

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 29 JANUARY 2019****REPORT OF: MRS JULIE ILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING****LEAD OFFICER: LIZ MILLS, DIRECTOR EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE****SUBJECT: ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURREY'S COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS, THE COORDINATED SCHEMES THAT WILL APPLY TO ALL SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2020 AND SURREY'S RELEVANT AREA****SUMMARY OF ISSUE**

Each year, Surrey County Council is responsible for processing approximately 30,000 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 schemes. Academies, foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements and therefore their admission arrangements are not covered in this report.

Following statutory consultation on Surrey's admission arrangements for September 2020, Cabinet is asked to consider the responses set out in Enclosure 5 and make recommendations to the County Council on admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled infant, junior, primary and secondary schools and for the coordinated schemes that will apply to all schools for September 2020.

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

- Furzefield Primary, Reigate & Banstead – Recommendation 1
- Wallace Fields Junior, Epsom & Ewell – Recommendation 2
- Children previously in state care outside England – Recommendation 3
- Surrey's Relevant Area – Recommendation 4
- Published Admission Numbers for other community and voluntary controlled schools – Recommendation 5
- Admission arrangements for which no change is proposed – Recommendation 6
- Primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes that will apply to all schools for 2020 – Recommendation 7

Recommendations are set out on pages 2 to 3 and further details of each proposal are set out on pages 4 to 8.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet make the following recommendations to the County Council:

Recommendation 1

That the published admissions number for Reception at Furzefield Primary School is decreased from 60 to 58 for September 2020.

Reasons for Recommendation

- It will enable children admitted to the SEND Learning and Additional Needs centre to be educated in the mainstream class more than 50% of the time
- It will reduce the likelihood of the school having to take qualifying measures to meet infant class size legislation
- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school
- There will still be sufficient places for local children if the PAN is decreased
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school

Recommendation 2

That the admission arrangements for Wallace Fields Junior School are amended so that the measuring point used to assess nearest school and home to school distance will be the nearest gate of either Wallace Fields Infant School or Wallace Fields Junior School.

Reasons for Recommendation

- There was overall support for this change
- It will ensure that the school serves the local community around both the infant and the junior schools
- It will enable more local children to transfer from the infant school to the junior school
- It will support families by keeping siblings at schools that are within close proximity
- It will remove uncertainty for some families who have the infant school as their nearest school at Reception but not the junior school at Year 3
- This proposal is in line with a separate consultation by Wallace Fields Infant School to make the same changes to their admission arrangements. The change to the admission arrangements for Wallace Fields Junior School is subject to the governors of Wallace Fields Infant School also agreeing to the same change at their full Governing Body meeting on Wednesday 16 January 2019
- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of Wallace Fields Junior School

Recommendation 3

That children previously in state care outside England who left that care as a result of being adopted are given priority under criterion two for children with an exceptional social/medical need.

Reasons for Recommendation

- It is consistent with the advice issued by Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards, and advice issued by the Department for Education in August 2018
- It provides as much parity as the local authority can provide with children who have been adopted from care in England, who receive priority within criterion one
- It will ensure that this vulnerable group of children will receive priority in the admissions process for community and voluntary controlled schools, regardless

of the country in which the child was in state care, as long as they were adopted from that care.

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 aware of those changes
- No change has been made to Surrey's Relevant Area since it was last determined in March 2017

Recommendation 5

That the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for September 2020 for all other community and voluntary controlled schools (excluding Furzefield Primary School which is covered by Recommendation 1) are determined as they are set out in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1.

Reasons for Recommendation

- All other PANs remain as determined for 2019 which enables parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences
- The School Commissioning team supports the PANs

Recommendation 6

That the aspects of Surrey's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2020 for which no change is proposed, are agreed as set out in Enclosure 1 and its appendices.

Reasons for Recommendation

- The existing arrangements are working well
- 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 arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend their nearest schools and in doing so reduce travel and support Surrey's sustainability policies
- Schools which will not be taken in to account in the assessment of nearest school, as set out in Appendix 3 of Enclosure 1, have been determined by the definition set out in paragraph 12 of Enclosure 1

Recommendation 7

That the primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes that will apply to all schools for 2020 are agreed as set out in Enclosure 2.

Reasons for Recommendation

- The coordinated schemes for 2020 are essentially the same as 2019 with dates updated
 - The coordinated schemes would enable the County Council to meet its statutory duties regarding school admissions
 - The coordinated schemes are working well
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- Changes highlighted in bold in Enclosure 2 add clarity and are in line with the schemes proposed by other local authorities participating in the Pan London coordinated admissions process

DETAILS

Recommendation 1 – Furzeffield Primary School: reduction of Reception PAN from 60 to 58

1. The reasons for this change are set out in section 1 of Enclosure 4.
2. The number of responses was low with one respondent in support of this proposal and three opposed to it.
3. A reduction in PAN from 60 to 58 would ensure that each year group can accommodate two centre children in the mainstream classes, thus protecting the centre places that have been commissioned for SEND children. It would also reduce the likelihood of the school having to take qualifying measures to comply with Infant Class Size legislation as class sizes should not breach 30.
4. Whilst three respondents were opposed to this proposal, none lived in the local area of the school. The comments of those opposed concerned the general provision of school places and the difficulty in finding places if numbers were reduced.
5. It is anticipated that there would still be sufficient places in the area if the PAN is decreased.
6. In addition, this decrease in PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.
7. This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of Furzeffield Primary School.

Recommendation 2 – Wallace Fields Junior School: change to the measuring points used to assess nearest school and home to school distance

8. The reasons for this change are set out in section 2 of Enclosure 4.
9. There was significant support for this proposal with 28 respondents in support and one opposed to it.
10. This proposal is in line with a proposal consulted on by Wallace Fields Infant School to make the same changes. As an academy, the governing body of Wallace Fields Infant School was responsible for consulting on this change.
11. This change is subject to the governors of Wallace Fields Infant School proceeding with the same change to their admission arrangements for 2020. Their full Governing Body is due to meet on Wednesday 16 January 2019.
12. The Headteacher and Governors at both Wallace Fields Infant and Wallace Fields Junior schools support this change as they are keen for both schools to serve the same community around the schools. They agree that they do not wish some families to gain a place at the infant school as a result of it being their nearest school, only to find that the same children cannot transfer to the junior school on the same basis, despite having not changed address. Nor do they wish that children admitted to one school on the basis of nearest school cannot have a sibling considered on the same basis for the other school.

13. Such a change to the points used to measure nearest school will also require a change to the points used to measure home to school distance and this will ensure consistency when considering admission to either school.

Recommendation 3 – Children previously in state care outside England who left that care as a result of being adopted – inclusion within criterion 2 for children with an exceptional social/medical need

14. The reasons for this change are set out in section 3 of Enclosure 4.
15. The number of responses was low with six respondents in support of this proposal and nine opposed to it.
16. This change will bring admissions legislation in to line with the Children and Social Work Act that already requires local authorities to provide support to this group of children and their families, regardless of the country in which the child was in state care, as long as they were adopted from that care.
17. Any change to the School Admissions Code will be subject to consultation and the will of Parliament. Until such time that the School Admissions Code is changed, this group of children cannot be given highest priority for admission to school. However in response to the advice issued by the Department for Education, it is proposed to include this category of children within the second criterion that exists for community and voluntary controlled schools, namely ‘Exceptional social/medical need’.
18. Whilst nine respondents were opposed to this proposal, it is recognised that children who have been adopted from care are some of the most vulnerable in our community. This proposal provides as much parity as the local authority can provide with children who have been adopted from care in England, who receive priority under criterion one, and will ensure that this vulnerable group of children receive priority in the admissions process for community and voluntary controlled schools.
19. To achieve this it is proposed to add the following wording to Section 10 of Enclosure 1:
‘In addition, children who were previously in state care outside of England, and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, **will** be considered under this criterion. A child will be regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The parent/carer will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that the child was in state care **outside England** and left that care as a result of being adopted.’
20. The text highlighted in bold in paragraph 19 has changed since the consultation. These changes provide further clarity to this paragraph and ensures that children adopted from state care elsewhere in the United Kingdom might also be included under this provision and that it is not restricted to those adopted from state care ‘abroad’.

Recommendation 4 – Surrey’s Relevant Area

21. The Relevant Area that Surrey intends to publish for schools for the next two years is set out in Enclosure 3.
22. 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.

23. The Education Act 2002 requires the local authority to review and consult on its Relevant Area every 2 years.
24. The proposed Relevant Area for 2019 remains as it was determined in 2017.
25. Whilst three respondents took the opportunity to make comments about Surrey's Relevant Area, none of the comments were relevant to this matter and instead concerned the general provision of school places.

Recommendation 5 - Proposed Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for other community and voluntary controlled schools

26. Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 sets out the proposed admission numbers for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2020 admission, with changes highlighted in bold.
27. The change to PAN that is highlighted in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 is referenced in Recommendation 1.
28. It is proposed that the PAN for all other community and voluntary controlled schools for 2020 should remain as determined for 2019 and this would enable parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences.
29. The School Commissioning team support the proposed PANs.
30. Each community and voluntary controlled school has been given opportunity to comment on the proposed PAN if they wished.

Recommendation 6 – Admission arrangements for which no change is proposed

31. 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.
32. 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.
33. Schools which will not be taken in to account in the assessment of nearest school, as set out in Appendix 3 of Enclosure 1, have been determined by the definition set out in paragraph 12 of Enclosure 1.
34. The admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools are generally working well. This is demonstrated by the fact that in 2018, of the 29,625 on time applications across all phases from Surrey residents, 85.8% were offered a place at their first preference school and 96% were offered a place at one of their preference schools.
35. 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.
36. Four respondents took the opportunity to make comments about the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed. However two of these related to the general provision of school places and the need for new schools to be built, which are not relevant to these admission arrangements.

37. The other two respondents made specific comments regarding Surrey schools.
38. **Wallace Fields Junior School** – one respondent felt that the admission arrangements for Wallace Fields Junior School should be adapted to give priority to children who have been to the infant school and have a sibling at either the infant or junior school, regardless of whether or not either school is the nearest.
39. The admission arrangements for Wallace Fields Junior School currently operate on a tiered basis so that children living nearest the school receive priority ahead of those who do not. This applies to siblings, children attending the feeder school (Wallace Fields Infant School) and other applicants considered on distance. This arrangement ensures that local children i.e. those who have it as their nearest school, receive an offer ahead of children who do not live local to the school.
40. As Wallace Fields Junior School is often oversubscribed by families who have this school as their nearest school, any increase in priority for siblings who do not have it as their nearest school, perhaps because the family has moved away, would displace other children who live closer to the school. There is a fine balance to be struck between supporting families and providing places for local children.
41. In any case, as any change to the sibling criterion within the admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools would constitute a change to the way children were to be admitted, it would not be possible to make such a change without due consultation and consideration of the impact.
42. **Southfield Park Primary School** - one respondent queried whether, within the admission arrangements for Southfield Park Primary School, the catchment might be removed and priority be given instead on the basis of the distance children live from the school.
43. The catchment for Southfield Park Primary School was introduced some years ago to serve families living in the area surrounding the school as well as those living on the Clarendon Park estate. Whilst there have been some changes to schools in this area meaning that there are now more schools for families to apply for at Reception, families living on the Clarendon Park estate may still live further away from their nearest alternative schools than perhaps some families living on the other side of the catchment.
44. Whilst this matter was reviewed prior to consultation, it was decided not to propose any change to the admission arrangements for Southfield Park for 2020. Any change to a school's catchment would constitute a change to the way children were to be admitted and as such it would not be possible to make such a change without due consultation and consideration of the impact.

Recommendation 7 - Surrey's primary and secondary coordinated admission schemes

45. 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.
46. The coordinated admission schemes are working well with all schools participating, as they are legally required to.
47. 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.

48. Dates within the primary and secondary coordinated schemes have been updated to ensure they comply with the Pan London timetable.
49. There are no other material changes proposed to the coordinated admission schemes. However a paragraph has been added to each scheme to confirm the date by which requests for out of cohort admission will be shared with the maintaining local authority (paragraph 10 of the primary scheme and paragraph 9 of the secondary scheme). This change adds clarity to the schemes and is in line with the schemes proposed by other local authorities participating in the Pan London coordinated admissions process.

CONSULTATION

50. On 1 October 2018 the Cabinet Member for All-age Learning agreed to consult on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools.
51. A consultation on the proposed changes, the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed, the coordinated schemes and Surrey's Relevant Area was launched on 9 October 2018 and ran for six weeks until 19 November 2018.
52. 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 proposed Relevant Area is attached as Enclosure 3.
53. A document which set out a summary of the consultation was made available to schools and parents and is attached as Enclosure 4.
54. 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, foundation, free and voluntary aided schools within a 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.
55. 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.
56. Nurseries and schools were asked to draw the consultation to the attention of parents with children at the nursery or school.
57. 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.
58. Notice of the consultation was also published on Surrey County Council's website along with an online response form.
59. In total, 34 respondents submitted a response to the consultation, some of whom had answered more than one question.
60. A full analysis of the responses to the consultation is included as Enclosure 5.

61. 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	Furzeffield Primary School - reduction of Reception PAN from 60 to 58	Enclosure 1, Appendix 1	1	3
2	Wallace Fields Junior School – change to the measuring points used to assess nearest school and home to school distance	Enclosure 1	28	1
3	Children previously in state care outside England who left that care as a result of being adopted – inclusion within criterion 2 for children with an exceptional social/medical need	Enclosure 1	6	9

62. 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. Three respondents commented on Surrey's Relevant Area and four respondents commented on the proposed admission arrangements for the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools in Surrey.
63. Details of recommendations have been shared with the local Members for each area, where appropriate.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS

64. 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

65. 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

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

67. The admission arrangements comply with legislation on School Admissions and the School Admissions Code.

68. The local authority has carried out a consultation on all changes for a period of 6 weeks between 9 October 2018 and 19 November 2018, which is in accordance with statutory requirements.
69. 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.
70. 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.
71. 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.
72. 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

73. 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.
74. Measures have been taken to reference vulnerable groups both in terms of exceptional arrangements within admissions, the SEND 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

75. 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.
76. The proposed admission arrangements also propose to give priority within criterion two for exceptional social/medical need, to children who were previously in state care outside England who left that care as a result of being adopted.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS IMPLICATIONS

77. 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

78. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.
79. Since 2017 the County Council's Safer Travel Team have promoted a new national online system called Modeshift STARS www.modeshiftstars.org. This system is supported by the Department for Transport. The Modeshift STARS website provides materials for schools to create a School Travel Plan. A school can choose a number of interventions such as Bikeability cycle training and the Golden Boot Challenge to help achieve their accreditation. Successful implementation of School Travel Plans will lead to improvements in road safety and more sustainable travel on school journeys. This will reduce congestion, improve air quality, and active travel will improve the health of children.
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 2020 admissions arrangements as agreed by the Cabinet will be ratified by the full County Council on 5 February 2019.
- The determined admission arrangements will be published on Surrey's website by 15 March 2019 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 2019.
- The arrangements will be published in the primary and secondary admissions booklets in August 2019, which will be made available to parents online and in hard copy by request in September 2019.
- 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 2019.

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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 which will operate shared 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
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 – 1 October 2018