

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	31 March 2010
Title:	Determination of co-ordinated admission arrangements: 2011/12.
Reference:	1456
Report From:	Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Lead Member on the consultation carried out, following advice from Hampshire's Admissions Forum, with schools and other interested parties regarding the admission arrangements for September 2011 including co-ordination of applications made outside the normal admission rounds in the school year beginning September 2011. Also to seek the determination of the proposed scheme for co-ordination of admission arrangements for maintained schools in the school year 2011/12 and the admissions policies for all voluntary controlled and community schools.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The County Council is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within Hampshire and is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these schools. Regulations require all admission authorities (i.e. LAs and the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools, referred to in this report as "admission authority schools") to determine their school admission arrangements for 2011/12 by 15 April 2010 and to have notified other admission authorities within 14 days of this date at the latest. Also a public notice must be placed in newspapers before 1 May.
- 2.2. Additional regulations introduced after the school admission arrangements for 2010/11 were determined in April 2009, require all admission authorities to co-ordinate applications made outside the normal admission rounds in the school year beginning September 2010. Admission authorities are required to determine these co-ordinated arrangements by 15 April 2010 and to have

notified other admission authorities within 14 days of this date at the latest. Again a public notice must be placed in newspapers before 1 May.

- 2.3. 'Admission arrangements' means the overall procedure, practices, criteria and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places and refers to any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
- 2.4. The School Admissions Code (2007), first imposed changes on admissions for September 2008. That Code was the first to have a statutory basis and impose mandatory requirements. A revised School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeal Code came into force on 10 February 2009. This Code was subsequently revised and, following due Parliamentary process, came into force on 10 February 2010.
- 2.5. The annual consultation on admission arrangements for September 2011 was carried out informally during the autumn term 2009 in the expectation that the Code would be revised in the light of recommendations made by Sir Jim Rose in his review of the primary curriculum in April 2009. The revised Code clarified that the 2011 arrangements must comply with the 2009 Code, although there are two extra requirements in connection with children starting the primary phase. Firstly, admission authorities must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. This should be on a full-time basis if the parent chooses but parents can request that their child attends part-time until reaching compulsory school age. Secondly, admission authorities must allow parents of children who are offered a place at the school before they are of compulsory school age to defer their child's entry until later in the school year.
- 2.6. The main focus of Hampshire County Council's consultation on arrangements for 2011/12 was in connection with the date for notifying parents of the outcome of main admission round applications for children starting a new phase of primary education in September 2011. Previously this date has been towards the end of January but new regulations impose a national deadline of 15 January for the submission of primary applications and to allow authorities to meet the new requirements for inter-Local Authority co-ordination the new regulations require Local Authorities to continue exchanging information until the last working day in March (Thursday 31 March 2011 for September 2011 admissions). As a consequence, the date for notifying parents of the outcome of primary phase applications made in the 2011/12 admission round cannot be before 1 April. This is a considerable change for primary phase schools and parents who would previously have known the outcome of their applications in late January. The proposed decision date offered for consultation was 6 May 2011. This proposal took account of the dates of the Easter holiday in 2011, the large dataset in Hampshire's main round admissions processes and high number of neighbouring authorities.
- 2.7. The 2009 Code stipulated that from the academic year 2010/11 onwards, local authorities must co-ordinate all in-year applications. It stipulated that local authorities must formulate a scheme, by 1 January 2010, for co-ordinating in-year admissions from September 2010. Hampshire County

Council's consultation focussed on the timescales in which in-year applications should be processed and the centralised operation of waiting lists was carried out in the autumn term 2009 to allow a qualifying scheme to be formulated by 1 January 2010. As the LA had not operated a centralised scheme for in-year applications, it initiated a trial scheme for the 2009/10 school year. The trial scheme involved community and controlled schools and admission authority schools were invited to opt into the scheme if they wished to do so. The Executive Lead Member approved the adoption of the in-year 2010 co-ordinated scheme at his meeting of 17 December 2009. The same in-year scheme is proposed for 2011/12 with a few minor amendments.

- 2.8. Consultations with schools, neighbouring local authorities, parents and other interested parties for 2011 admissions have been carried out in three phases:
- October - November 2009: consultations on published admission numbers (PANs);
 - October - November 2009: informal consultation on proposed co-ordination schemes and admission policies, with reference to particular aspects of the policies;
 - January -March 2010: statutory consultation on intended arrangements, following the publication of a notice in newspapers covering Hampshire's administrative area. Details available in the consultation documents include revised PANs and any revisions approved by Forum in response to the autumn term consultations.
- 2.9. Statutory consultation with schools, neighbouring local authorities and parents for the co-ordination of in-year admissions from September 2010 was carried out from October to November 2009.
- 2.10. Throughout the consultations for 2011/12 admissions, particular attention has been paid to the consultations on PANs in order to find a proper balance between the effective management of school places and the successful expression of parental preference. The number of 4 year old pupils needing school places has begun to increase following a period during which the number of primary aged pupils had fallen.
- 2.11. The results of the informal consultation for the 2011/12 arrangements and the statutory consultation on the co-ordination of in-year admissions from September 2010 were considered by the Hampshire Admission Forum at its meeting on 10 December 2009. The statutory consultation responses for the 2011/12 arrangements were considered at its 1 March 2010 meeting. The Forum must act in accordance with all relevant legislation. The County Council has a statutory duty to "have regard" to the recommendations of the Forum. The constitution and membership of Forums is laid down in the Local Authority Reports Regulations and in paragraph 4.29 of the revised School Admissions Code. The Hampshire Admission Forum reflects the types of schools in the county and includes county councillors, Headteachers representing specific categories of school, representatives of the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, the armed forces,

special educational needs, ethnic minorities, early years, neighbouring LAs, a school governor, a Choice Advisor and a parent representative. The Forum reports to the Schools Adjudicator and is advised by LA officers, one of whom acts as secretary

3. Outline of Proposals being Consulted Upon: check model.

- 3.1. That the Executive Lead Member approve the proposed admission arrangements for the admissions round for applying for a school place in the normal year of entry, in September 2011 and the proposed arrangements for co-ordinating in-year admissions from September 2011. The admission arrangements have gone through the approved consultation process and have been recommended by Hampshire's Admissions Forum.

4. Consultation details: 2011/12 arrangements in general and the proposed notification date for primary phase applications, 6 May 2011

- 4.1. In the autumn term schools were asked to comment on the suitability of 6 May 2011 as the proposed notification date for primary phase applications and provided with the opportunity to comment on any other aspects of the proposed arrangements. Attention was drawn to the fact that the national closing date of 15 January 2011 for primary phase applications was two months later than the date previously operated in Hampshire. An outline of the new requirements to continue information-exchange with other LA's until 31 March 2010 was provided and other material factors such as the two week Easter holiday were highlighted.
- 4.2. The Authority received 29 responses from schools, including 26 primary phase schools. All 26 primary phase schools stated that 6 May 2011 was too late and many provided very detailed reasons to support their response. One of the three responses from secondary schools declared complete agreement with the arrangements but declined to comment on the primary phase notification date. The two remaining secondary school responses were from foundation schools commenting on the timescales associated with the processing of in-year applications.
- 4.3. Hampshire's Admissions Forum, having regard to the informal consultation responses, at its 10 December meeting approved a statutory consultation, during the spring term period, on the adoption of 6 May 2011 as the proposed notification date for primary phase applications. The low response rate to the autumn term consultation was commented on.
- 4.4. In the spring term schools were notified that the Hampshire Admissions Forum, had not raised objections to 6 May 2011 as the notification date. During the statutory public consultation in the spring term, parents sent 13 letters objecting to the proposed date and requesting the LA to adopt an earlier date. Schools were invited to select a date between 1 April and 6 May 2011 which they preferred and to provide reasons for their selection. This consultation elicited 16 responses (all from primary phase schools). Ten of the responses clustered around 26-29 April 2011. The remaining 6 responses varied between preferring dates from 1 April to 6 May. Hampshire

Admissions Forum, on 1 March 2010, indicated that although it was prepared to back the proposed date of 6 May, a compromise might be reached with Thursday 28 April 2011. **(See Appended summary)**. That particular date was proposed by Forum because it is the first Thursday of the summer term and a date by which the Local Authority can carry out the processing of all applications. This is now the proposed notification date.

5. Arrangements for co-ordinating admissions from September 2011

- 5.1. Co-ordination of main round admissions was first established for admission to secondary schools in September 2005 and at primary level in September 2006. As already stated new legislation created in-year co-ordination from September 2010; the school admissions team has been trialling centralised in-year admissions with extra staffing resources made available following a successful bid to Hampshire's Schools Forum for extra funding.
- 5.2. The 2011 arrangements include co-ordination for main round applications and in-year applications. In future years all arrangements will follow this approach.

6. Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for primary and secondary schools:

- 6.1. Every year, the LA must publish in its composite prospectus the number of pupils who will be admitted to each school. This is known as the published admission number (PAN). The LA consults annually governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools on the proposed PAN for their school. Admission authority schools are responsible for setting their own PAN, after consultations. If a school has specialist resourced SEN provision, the pupils to be admitted to this provision are usually included within the PAN.
- 6.2. The governors of community and voluntary controlled schools are able to object to the independent Schools Adjudicator if they consider that the PAN proposed by the LA is not appropriate for their school.
- 6.3. Schools may seek a PAN lower than that indicated by the capacity of the school. For example, an infant school will wish to reduce an indicated PAN of 31 to 30 to comply with class size legislation. Similarly, a secondary school might wish to reduce the indicated PAN to coincide with an even pattern of tutor group organisation. If an admission authority seeks to reduce the indicated PAN, it is necessary to publish notices and the Schools Adjudicator must consider objections if these are received from at least ten parents. The LA publishes notices in respect of community and voluntary controlled schools; for foundation and voluntary aided schools, the governors have this responsibility. Significant changes to the Published Admission Number usually require an adjustment to the school's capacity.
- 6.4. The Admission Forum considered all PANs, that were changing from the 2010 figure, at its meeting on 1 March. The enclosed tables for both primary (Annexe E) and secondary (Annexe F) schools give details of the PAN for

2010, the school capacity, the indicated PAN and the proposed PAN for 2011 (i.e. DCSF latest capacity figures).

- 6.5. As in previous years, it is recommended that for 2011/12 admissions the Director of Children's Services, and having regard to any advice from the Admission Forum, be empowered to:
- authorise the publication of local notices where a PAN lower than the indicate admission number arising from the capacity assessment should be published, in accordance with legislation; and
 - lodge an objection to the Schools Adjudicator in respect of any aspect of an admission authority school's or neighbouring LA's admissions arrangements (including PANs) which appear to be at variance with legal requirements or Code of Practice advice, taking into account factors at the school, the possible effect on admissions to other schools and the outcome of further consultations, if any.

7. School specific criteria

- 7.1. The County Council's policy applies for admissions to all community and voluntary controlled schools within Hampshire. The Admission Forum has, in the past, recognised that there are some cases where a small amount of flexibility is advisable in relation to individual school policies. This is to avoid situations where rigid implementation of the LA policy would lead to unacceptable anomalies. The required flexibility is delivered through school specific criteria, which includes using walking route as the method for measuring the distance tiebreaker.
- 7.2. The need to centralize the administration of the main admissions round makes it more difficult to accommodate school specific criteria. Schools are advised that continuing to operate a school specific criterion may require them to directly support the processing of applications to their school.
- 7.3. Annexe G lists all proposed school specific criteria for 2011, supported by the Admission Forum. Proposed new criteria are given in italics. For 2011 admissions, these were considered by the Admission Forum.
- 7.4. The list given at Annexe G, therefore, is recommended with the support of the Admission Forum to the Executive Member for his agreement. It is also recommended that the Director of Children's Services, having regard to any advice from the Adm Forum and in consultation with the ELM, be empowered to amend the list of ssc as appropriate during the course of the ac year.

8. Boarding Policies:

- 8.1. Hampshire has provision for six boys and six girls to board each year (Appendix H). This is available at Kings' School (boys) and at The Westgate School (girls). The School Admissions Code gives specific guidance on the admission policy for admissions to boarding provision in mainstream schools.

9. Impact Issues:

The following issues have been identified as potential impact issues the County Council would need to be aware of if it were asked to implement the proposals in this paper:

- 9.1. To ensure that the admission arrangements do allow for the best interests of all children to be properly taken into account when applying the published policy an equality impact assessment has been undertaken. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender or disability arising from this report has been identified.

10. Risk Issues:

The following have been identified as possible risk issues for the County Council to consider if it were asked to implement the proposals in this paper:

- 10.1. n/a

11. Conclusions:

- 11.1. Having followed the processes detailed above the various proposed constituents of Hampshire County Council's 2011/12 admission policies for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and the co-ordinated admission arrangements for 2011/12 are both recommended by Hampshire's Admissions Forum for determination by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

12. Recommendations

12.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approve the adoption of:

- the revised admission policies for community and voluntary controlled schools set out in Annexes A and B and for Nursery Units attached to maintained schools set out in Annexe C;
- the scheme for co-ordinating admissions to school in 2011/12, set out in Annexe D;
- the published admission numbers (PANs) for community and voluntary controlled schools set out in Annexes E and F;
- the school specific criteria listed in Annexe G;
- the boarding policy listed in Annexe H.

- the scheme for co-ordinating applications made outside the normal admission rounds (in-year admissions) in the school year beginning September 2011, set out in Annexe I.

12.2. That the Director of Children's Services, having regard to any advice from the Admission Forum, be empowered to:

- authorise the publication of local notices in those instances where there is agreement with governors of community and voluntary controlled schools that a PAN lower than the indicated admission number, arising from the capacity assessment, should be published; in accordance with legislation.
- lodge an objection to the Schools Adjudicator in respect of any aspect of an admission authority school's or neighbouring LA's admission arrangements which appear to be at variance with legal requirements, mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code or failed to follow the Code's guidelines without justification, taking into account factors at the school, the possible effect on admissions to other schools and the outcome of further consultations, if any.
- amend the list of school specific criteria as appropriate during the course of the academic year; in consultation with the Executive Lead Member.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	
<i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Corporate Strategy tick boxes above. If it is not applicable, please delete.</i>	

NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 School Admissions Code 2010		<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Consultation responses appended	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?