in, or surrounding Hertfordshire, believe that the existing Relevant Areas should be amended.

Hertfordshire County Council's Admission Arrangements.

4.5 The County Council is the admission authority for 282 primary, infant and first schools and 9 secondary schools. When any of these schools are oversubscribed, the Council's published admission arrangements are used to determine which children should be offered places.

4.6 The County Council's existing admission arrangements work well with nearly 95% of children allocated a ranked primary or secondary school. Maintaining existing arrangements will minimise parental anxiety which is particularly high in the primary sector given the current pressure on places and maximise the benefits of existing knowledge of the allocation process. Admission arrangements for 2017/18 are available at www.hertsdircet.org/admissions

4.7 It is proposed that Published Admission Numbers are retained for all schools, except those outlined below where an increase is required to

meet rising local demand:

William Ransom, Hitchin - increase from 38 to 60
Tannery Drift, Royston - increase from 45 to 60
Roman Way, Royston - increase from 45 to 60
Forres, Hoddesdon - increase from 45 to 60
Prae Wood, St Albans - increase from 30 to 60
Giles Junior, Stevenage - increase from 60 to 90
Almond Hill Junior, Stevenage - increase from 60 to 90.

4.8 The County Council is required to consult all community and voluntary schools where PAN's are proposed to be retained or increased. All schools where an increase is proposed have agreed to the increase.

4.9 Only minor changes to the County Council's admission arrangements are necessary to meet new legislation/guidance and therefore do not require formal consultation:

Policy for summer born children taking into account

- the Minister of State's letter dated 8 September which makes clear that the Department for Education (DfE) will be amending the School Admissions Code to ensure that any summer born children whose parents believes they are not ready for entry to the Reception year in their chronological year group can make an application the following year;
- 6th form oversubscription criteria – amendment from "GCSE point score" to home-school distance in line with recent determinations by the Office of the School's Adjudicator.

4.10 Hertfordshire's schemes of coordination have been in place for a number of years and are well understood by both maintained schools and academies. The schemes will be updated to ensure that timescales are accurate and changes in legislation and guidance are taken into account.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 None.

6 Equalities Implications

6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the Equality Implications of the decision that they are making.

6.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EQiA) produced by officers.

- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation
- 6.4. An EQIA of the County Council's admission arrangements has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix C to the report. The assessment shows that it is unlikely that the proposals will have an adverse impact upon any particular group with a protected characteristic.
- 6.5 The equalities impact of retaining the County Council's existing Relevant Areas has also been considered and there is no evidence that there will be any adverse impact upon groups with protected characteristics.

Background Information

Report and Minutes, Cabinet, November 2015

Report to Enterprise, Education and Skills Cabinet Panel, 4 February 2016

Admission arrangements for 2017/18 are available at

www.hertsdircet.org/admissions