

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING

DATE: 1 OCTOBER 2019

LEAD OFFICER: LIZ MILLS, DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

**COMMUNITY PEOPLE
VISION
OUTCOME:**



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The local authority must consult on any changes it wishes to make to the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021. Consultation must run for at least six weeks between 1 October 2019 and 31 January 2020 and admission arrangements for 2021 must be determined by 28 February 2020.

This report seeks authorisation to proceed to consultation on the following:

- All community and voluntary controlled schools – priority for children of staff
- Worplesdon Primary School – reduction of Reception PAN from 60 to 57

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Cabinet Member authorises the Service Manager Admissions and Transport to go out to statutory consultation on the proposed changes to admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2021.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is a statutory requirement to consult on admission arrangements every seven years, or sooner if there is a proposal to change any part of a school's admission arrangements. The local authority is proposing some changes to the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and, as such, there is a statutory duty to consult on these changes. The consultation will also seek views on the admission arrangements for which there is no proposal for change.

DETAILS:

1. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014 require all admission authorities to consult on their admission arrangements every seven years, unless they are proposing any changes to their arrangements, in which case they must consult each year they are proposing a change.
2. Consultation must take place for a minimum of six weeks, between 1 October 2019 and 31 January 2020, and all admission authorities must then determine

their arrangements by 28 February 2020, whether or not they have been subject to consultation.

3. Surrey County Council (the Council) is proposing some changes to its admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and as such is intending to consult on these changes between 10 October 2019 and 21 November 2019.

Changes proposed to the admission criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021

All community and voluntary controlled schools

4. The School Admissions Code permits admission authorities to give priority to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:
 - 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
 - the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
5. In a survey of the 100 community and voluntary controlled schools in June, 49 schools responded that they were in favour of Surrey introducing priority for children of staff within the admission arrangements. Two schools were not in support and one had no opinion. 48 schools did not respond.
6. Community and voluntary controlled schools which responded in favour indicated that giving priority to children of staff would help with staff recruitment and retention.
7. It is therefore proposed to consult on the introduction of priority for children of staff within the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools. The definition of children of staff would be in line with the School Admissions Code and would be added as a new criterion after criterion 2 for exceptional social/medical need. This change is reflected in Enclosure 1 and is highlighted in bold within sections 7, 8 and 11.
8. For 2020 admission over 90 own admission authority schools (36% of all own admission authority schools) will give priority for children of staff. This is therefore an established practice in Surrey.
9. Community and voluntary controlled schools which did not respond to the survey and which feel strongly opposed to giving priority to children of staff would have the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

Worplesdon Primary School – Guildford

10. It is proposed to formally consult on a reduction to the Reception PAN at Worplesdon Primary School from 60 to 57. This change is reflected in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1, which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021 admission.

11. Worplesdon Primary School currently has a Reception PAN of 60. A reduction in PAN from 60 to 57 would ensure that each year group can accommodate three centre children in the mainstream classes, thus protecting the centre places that are being commissioned for SEND children from 2020.
12. Although the SEND places are being commissioned in liaison with Freemantles School, it is intended that children would be placed on roll at Worplesdon Primary and educated with the mainstream children more than 50% of the time. This reduction in PAN would therefore 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.
13. This reduction in PAN is subject to a statutory notice being published and agreed.
14. It is anticipated that there would still be sufficient places in the area if the PAN is decreased.
15. This decrease in PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

Other changes that are not subject to consultation

Increase in PANs

16. Admission authorities are not required to consult on proposed increases to PANs but must include the proposed increase within the admission arrangements. Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 sets out the proposed admission numbers for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021 admission.
17. Surrey is intending to increase the Year 7 PAN at Ash Manor School from 210 to 240 as part of a planned expansion but no consultation is required for this.

Schools that will be considered in the assessment of nearest school

18. Section 13 of Enclosure 1 sets out that a school will be considered in the assessment of nearest school if it has admitted children without regard to faith, selection (grammar schools) or boarding in the previous three admissions years.
19. Whilst no change is proposed to this policy, each year a review of the previous three years' intakes must take place to ensure that the schools to be considered in the assessment of nearest school are in line with this policy.
20. For information, for 2021 admission, this policy means that the following schools will no longer be listed in Appendix 3 as schools which will **not** be included in the assessment of nearest school when the admission criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools are applied:
 - St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School – Guildford
 - St Anne's Catholic Primary School – Reigate & Banstead
 - St Francis Catholic Primary School – Tandridge
 - St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Primary School – Waverley

- St Edmund's Catholic Primary School – Waverley
- St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School – Waverley
- Charters School – Windsor & Maidenhead

21. This is because each of these schools has admitted children without regard to faith, selection or boarding in the last three years.

CONSULTATION:

22. The School Commissioning team has been involved in considering the proposals for change.
23. All schools directly affected by the proposed changes have been consulted.
24. Parents, schools and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed admission arrangements, including any changes being proposed, throughout the six week consultation.
25. As the local authority is only responsible for consulting on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before consultation begins will be removed from the paperwork.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

26. The risks of consulting on these changes are low. There may be some local opposition to some of the proposals from those cohorts or groups that may be disadvantaged by the proposals but it is important to identify those concerns as part of the consultation.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

27. 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:

28. The Section 151 Officer confirms that the proposed changes to admission arrangements will be met within existing resources within the Directorate. There is a financial risk that the new arrangements giving priority to children of staff members may require a small number of children to be transported at the Council's expense to alternative schools.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

29. The proposed admission arrangements comply with legislation on School Admissions and the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

30. The local authority will carry out a consultation on all changes for a period of six weeks between 10 October 2019 and 21 November 2019, which is in accordance with statutory requirements.
31. The consultation will be carried out with all persons required under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014.
32. The local authority will give due regard to the responses to the consultation before considering the recommendations to put before Cabinet.
33. The public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies to the decision to be made by the Cabinet Member in this report. There is a requirement when deciding upon the recommendations to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the equalities paragraphs of the report and in the attached equalities impact assessment (EIA).

Equalities and Diversity:

34. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached as Enclosure 3. The adoption of determined admission criteria is a mandatory requirement supported by primary legislation. The policy as it relates to community and voluntary controlled schools does not discriminate by age, gender, ethnicity, faith, disability or sexual orientation.
35. Measures have been taken to reference vulnerable groups both in terms of exceptional arrangements within admissions, the Special Educational Needs (SEN) process and the Fair Access Protocol. In addition, a right of appeal exists for all applicants who are refused a place at a particular school.

Other Implications:

36. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant, a summary of the issues is set out in detail below:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Set out below
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Environmental sustainability	Set out below
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children Implications:

37. As required by the School Admissions Code, the proposed admission arrangements give top priority to children who are Looked After by a local authority and to those children who have left care through adoption, a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

38. The admission arrangements also provide for children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted to be given second highest priority within the exceptional social/medical need criterion. This is in line with advice issued by the Department for Education and the stated wish of the Minister of State for School Standards.

Safeguarding Responsibilities for Vulnerable Children and Adults Implications:

39. 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 Council's priority for safeguarding vulnerable children.

Environmental Sustainability Implications:

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

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- If approval is given to consult, the local authority will consult on the proposed admission arrangements for six weeks between 10 October 2019 and 21 November 2019.
- As the local authority is only responsible for consulting on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before consultation begins will be removed from the paperwork.
- Details will be distributed to:
 - all schools and nurseries in the county, including a form of wording that they may wish to display on their website, in newsletters or on notice boards
 - out of County schools which are close to the border of Surrey
 - each of Surrey's neighbouring local authorities
 - each Diocesan Body representing schools in the county
 - all Surrey County Council Members and Borough/District Members, asking them to share the details with local community and resident groups as appropriate
 - Parish Councils within the area of Surrey County Council
 - Surrey MPs
- A paper summarising the outcome of the consultation and making recommendations will then be passed to Cabinet on 28 January 2020 for decision and then to Full Council on 4 February 2020 to ratify the decision so that the admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary

controlled schools and the coordinated schemes for 2021 can be determined before the statutory deadline of 28 February 2020.

- As the local authority is only responsible for determining the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before determination will be removed from the paperwork.
- The admission arrangements for September 2021 will then be published by 15 March 2020 on the Council's website and a notice will be sent to all those consulted.

Contact Officer:

Claire Potier, Principal Manager Admissions and Transport, 01483 517689

Consulted:

School Commissioning Team
Schools affected by the proposals
Director – Education, Lifelong Learning & Culture
Assistant Director for Education

Annexes:

Enclosure 1 – Draft admission arrangements for community and VC schools
Appendix 1 – Draft published admission numbers
Appendix 2 – Draft schools to be considered as on adjoining/shared sites
Appendix 3 – Draft schools to be considered in assessment of nearest school
Appendix 4 – Catchment map for Southfield Park
Appendix 5 – Supplementary Information Form for children of staff applicants
Enclosure 2 – Draft coordinated schemes
Enclosure 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Sources/background papers:

- School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Education Act 2002
- School Admissions Code
- Equality Act 2002
- DfE advice on the admission into school of children previously in state care outside of England

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