

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Education
Date:	18 January 2017
Title:	Determination of 2018/19 admission arrangements
Reference:	8021
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Member on the consultation carried out regarding the admission arrangements for the main admissions round for entry to school in September 2018, following advice from Hampshire's Admission Forum, schools and other interested parties. The paper also presents the detail of the proposed admission arrangements.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The existing School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014 and School Admissions Appeal Code came into force on 1 February 2012. Further references refer to the School Admissions Code (SAC).

2.2. 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. Hampshire provides a co-ordinated and centralised main round process. For in-year admissions, schools and the authority support parents in making an application. Regulations require all admission authorities (i.e. LAs and the governing bodies of academies and voluntary aided and foundation schools, referred to in this report as "own admission authority" (OAA) schools) to determine their school admission arrangements for 2019/19 by 28 February 2017 and to have notified other admission authorities and published the admission arrangements on their website by 15 March 2017.

2.3. The term 'admission arrangements' means the overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding on the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered (normally a supplementary information form is used by OAA schools where priority for admission cannot be determined from the

information on the LA's form). In the case of the LA, this includes a County admission policy with which community and voluntary controlled schools' policies must comply. A list of school specific criteria also form part of the admission arrangements. In Hampshire there is a separate policy for entry at Year R, Year 3 and Year 7 and for nurseries. Separate policies for junior schools which are in a federation with their linked infant school and for all-through schools (with the age range 4-16) have also been devised for first implementation in September 2018. The admission arrangements also include the published admission number (PAN) for each community and voluntary controlled school.

- 2.4. Admissions authorities must consult by 31 January in the determination year on their admission arrangements, unless there are no changes proposed. Consultation with schools, neighbouring local authorities and parents on the County's 2018 admission policies and PANs has been carried out in two phases:
- 19 September – 21 October 2016: consultations with schools on PANs and the proposed admission policies;
 - 21 November 2016 - 02 January 2017: statutory consultation with schools, other local authorities and parents on the intended arrangements, including any revised PANs. Consultation documents included any revisions advised by Forum and recommended by senior management in response to the informal consultation with schools.
- 2.5. Throughout the consultation for 2018/19 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 four year old pupils needing school places has continued to increase and this has led to pressures in certain areas of the county. The consultation in September gathered information on both individual schools' requests to change their PAN and schools' responses to proposals by the LA to change the PAN. All proposed changes are shown in the consultation documents, with proposed reductions highlighted since any reduction to a PAN requires wider consultation. For all proposed PAN changes the authority carries out the required statutory consultation.
- 2.6. The Admission Forum no longer has a statutory role in the decision making process, however, the Elected Lead Member has committed himself to "have regard" to the advice of the Admission Forum. The Hampshire Admission Forum is made up of advocates for children, schools and families from a variety of settings including county councillors, Headteachers representing the range of schools in the County, representatives of the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, the armed forces, special educational needs, ethnic minorities, early years providers and school governors. The Forum is advised by LA officers and meets four times a year to consider issues relating to school admissions. The statutory consultation process for the 2018/19 arrangements was considered at the September, November and January meetings of the Hampshire Admission Forum.

3. Outline of proposals being consulted upon

3.1. That the Executive Member approve the proposed admission arrangements for the school year 2018/19. The admission arrangements have undergone the required consultation process and are based on the following three dimensions:

- the revised admission policies for community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools set out in Annexes A, B, C, D and E the school specific criteria listed in Annexe F;
- the 2018 published admission numbers (PANs) for community and VC schools set out in Annexes G and H;
- the review of some community and voluntary controlled school catchments, set out at Annexes I, J, K and L;
- the admission policy for Nursery Units attached to maintained schools set out in Annexe M.

4. Infant/primary, junior, secondary and all-through admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools 2018/19 (Annexe A, Annexe B, Annexe C, Annex D and Annex E)

4.1. Admission policies set out how applications for each school are prioritised and provide key dates for the year in question.

4.2. The informal consultation with schools carried out during the autumn term 2016, followed the Admission Forum's recommendation to consult on:

- a higher admission priority for the existing 'child of staff' criterion, and
- (for the junior school policy only), a higher priority for children attending a) the federated infant school, b) the linked infant school,

and to provide an opportunity for Hampshire schools to express a view as to whether they would support these changes in Hampshire's admissions policies for 2018.

4.3. The consultation, which was published to all schools, was conducted online and asked respondents to declare their role and school status before responding to a series of closed questions with the opportunity to provide further comment. There were 65 responses from schools in total, from a mix of lone head teacher opinion and governing body responses (of which 55 were from Community and voluntary controlled schools).

4.4. Schools were asked to consider whether they would support a higher priority for the 'child of staff' criterion. The criterion was first introduced to the County's policy for September 2014, and a definition is provided in the SAC:

*1.39 Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:
a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or*

b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Hampshire's policy provides further clarity:

'Staff' includes all those on the payroll of the school. 'Children of staff' refers to situations where the staff member is the natural parent, the legal guardian or a resident step parent.

In summary, approx. 78% of the Community and voluntary controlled respondents were in favour of increasing the level of priority for children of staff. Schools were asked to consider whether they would support the 'child of staff' criterion being positioned above all catchment children (after 'looked after children' and the criterion for children with medical grounds for admission). 54% of the community and voluntary controlled schools supported this proposal, and a further 24% indicated a neutral stance. The other 22% of Community and voluntary controlled schools indicated that they would prefer that the 'child of staff' criterion be positioned after all catchment children (above children out of catchment with a sibling). Some made comments that they would not wish to displace catchment families. Forum considered the number of staff child applications received in the normal admission rounds over the last 3 years and noted the very small number of applications. They discussed the recruitment and retention difficulties schools are experiencing and head teacher members shared anecdotal evidence of where the 'staff child' priority at an OLA school had eased pressure on staff work-life balance and in turn supported school improvement (staff as parents).

Others shared concerns that at smaller schools, a couple of staff securing places at the school might displace catchment children which would cause problems for those families, but if a member of the leadership team, for example, could not get their child in, it might impact on the whole community with the loss of a key member of staff.

Forum recommends, based on school responses and those of senior officers, that priority for children of staff should be placed above all catchment children within the County Council's policy for 2018.

- 4.5. Forum considered schools' responses to the proposal that children attending the linked infant school should be given a higher priority to the linked junior school, above catchment children, and whether this should apply to a) the 13 federated infant/junior pairings or b) all infant/junior pairings. 76% of the community and voluntary controlled schools who responded supported this proposal, and a further 16% indicated a neutral stance.

All of the federated infant/junior pairings eagerly supported the proposal that their policy should support the children at their infant school transitioning into their junior school. In the last few years, a number of federated infant and junior pairings have implemented a school specific criterion (approved by Admission Forum) in their junior policy providing a priority for in-catchment children attending their infant school, to reinforce the relationship between the schools sharing one governing body and Executive head teacher.

Comments from schools highlighted come of the complexities of school organisation in some parts of the county where there were mismatches in admission numbers and schools with more than one linked school.

Forum discussed parental expectations that children on the roll of an infant school should be able to progress with their peers to the linked junior school. Under the current junior school policy, catchment children and out-catchment children with siblings are given priority, even if they are not already attending the linked infant school, leaving some out-catchment children attending the linked infant school unable to gain places. Year 2 children attending a primary school are able to automatically progress to Year 3 without the need to re-apply. Whilst Year 2 children attending an infant school must still apply for a junior school place, giving them a higher priority within the junior admission policy would provide a greater level of certainty for families regarding their chances of gaining a place and providing that continuity afforded to those attending a primary school.

Forum recommends, based on school responses and those of senior officers, that children attending the infant school should be given a higher priority to the junior school, above catchment children, for the 13 federated infant/junior pairings only and that other non-federated infant/junior pairings could requests a school-specific criterion if their local circumstances would support the arrangement.

4.6. Forum therefore concluded that the following changes should be made to the County Council's admission policies for 2018:

- a higher priority for the 'Child of staff' criterion from its current position above 'other children', to above 'children living in the catchment area of the school with a sibling attending the school';
- a higher priority for 'children attending the linked infant school' in the junior school policy for federated infant and junior pairings (of which there are 13) from its current position above 'other children' to above 'children living in the catchment area of the school with a sibling attending the school', below 'Child of staff'.

4.7. There have been eight responses to the public consultation on the County Council's proposed admission arrangements for 2018. These are included at Annexe N:

Three of the respondents have written in support of the proposed policy changes for the higher priority for the 'child of staff' criterion and four have indicated their support for priority to the children attending the infant school in federated infant and junior pairings.

A comment was received from Poole Children's Services questioning whether the in-catchment and out-catchment categories should remain within the proposed federated junior policy. This has been considered by the Admission Forum and it remains that the County would wish to prioritise any remaining

places, after those attending the infant school, to children living in the school's catchment area over other children.

Two respondents have commented on the proposed catchment change to Halterworth Primary school and their concerns about funding for the school which is considered by officers to be a separate issue and will be dealt with as such.

One respondent has commented to give their support for the proposed catchment review for The Vyne Community School for the Hoe Lane development.

The Governing Body of St James' CE Primary School, Emsworth, have commented that the school would wish to reduce their PAN from 34 to 30 for reasons related to funding and school standards. This has not been supported by officers and the Admission Forum and therefore not put forward for determination. The Governing Body may refer their concerns to the Schools Adjudicator, as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of this report.

- 4.8. The policies in Annexes A, B, C, D and E, therefore, are recommended by Admission Forum to the Executive Member for his agreement.
- 4.9. The SAC sets the national dates for notifying parents of their children's new school place for September 2018: 16 April for primary age children and 01 March for secondary age children.

5. School specific criteria (Annexe F)

- 5.1. The County Council's policies apply to 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 advised 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, for example, the use of walking route as the method for measurement of distance for tiebreaker purposes (as an alternative to the straight line method) to suit particular local circumstances, or a criterion giving priority to children attending the linked infant school.
- 5.2. The need to centralise 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 the school.
- 5.3. Annexe F lists all proposed school specific criteria for 2018, supported by the Admission Forum who considered these at their November and January meetings.
- 5.4. The list given at Annexe F, therefore, is recommended with the support of the Admission Forum to the Executive Member for his agreement.

6. Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for infant/primary, junior and secondary schools (Annexe G and Annexe H)

6.1. Every year, the LA must, as part of its admission arrangements, publish on its website the number of pupils who will be admitted to each school (the PAN). The LA consults governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools annually on the proposed PAN for their school. At its meeting in November 2016, Hampshire Admission Forum considered all PANs where a change from the 2017 figure is proposed. The enclosed tables for primary phase schools (Annexe G) and secondary schools (Annexe H) give the PAN for 2017 and the proposed PAN for 2018. If a school has specialist resourced SEN provision, the pupils to be admitted to this provision are usually, but not always, included within the PAN.

6.2. It should be noted that there is a proposal to reduce the PAN at three schools:

- a reduction to the admission number of the Year 3 intake at Castle Hill Primary School, in Basingstoke, from 64 to 60;
- a reduction to the admission number for Year 7 at Yateley School from 261 to 240;
- a reduction to the admission number for Year R at South View Infant and Nursery School from 72 (including 5 resourced provision places for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan) to 60 plus 4 resourced provision places.

Each schools' governing body has made cogent educational and curricular arguments in favour of the reduction and it is the LA's view that the proposed reductions do not compromise the LA's duty to provide school places for local residents.

6.3. The governors of community and voluntary controlled schools are able to object to the Schools Adjudicator if they consider that the PAN proposed by the LA is not appropriate for their school. An objection to a decision by the LA to increase or keep the same PAN at a community or voluntary controlled school cannot be brought, except where the objection is brought by the governing body of the school. An objection to the lowering of a PAN may be made to the Schools Adjudicator by a parent or other interested party.

7. Catchment area reviews (Annexe I, J, K and L)

7.1. The SAC states that a catchment area is a geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school. A catchment area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined and published in the same way as other admission arrangements. Catchment areas must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined. Catchment areas do not prevent parents who live outside the catchment of a particular school from expressing a preference for the school. Hampshire's admission arrangements include catchment areas to reinforce the LA's commitment to ensuring that, as far as possible, schools serve their local community.

7.2. Every year, the LA must, as part of its school place planning function, ensure that there are sufficient school places for Hampshire residents and for any

new communities arising from housing development. Where the development is substantial, a new school is built and a Multi Academy Trust is identified to run the school. The LA must then review the catchment areas of any surrounding community and voluntary controlled schools to ensure that they remain reasonable: ensuring extended communities are not fractured by a catchment boundary; the forecast size of the child population for the area can be accommodated within the school's capacity and that the new school has an established area that they might operate as a catchment area within their admission arrangements.

- 7.3. It should be noted that there is a proposal to change the catchment areas of the identified local schools at the following four locations in Hampshire:
- a change to the catchment areas of the following schools in Basingstoke in response to a review of the school provision in the area to accommodate the new **Chapel Hill development** and the existing Dextra Court apartments: Winklebury Infant; Winklebury Junior; Oakridge Infant; Oakridge Junior; Fort Hill Community Secondary and The Vyne Community school;
 - a change to the catchment areas of the following schools in Basingstoke in response to a review of the school provision in the area to accommodate the new **Razors Farm and Aurum site developments**: Sherborne St John Church Of England Primary School and Great Binfields Primary School;
 - a change to the catchment areas of the following schools in Romsey, in response to a review of the school provision in the area to accommodate the new **Hoe Lane development**: Halterworth Primary School; North Baddesley Infant and North Baddesley Junior Schools;
 - a change to the catchment areas of Talavera Infant School and Talavera Junior School in Aldershot to accommodate a new academy primary school opening in September 2018 at Wellesley; part of the **Aldershot Urban Extension development**.
- 7.4. Each schools' governing body has been consulted and affected families written to ahead of the statutory consultation of the proposed arrangements. In the latter two cases a new school is being created purely to support new houses on what is currently green field sites. For seven of the affected schools, transitional arrangements are proposed to support the admission of siblings of families whose catchment will change as a result of the proposed catchment change. These are detailed in the proposed school specific criteria at Annex F.

8. Nursery Policy (Annexe M)

- 8.1. There are no proposed changes to the Nursery policy for 2018.

9. Material changes from the 2017/18 arrangements are as follows:

- (i) Within the County Council's admission policies:

- a higher priority for the 'Child of staff' criterion from its current position above 'other children', to above 'children living in the catchment area of the school with a sibling attending the school';
 - a higher priority for 'children attending the linked infant school' in the junior school policy for federated infant and junior pairings from its current position above 'other children' to above 'children living in the catchment area of the school with a sibling attending the school', below 'Child of staff';
- (ii) Of the School Specific criteria:
- introduction of a specific criterion for Endeavour Primary, Sherborne St John CE Primary, Talavera Infant and Junior, Winklebury Infant and Junior and Fort Hill School, to support the admission of children affected by the proposed catchment changes in response to local housing development;
 - amendment of a specific criterion for St James CE Primary school, Emsworth, to provide clarity of the churches included in 'churches together in England';
 - deletion of a specific criterion for five junior schools who are federated with their linked infant school and operating a priority for catchment children attending the linked infant school: Bursledon, Fryern, Leeland, Newport and Northern junior schools; these are no longer required if the proposed changed to the junior school policy is agreed;
- (iii) changes to some schools' Published Admission Numbers (PAN) including:.
- a reduction to the admission number of the Year 3 intake at Castle Hill Primary School, in Basingstoke, from 64 to 60;
 - a reduction to the admission number for Year 7 at Yateley School from 261 to 240;
 - a reduction to the admission number for Year R at South View Infant and Nursery School from 72 (including 5 resourced provision places for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan) to 60 plus 4 resourced provision places.
- (iv) changes to the following school catchment areas: Winklebury Infant; Winklebury Junior; Oakridge Infant; Oakridge Junior; Fort Hill Community Secondary and The Vyne Community school; Sherborne St John Church Of England Primary School and Great Binfields Primary School; Halterworth Primary School; North Baddesley Infant and North Baddesley Junior Schools; Talavera Infant School and Talavera Junior School.

10. Objecting to admission arrangements determined by schools which are their own admission authority (OAA schools)

- 10.1. It should be noted that admission arrangements for academies are approved by the Secretary of State as part of an academy's Funding Agreement, and requires compliance with admissions legislation and relevant Codes. Academies and other OAA schools are required to consult in the same way as any other admission authority: at least once every seven years or annually if there are changes to arrangements.
- 10.2. OAA schools are responsible for setting their own PAN and must inform the LA of their decision. They are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN. A variation to the determined admission number may be made by an OAA school without being referred to the Schools Adjudicator.
- 10.3. Local authorities must refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements that have been determined by OAA schools in its area are unlawful. An objection to a variation from the School Admissions Code agreed by the Secretary of State in relation to the admission arrangements for an Academy cannot be brought. Objections to a decision by an academy or other OAA school to increase its PAN or keep it the same cannot be brought. Objections to any other aspect of an OAA school's admission arrangements will be considered by the Schools Adjudicator.

11. Impact Issues

- 11.1. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender or disability arising from this report has been identified. However, to ensure that the admission arrangements 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 and is attached to this paper.

12. Risk Issues

- 12.1. 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:
- 12.2. N/A

13. Recommendations

- 13.1. That the Executive Member for Education approve the proposed admission arrangements for the admissions round for applying for school place for admission during September 2018/19. The admission arrangements have gone through the approved consultation process and have been recommended by Hampshire's Admission Forum and are summarised in:

- the revised admission policies for community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools set out in Annexes A, B, C, D and E the school specific criteria listed in Annexe F;
- the 2018 published admission numbers (PANs) for community and VC schools set out in Annexes G and H;
- the review of some community and voluntary controlled school catchments, set out at Annexes I, J, K and L;
- the admission policy for Nursery Units attached to maintained schools set out in Annexe M.

13.2. That the Director of Children's Services, having regard to any advice from the Admission Forum, be given delegated authority to amend the list of school specific criteria as appropriate during the course of the academic year; in consultation with the Executive Member.

(iii) CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

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.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender or disability arising from this report has been identified. However, to ensure that the admission arrangements 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.

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?