

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	6 April 2011
Title:	Determination of 2012/13 admission arrangements
Reference:	2709
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Martin Goff

Tel: 01962 846185

Email: martin.goff@hants.gov.uk

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 2012. Following recommendations of the Forum, the paper also presents the detail of the proposed admission arrangements. Arrangements include co-ordination of applications made outside the normal admission rounds in the school year beginning September 2012.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The existing School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeal Code came into force on 10 February 2010. References in this section 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 co-ordinated admission arrangements for these schools. 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 "admission authority schools") to determine their school admission arrangements for 2012/13 by 15 April 2011 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. (SAC 1.26 and Appendix 4)
- 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. Admission authorities must consult by 1 March in the determination year on their admission arrangements (SAC 1.26), apart from in circumstances which do not apply here. Consultations with schools, neighbouring local authorities and parents for 2012 admissions on the main policies, published admission numbers (PANs) and co-ordinated scheme for main round admissions have been carried out in three phases:
 - October - November 2010: consultations with schools on PANs;
 - October - December 2010: informal consultation with schools on proposed co-ordination scheme and admission policies, with reference to particular aspects of the policies;
 - January - March 2011: statutory consultation with schools, other local authorities and parents on the 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.
- 2.5. Throughout the consultations for 2012/13 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 continued to increase and this has led to pressures in certain areas of the county. The autumn consultation gathered information on individual schools' requests to change their PAN. The authority carried out a formal consultation on proposed PAN changes during the spring term.
- 2.6. The County Council has a statutory duty to "have regard" to the recommendations of the Admission Forum. The constitution and membership of Forums is laid down in the Local Authority Reports Regulations and in paragraph 4.29 of the School Admissions Code. The Forum must act in accordance with all relevant legislation. 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. The statutory consultation responses for the 2012/13 arrangements were considered at the 10 March 2011 meeting of the Hampshire Admission Forum.

3. Outline of proposals being consulted upon

- 3.1. That the Executive Lead Member approve the proposed admission arrangements for the admissions round for applying for school place for admission during September 2012/13. The admission arrangements have

gone through the approved consultation process and have been recommended by Hampshire's Admission Forum.

- the revised admission policies for community and voluntary controlled schools set out in Annexes A and B and the school specific criteria listed in Annexe C
- the scheme for co-ordinating admissions to school in 2012/13, including admissions made outside the normal admissions round, set out in Annexe D;
- the 2012 published admission numbers (PANs) for community and voluntary controlled schools set out in Annexes E and F;
- the admission policy for Nursery Units attached to maintained schools set out in Annexe G;
- the boarding policies listed in Annexe H.

2012/13 arrangements: consultation details

4. Primary and secondary admission policies for community and voluntary controlled school 2012/13 (Annexe A and Annexe B)

- 4.1. Admission policies set out how applications for each school are prioritised and the time frame for the year in question. The informal consultation carried out during the autumn term 2010, followed the Admission Forum's recommendation to consult with schools on the use of the 'medical criterion' (currently the second priority in the event of oversubscription after Looked After Children in both policies) and the possibility of using a medical criterion only in the event of needing to apply a tiebreaker. Only three schools expressed a view; Forum at its December meeting recommended that the formal period of consultation in the spring propose no change in the use of the 'medical criterion'.
- 4.2. There have been recent concerns arising from the relatively late date for notifying parents of primary age children of their new school place for the coming September. For 2011 admission this date was set at Thursday 28 April 2011. For 2012 admission, in light of this year's experience and statutory constraints, the notification date of Thursday 19 April 2012 is recommended; this is the equivalent date to the previous year, relative to the Easter break.
- 4.3 **Catchment area change in Gosport:** the authority proposed a change to the catchment area of two primary schools in the Gosport/Fareham area. The change was supported by the two primary schools affected. The consultation was carried out with families living in the affected area: parents affected were contacted directly and invited to express their views. Three responses were received; the correspondence is on file and available for Members' perusal in the Members Room on 30 March 2011 and throughout the week preceding the Cabinet meeting on 6 April 2011. The revised

catchment area forms part of the proposed 2012 arrangements. No change is proposed to secondary catchment areas.

5. School specific criteria (Annexe C)

- 5.1. 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, 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.
- 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 their school.
- 5.3. Annexe C lists all proposed school specific criteria for 2012, supported by the Admission Forum. Proposed new criteria are given in italics. For 2012 admissions, these were considered by the Admission Forum.
- 5.4. The list given at Annexe C, therefore, is recommended with the support of the Admission Forum to the Executive Member for his agreement

6. Arrangements for co-ordinating admissions from September 2012 (Annexe D)

- 6.1. Co-ordination of main round admissions was first established for admission to secondary schools in September 2005 and at primary level in September 2006. In-year co-ordination was introduced in September 2010; in Hampshire there was a trial of the new process beginning in 2009.
- 6.2. The 2012 arrangements include co-ordination for main round applications and in-year applications and, other than very minor changes, follows the pattern of previous schemes.
- 6.3. Local authorities are required to co-ordinate admission arrangements for maintained schools within their area, including boarding schools and academies (but excluding special schools and nursery schools).
- 6.4. 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 require compliance with admissions legislation and relevant Codes. An academy is required to consult in the same way as any other admission authority. Apart from increasing its admission number with local agreement following consultation, an academy cannot alter its admission arrangements without the approval of the Secretary of State. Any objections to an academy's admission arrangements will be considered by the Secretary of State. (SAC 1.15)

7. Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for primary and secondary schools (Annexe E and Annexe F)

- 7.1. 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 annually consults 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.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. 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 such notices on behalf 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 a reassessment of the school's capacity.
- 7.4. At its meeting on 16 December, Hampshire Admission Forum considered all PANs where a change from the 2011 figure was proposed. The enclosed tables for primary schools (Annexe E) and secondary schools (Annexe F) give the PAN for 2011, the indicated PAN (based on the DfE's recommended capacity for the school) and the proposed PAN for 2012.
- 7.5. As in previous years, it is recommended that for 2012/13 admissions 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; and
 - lodge an objection to the Schools Adjudicator in respect of any aspect of an admission authority school's or another LA's admission arrangements (including PANs) which appear to be at variance with legal requirements or the School Admission Code, taking into account factors at the school, the possible effect on admissions to other schools and the outcome of further consultations, if any.

8. Nursery Policy (Annexe G)

- 8.1. The authority holds an annual meeting with maintained Nursery Schools and maintained schools with a Nursery Unit. The proposed policy was discussed at that meeting in November 2010 and was included in the statutory consultation.

9. Boarding Policies (Annexe H)

- 9.1. Hampshire has boarding provision for six boys at Kings' School for six girls at The Westgate School each year. Proposed policies were included in the statutory consultation. Specific guidance on admission policies for admissions to boarding provision in mainstream schools (SAC 1.16, 2.59, Appendix 6) has been followed.

10. 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:

- 10.1. 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 do allow for the best interests of all children to be properly taken into account when applying the published policy an equality impact assessment is being undertaken

11. 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:

- 11.1. n/a

12. Conclusions

- 12.1. Having followed the processes detailed above the various proposed constituents of Hampshire County Council's 2012/13 admission arrangements are recommended by Hampshire's Admissions Forum for determination by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

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		
<u>Title</u>	<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>
None	

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?