

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 31 JANUARY 2017****REPORT OF: MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURREY'S COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS AND THE COORDINATED SCHEMES THAT WILL APPLY TO ALL SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2018****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Each year, Surrey County Council is responsible for processing approximately 29,000 applications for a school place from Surrey residents and coordinates offers for over 350 schools. The admission arrangements for each school determine which children can be offered a place and Surrey's coordinated admissions scheme ensures that, as far as possible, no child receives an offer at more than one school.

Surrey County Council is responsible for setting the admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools and the coordinated admissions scheme. Academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements and as such are not covered in this report.

Following statutory consultation on Surrey's admission arrangements for September 2018, Cabinet is asked to consider the responses set out in Enclosure 4 and make recommendations to the County Council on admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled infant, junior, primary and secondary schools, the coordinated schemes that will apply to all schools for September 2018 and Surrey's Relevant Area.

This report covers the following areas in relation to school admissions:

- Stoughton Infant School, Guildford – Recommendation 1
- St Andrew's CofE Infant School, Farnham – Recommendation 2
- Walsh CofE Junior School, Ash – Recommendation 3
- Surrey's Relevant Area – Recommendation 4
- Admission arrangements for which no change is proposed – Recommendation 5
- Primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes that will apply to all schools for 2018 – Recommendation 6

Recommendations are set out on pages 1 to 3 and further details of each proposal are set out on pages 4 to 8.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
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It is recommended that Cabinet make the following recommendations to the County Council:

**Recommendation 1**

That a sibling link is introduced for Stoughton Infant School with Northmead Junior School for September 2018.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

- There was overall support for this change
- It would support families with more than one child as families with a sibling at Northmead Junior School would benefit from sibling priority at Stoughton Infant School
- This proposal is in line with a separate proposal by Northmead Junior School to introduce a reciprocal sibling link with Stoughton Infant School. This was agreed by the Governing Body of Northmead Junior School on 18 January 2017.
- It would provide continuity and a clearer transition for parents, children and schools and would reduce anxiety for parents
- It would maximise the opportunity for families to keep children together or at schools with agreed links
- It is supported by Governors at Northmead Junior School and by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Stoughton Infant School

**Recommendation 2**

That the published admissions number for St Andrew's CofE Infant School in Farnham is decreased from 40 to 30 for September 2018

**Reasons for Recommendation**

- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school
- There will still be sufficient infant places for local children if the PAN is decreased
- It will help support other local schools in maintaining pupil numbers
- It will alleviate funding and staffing issues in the school
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school

**Recommendation 3**

That the published admissions number for Walsh CofE Junior School is decreased from 75 to 64 in September 2018

**Reasons for Recommendation**

- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school
- There will still be sufficient junior places for local children if the PAN is decreased
- It will help support other local schools in maintaining pupil numbers
- It will alleviate funding, accommodation and staffing issues in the school
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school

**Recommendation 4**

That Surrey's Relevant Area is agreed as set out in Enclosure 3.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

- The local authority is required by law to define the Relevant Area for admissions
- The Relevant Area must be consulted upon and agreed every two years even if no changes are proposed
- Setting a Relevant Area ensures that any schools who might be affected by changes to the admission arrangements for other local schools will be made

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aware of those changes

- No change has been made to Surrey's Relevant Area since it was last determined in March 2015

### **Recommendation 5**

That the aspects of Surrey's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2018, for which no change is proposed, are agreed as set out in Enclosure 1 and its Appendices.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- This will ensure stability and consistency for the majority of Surrey's parents, pupils and schools
- The arrangements enable parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences
- The existing arrangements are working well
- The arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend their nearest schools and in doing so reduces travel and supports Surrey's sustainability policies
- Changes highlighted in bold in sections 11, 19 and 21 of Enclosure 1 which have not otherwise been referenced in this report, have been made to add clarity to the admission arrangements but do not constitute a policy change
- Changes to PAN that are highlighted in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 are referenced in Recommendations 2 and 3

### **Recommendation 6**

That the primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes that will apply to all schools for 2018 are agreed as set out in Enclosure 2.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- The coordinated schemes for 2018 are essentially the same as 2017 with dates updated
- Paragraph 50 of the primary and secondary schemes and paragraph 2 of the secondary scheme have been updated to provide clarity to the schemes
- The coordinated schemes will enable the County Council to meet its statutory duties regarding school admissions
- The coordinated schemes are working well

<b><u>DETAILS:</u></b>
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### **Consultation**

1. On 6 October 2016 the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement agreed to consult on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for some community and voluntary controlled schools.
2. A consultation on the proposed changes, the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed and Surrey's Relevant Area was launched on 14 October 2016 and ran for six weeks until 24 November 2016.
3. Full details of the proposed admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools, including the arrangements for which there is no change proposed are attached as Enclosure 1 and its Appendices. The proposed primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes are attached as Enclosure 2 and Surrey's Relevant Area is attached as Enclosure 3.

4. A document which set out a summary of the consultation was made available to schools and parents and is attached as Enclosure 4.
5. The consultation was sent directly to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and Parent Governors of all Surrey schools, Diocesan Boards of Education, neighbouring local authorities, out of County academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools within 3 miles (primary schools) or 5 miles (secondary schools) radius of the Surrey border, Surrey County Councillors, Borough and District Councillors, Parish and Town Councillors, members of Surrey's Admission Forum, Early Years establishments and Surrey MPs.
6. Surrey County Council Members and Borough and District Councillors were asked to draw the consultation to the attention of any local community or resident groups in their area who may have an interest in responding.
7. Nurseries and schools were asked to draw the consultation to the attention of parents with children at the nursery or school.
8. All consultees were also sent a suggested form of wording for parents, which they were encouraged to put on websites, noticeboards and in newsletters, as appropriate.
9. Notice of the consultation was also published on Surrey County Council's website along with an online response form.
10. In total, 31 respondents submitted a response to the consultation, some of whom had answered more than one question.
11. A full analysis of the responses to the consultation is included as Enclosure 5.
12. A summary of the responses to the individual school related questions within the consultation is set out below in Table A. As some respondents answered more than one question, the total number of responses in Table A is higher than the total number of respondents.

**Table A - Summary of responses to admission consultation**

Question Number	Proposal	Document	Agree	Disagree
1	Stoughton Infant School – sibling link with Northmead Junior	Enclosure 1 Appendix 2	19	1
2	St Andrew's CofE Infant School – reduction of PAN from 40 to 30	Enclosure 1 Appendix 1	3	4
3	Walsh CofE Junior – reduction of PAN from 75 to 64	Enclosure 1 Appendix 1	8	4

13. In addition, respondents were asked if they had any comments on Surrey's Relevant Area or the proposed admission arrangements for the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools in Surrey. Two respondents chose to comment on Surrey's Relevant Area and four chose to comment on the proposed admission arrangements for the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools in Surrey.
14. Details of recommendations have been shared with the local Members for each area, where appropriate.

<b>Proposed changes to local admission arrangements</b>
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**Recommendation 1 – Stoughton Infant School: introduction of a sibling link with Northmead Junior School**

15. The number of responses was low with 19 respondents in support of this proposal and one opposed to it.
16. For September 2018, it is proposed to introduce a sibling link for Stoughton Infant School with Northmead Junior School. In this way, families with an older child attending Northmead Junior School would receive sibling priority for a younger child to attend Stoughton Infant School.
17. The admission criteria for Stoughton Infant School would not change but would be described as operating shared sibling priority with Northmead Junior School for 2018 admission (see Enclosure 1 – Appendix 2).
18. This proposal is in line with a proposal put forward by Northmead Junior School to introduce its own sibling link with Stoughton Infant School. As a foundation school, the governing body of Northmead Junior School was responsible for consulting on this change and this has since been agreed at their full Governing Body meeting on 18 January 2017.
19. This proposal is supported by the headteacher and Governing Body of Stoughton Infant School. It is also supported by Governors at Northmead Junior School.
20. In line with Surrey County Council policy, the introduction of a reciprocal sibling link with Northmead Junior School would enable sibling priority to be given to a child who is applying to start at Stoughton Infant School in Reception even if they have a sibling who would have left Year 2 of the school by the time the younger child starts. This is because the feeder link within the admission criteria for Northmead Junior would provide for them to be admitted to that school, thereby retaining their sibling priority.
21. This proposal is consistent with Surrey's planning principles set out in the School Organisation Plan which undertake to consider sympathetically the desirability of separate infant schools feeding into junior or primary provision where this reduces transport needs for young children.
22. The introduction of a reciprocal sibling link between the two schools would provide a greater chance of families keeping their children together or at schools in close proximity.

**Recommendation 2 – St Andrew's CofE Infant School: reduction of Reception PAN from 40 to 30**

23. The number of responses was low with three respondents in support of this proposal and four opposed to it.
24. For September 2018 it is proposed to decrease the Reception PAN for St Andrew's CofE Infant School from 40 to 30.
25. This school currently has vacancies in Reception and Year 1. As applications for Reception are forecast to drop year on year for the Farnham area, this decrease in PAN would enable the school to organise its classes and resources more effectively.
26. It is anticipated that there will still be sufficient infant places if the PAN is decreased but this decrease will help support other local schools in maintaining pupil numbers.

27. This decrease in PAN will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.
28. Whilst four respondents were opposed to this proposal, none lived in the local area of the school and their comments concerned the general provision of school places rather than any specific concern in the Farnham area.

**Recommendation 3 – Walsh CofE Junior School: reduction of Year 3 PAN from 75 to 64**

29. The number of responses was low with eight respondents indicating their support of this proposal and four opposed to it.
30. For September 2018 it is proposed to decrease the Reception PAN for Walsh CofE Junior School from 75 to 64.
31. This decrease in PAN would enable the school to organise its classes and resources more effectively and reduce the need for classes of mixed year groups.
32. It is anticipated that there will still be sufficient junior places if the PAN is decreased but this decrease will help support other local schools in maintaining pupil numbers.
33. This decrease in PAN will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.
34. Whilst eight respondents indicated their support for this proposal, the comments from three of those indicated that they may well have been opposed to the proposal. Their specific concern related to the growing demand for school places following the granting of planning permission for 850 new dwellings in the area with another 400 pending, along with the increase nationally in the birth rate.
35. In the Ash area the birth rate has decreased over the last 3 years. Whilst housing permissions are increasing, the drop in birth rate means that the demand for school places is currently largely balanced out.
36. Whilst further housing may create a need for additional school places in the future, if this is the case those places would necessitate all through primary provision, not junior alone.

**Recommendation 4 – Surrey's Relevant Area**

37. The Relevant Area that Surrey intends to publish for schools for the next two years is set out in Enclosure 3.
38. The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to establish Relevant Area(s) for admission policy consultations. The Relevant Area is the area in which admission authorities must consult with schools regarding their proposed admission arrangements before finalising them.
39. The Education Act 2002 requires the local authority to review and consult on its Relevant Area every 2 years.
40. The proposed Relevant Area for 2017 remains as it was determined in 2015.
41. Whilst two respondents took the opportunity to make comments about Surrey's Relevant Area, neither comment was relevant to this matter and instead were concerned with the general provision of school places.

## **Recommendation 5 – Admission arrangements for which no change is proposed**

42. The local authority has a duty to determine the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled Schools by 28 February each year, even if there are no changes proposed.
43. Consistent admission arrangements that do not change enable parents to have a historical benchmark by which to assess their chances of success in future years and provide some continuity for schools and parents.
44. Changes highlighted in bold in sections 11, 19 and 22 of Enclosure 1 which have not otherwise been referenced in this report, have been made to add clarity to the admission arrangements but do not constitute a policy change.
45. The only changes in PAN, that are highlighted in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1, are referenced in Recommendations 2 and 3. It is proposed that the PAN for all other community and voluntary controlled schools for 2018 should remain as determined for 2017 and this would enable parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences.
46. The admission arrangements for Surrey’s community and voluntary controlled schools are generally working well. This is demonstrated by the fact that in 2016, of the 29,000 applications across all phases from Surrey residents, 85.7% were offered a place at their first preference school and 95.6% were offered a place one of their preference schools.
47. The admission arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend their nearest school and in doing so this reduces the need for travel and supports Surrey’s sustainability policies.
48. The existing admission arrangements provide for, on average, 85% of pupils to be offered their first preference school and 95% to be offered one of their preference schools.
49. Four respondents took the opportunity to make comments about the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed.
50. **Preference ranking and the equal preference system** - one respondent queried why it was necessary for parents to rank their preferences if Surrey operated an equal preference scheme and claimed this led to some schools offering to children who had named the school as their second preference when others who had named it first had not been offered a place.
51. The law requires local authorities to operate an equal preference system for admissions which requires applicants to rank their schools in the order they prefer them, schools to rank their applicants according to their admission criteria and the local authority to offer the highest preference school that a child is eligible for.
52. This ensures that applicants are ranked fairly and are not disadvantaged for lower preference schools should a more preferred school be unable to offer a place.
53. **Use of religious criteria** – one respondent disagreed with schools being allowed to apply religious criteria when they are not funded entirely by the church.
54. State funded schools that are designated as having a religious character are permitted to introduce faith based criteria within their admission arrangements. In doing so the school

must have regard to any guidance issued by their faith body and must comply with admissions law and the School Admissions Code.

55. The local authority is responsible for setting the admission arrangements for community and voluntary schools and none of these have faith based admission criteria.
56. **Use of sibling criteria** - one respondent felt that all schools should prioritise siblings within their admission arrangements.
57. For community and voluntary controlled schools the local authority does give priority to siblings, albeit for schools with a feeder link, this is sometimes after children attending a feeder school.
58. For academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, it is the Governing Body or Academy Trust who is responsible for setting admission arrangements and not the local authority. There is no legal duty to give priority to siblings and so for these types of schools the Governing Body or Academy Trust will decide whether to give siblings priority.
59. **Assessment of nearest school** - One respondent disagreed with Christ's College being included in the assessment of nearest school when it accepts up to 50% of its intake from practicing Christian families.
60. However this school is still considered in the assessment of nearest school because the remainder of its intake is admitted without regard to faith. For 2016 admission, 101 children out of 156 places allocated were offered without regard to faith.

#### **Recommendation 6 - Surrey's primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes**

61. The local authority has a duty to determine the primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes that will apply to all schools by 28 February each year, even if there are no changes proposed.
62. The coordinated admission schemes are working well with all schools participating, as they are legally required to.
63. The coordinated schemes provide for all preferences to be named on one application form and for applications to be coordinated to ensure that each child only receives one offer of a place.
64. Dates within the primary and secondary coordinated schemes have been updated to ensure they comply with the Pan London timetable.
65. There are no other material changes proposed to the coordinated admission schemes but the following changes have been made to add clarity:
  - Paragraph 50 of the primary and secondary schemes have been updated to confirm that details of how waiting lists for each school will be managed will be set out in the admission arrangements that apply to each school but that in each case waiting lists will be managed until at least the end of the autumn term.
  - Paragraph 2 of the secondary scheme has been updated to make clear that Surrey's application form for Year 10 invites parents to express a preference for up to three university technical colleges within and/or outside of Surrey.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

66. The risks of implementing these changes are low and the majority of local residents are likely to welcome the proposed changes. However, any parents who feel unfairly disadvantaged by the proposals can object to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator.

### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

67. The admission criteria for the majority of community and voluntary controlled schools in Surrey conform to Surrey's standard criteria. The more schools that have the same admission criteria the more the processes can be streamlined and thus present better value for money. However, where required, the admission criteria for some schools vary from Surrey's standard but these can currently be managed within existing resources.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

68. The Section 151 Officer confirms that the proposed changes to the admission arrangements will be met within existing resources.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

69. The admission arrangements comply with legislation on School Admissions and the School Admissions Code.
70. The local authority has carried out a consultation on all changes for a period of 6 weeks between 14 October 2016 and 24 November 2016, which is in accordance with statutory requirements.
71. There is a statutory requirement for consultation in this context as set out in The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. Such consultation involved those directly affected by the changes together with relevant representative groups. The material presented to consultees provided sufficient information to allow for intelligent consideration and response in relation to the proposals and was presented in a way that consultees could understand.
72. The best value duty is contained in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a result of which the Council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant guidance states that Councils should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision.
73. In considering this Report, Cabinet must give due regard to the results of the consultation as set out in the reports attached and the response of the Service to the consultation comments and conscientiously take these matters into account when making its final decision.
74. A summary of responses is collated in Enclosure 5 and the local authority has given due regard to those responses in considering the recommendations to put before Cabinet.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

75. The Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in full and is attached in Enclosure 6. The adoption of determined admission criteria is a mandatory requirement supported by primary legislation. The policy relating to community and voluntary

controlled schools does not discriminate according to age, gender, ethnicity, faith, disability or sexual orientation.

76. Measures have been taken to reference vulnerable groups both in terms of exceptional arrangements within admissions, the SEN process and the in-year fair access protocol. In addition a right of appeal exists for all applicants who are refused a school place.

#### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

77. The proposed admission arrangements give top priority to children who are Looked After or accommodated by a local authority and to those children who have left care through adoption, a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

#### **Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications**

78. The efficient and timely administration of the schools admission process coupled with the equitable distribution of school places in accordance with the School Admission Code and parental preference contribute to the County Council's priority for safeguarding vulnerable children.

#### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

79. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.
80. The admission arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend their nearest school and so reduces travel and supports policies on cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- The September 2018 admissions arrangements as agreed by the Cabinet will be ratified by the full County Council on 7 February 2017.
- The determined admission arrangements will be published on Surrey's website by 15 March 2017 and all consultees will be notified.
- All Surrey schools will also be notified of the determined admission arrangements in the Admissions termly newsletter, issued as part of the Schools Bulletin at the start of the Summer Term 2017.
- The arrangements will be published in the primary and secondary admissions booklets in August 2017, which will be made available to parents online and in hard copy by request in September 2017.
- The information on school admissions will be circulated to the Contact Centre, Surrey County Council Libraries and Early Years.
- Full information on school admissions will also be published on Surrey County Council's website in September 2017.

#### **Contact Officer:**

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#### **Consulted:**

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School Admissions Forum

Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Parent Governors of all Surrey schools  
 Early Years establishments in Surrey  
 Diocesan Boards of Education  
 Neighbouring local authorities  
 Out of County own admission authority schools within 3/5 miles radius of the Surrey border  
 Surrey County Councillors, Parish Councils, Local MPs,  
 General public consultation via the website/schools/contact centre

**Annexes:**

- Enclosure 1** Admission arrangements for community & voluntary controlled schools  
**Appendix 1** Published Admission Numbers (PANs)  
**Appendix 2** Schools to be considered as adjoining/shared sites for sibling priority  
**Appendix 3** Schools not to be considered in assessment of nearest school  
**Appendix 4** Catchment map for Southfield Park Primary  
**Appendix 5** Catchment map for Woodmansterne Primary  
**Appendix 6** Catchment map for Tatsfield Primary  
**Appendix 7** Catchment map for St Andrew's CofE Controlled Infant  
**Enclosure 2** Primary and secondary coordinated schemes  
**Enclosure 3** Surrey's Relevant Area  
**Enclosure 4** Summary of consultation  
**Enclosure 5** Outcome of consultation  
**Enclosure 6** Equality Impact Assessment

**Sources/background papers:**

- School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012
- School Admissions and Framework Act 1998
- Education Act 2002
- School Admissions Code 2014
- Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning report and decision – 6 October 2016

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