

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION AND LEARNING****DATE: 12 OCTOBER 2021****LEAD OFFICER: LIZ MILLS, DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG
LEARNING****SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY
AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023****ORGANISATION Empowering Communities
STRATEGY PRIORITY
AREA:****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 2023. Consultation must run for at least six weeks between 1 October 2021 and 31 January 2022 and admission arrangements for 2023 must be determined by 28 February 2022.

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

- a) Removal of use of 'nearest school' for Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School, Tillingbourne Junior School and Wallace Fields Junior School (paragraphs 10 to 13)
- b) Walton on the Hill Primary School – introduction of a catchment area to replace 'nearest school' (paragraphs 14 to 15)
- c) Reigate Priory School – confirmation of the measuring point that will be used to measure home to school distance (paragraphs 23 to 26)
- d) West Ashted Primary School – reduction of Year 3 PAN from 30 to 2 (paragraphs 27 to 31)
- e) Leatherhead Trinity Primary School – introduction of a Year 3 PAN of 4 (paragraphs 32 to 34)
- f) Felbridge Primary School – introduction of a Year 3 PAN of 2 (paragraphs 35 to 37)
- g) Nursery schools – priority for children of staff (paragraphs 38 to 41)
- h) Introduction of a supplementary information form for social/medical applicants (paragraph 42 to 44)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Cabinet Member authorises the Service Manager for School Admissions to go out to statutory consultation on the proposed changes to admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2023.

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 2021 and 31 January 2022 and all admission authorities must then determine their arrangements by 28 February 2022, whether or not they have been subject to consultation.
3. Surrey County Council (SCC) 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 20 October and 1 December 2021.
4. In October 2019, the Schools Adjudicator issued a determination on the admission arrangements for Stamford Green Primary School (ADA3589) which identified some concerns with the use of 'nearest school' and the objectivity and clarity regarding this. Although this determination applied to Stamford Green Primary School, its key message applies to any school which uses 'nearest school' as part of their admission arrangements.
5. The Schools Adjudicator set out that, by having 'nearest school' as a criterion within a set of admission arrangements, the admission authority creates a catchment area which is defined by a polygonal shape based on the location of the other schools surrounding the school. As a catchment area, admission authorities have a duty to consult on any changes, such as when the inclusion or location of 'nearest' schools change as these can result in a change to the polygonal shape/catchment area and thus which children may receive priority.
6. There are also other requirements in relation to catchment areas that admission authorities must comply with, such as being reasonable and clearly defined. In order to assess whether such a catchment area meets the requirements of the Code it would be necessary to understand the catchment boundaries that are created as a result of using 'nearest school' as an admission criterion.
7. In January 2021, following a review of admission arrangements, Surrey's Cabinet agreed to remove priority for children who have the school as their 'nearest school' for the majority of community and voluntary controlled schools for 2022 admission. However, there were eight schools where it was anticipated that the removal of nearest school was more likely to have a medium or significant impact on the intake and, as such, the local authority undertook to carry out a further review for those schools ahead of consultation for 2023. The eight schools were:

Elmbridge

Hurst Park Primary School

Epsom & Ewell

Southfield Park Primary School
Stamford Green Primary School

Wallace Fields Junior School

Guildford

Tillingbourne Junior School

Reigate & Banstead

Langshott Primary School

Meath Green Infant School

Walton on the Hill Primary School

8. The impact of removing priority on the basis of 'nearest school' for each of these schools has now been reviewed and a summary of the review is set out in Enclosure 2. Details of the proposals for these eight schools for 2023 are set out in paragraphs 10 to 22.
9. Other proposals for change that do not relate to the removal of 'nearest school' are set out in paragraphs 23 to 44.

Removal of use of nearest school for Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School, Tillingbourne Junior School and Wallace Fields Junior School

10. Following further review of the intakes for the last three years at Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School, Tillingbourne Junior School and Wallace Fields Junior School, as set out in Enclosure 2, it is now proposed to consult on the removal of use of 'nearest school' as a criterion for these schools.
11. Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School and Tillingbourne Junior School would be recorded as following Surrey's standard admission criteria, as set out in Section 7 of Enclosure 1. Due to the feeder link that exists from Wallace Fields Infant School, Wallace Fields Junior School will still be recorded as having school specific criteria, as set out in Section 8 of Enclosure 1.
12. The removal of 'nearest school' makes the admission arrangements for these schools simpler and more transparent as it enables every family to understand how their application will be considered and prioritises children based on their proximity to the school. This also brings the admission criteria for these school into line with the majority of the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools.
13. Unless otherwise indicated in Enclosure 2, these proposals are supported by the Headteacher and Governing Bodies of these schools.

Introduction of a catchment area for Walton on the Hill Primary School in place of 'nearest school'

14. Following review of the intake for the last four years at Walton on the Hill Primary School as set out in Enclosure 2, it is proposed to consult on the introduction of a catchment to replace use of 'nearest school'. The school will still be recorded as having school specific criteria, as set out in Section 8 of Enclosure 1.
15. The catchment that has been proposed has been modelled on the area created by use of 'nearest school' and is shown at Appendix 5 of Enclosure 1.
16. This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

Southfield Park Primary School and Stamford Green Primary School

17. It is not proposed to consult on any changes to the admission criteria for either Southfield Park Primary School or Stamford Green Primary School for 2023 admission. Modelling carried out for these schools is set out in Enclosure 2 and a more comprehensive review of the arrangements will be carried out ahead of consultation for 2024.
18. Both these schools fall within the North West Epsom Planning Area for which it is forecast that there will be between 24 to 35 surplus places in the area for five years from September 2023.
19. Southfield Park Primary School has a catchment that serves the housing area to the west and north west of the school. This catchment was introduced to provide priority for children who would not have easy access to another alternative school and included the area of Clarendon Park, a development built on one of the old hospital sites. Children living within catchment are currently prioritised according to their reverse distance. In this way children living further away from the school within catchment receive the higher priority. This was introduced to ensure children living in Clarendon Park were not disadvantaged in the admissions process because, at that time, these children did not have access to another primary school.
20. Priority for children on the basis of 'nearest school' was introduced at Southfield Park Primary School for 2014 admission following representation from the Parkview Epsom Resident's Association so that, once applicants within the catchment were offered a place, children were prioritised on the basis of 'nearest school'.
21. Modelling for the last two years indicates that the removal of priority for children who have the school as their 'nearest school' after catchment would have minimal impact on the intake. However, as this is not currently causing disadvantage to any applicant, it is proposed to carry out a wider review of the options for change for Southfield Park for 2024 admission, factoring in the catchment area which has not as of yet been reviewed. This review will take account of changes to school provision in the area over the last 10 years, parental preference vs offers made and up to date pupil forecasts for the area.
22. Stamford Green is an oversubscribed school in Epsom. Modelling for this school indicates that there might be significant impact on the intake if 'nearest school' was removed. It is therefore proposed that for this school, further analysis will be carried out on the options for change for 2024 admission.

Reigate Priory School – Reigate & Banstead

23. It is proposed to amend the admission criteria for Reigate Priory School to propose a nodal point that will be used to measure home to school distance that does not relate to a school gate. This change is reflected in bold in Section 8 of Enclosure 1.
24. For most schools, home to school distance is measured from the child's home to the nearest school gate available for pupils to use. However, Reigate Priory School is currently exploring a move to a new site which is about 0.7 miles south of the existing school site. The school are keen to ensure that the pattern of admission does not change as a result of a site move and, as such, it is proposed that home to school distances, used to prioritise applicants, will be calculated based on a nodal point at the site of Reigate Priory, where the school is currently situated.
25. This change will ensure there is no change to the intake if the site move does go ahead but will have no impact on the intake if it doesn't, because the nodal point used to prioritise applicants will still be within the existing site of the school.

26. This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. It is also supported by the Education Place Planning team as it ensures the school will still serve the area to the north of Reigate which does not have alternative Year 3 provision.

West Ashtead Primary School – Mole Valley

27. It is proposed to formally consult on a reduction to the Year 3 PAN at West Ashtead Primary School from 30 to 2. 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 2023 admission.
28. West Ashtead Primary School currently has a Junior PAN of 30. However, this reduction in PAN has been formally requested by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school as the school is not filling to its PAN. A reduction will provide the school with greater ability to maintain financial viability as they will be able to operate with just one class in KS2.
29. Surrey's Education Place Planning team are satisfied that this reduction will not impact the sufficiency of places as current forecasts indicate a projected surplus of primary places across the Ashtead and Leatherhead area from 2023. However, to help compensate for the reduction in PAN, there is a linked proposal to introduce a Year 3 PAN at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School (see paragraphs 32 to 34).
30. Furthermore, an unoccupied classroom space at West Ashtead Primary School will provide the local authority with some headroom should the need for more places arise in the future and the school has been asked to use the space flexibly in case demand increases and it is necessary to utilise this space for a bulge class.
31. This decrease in PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

Leatherhead Trinity Primary School – Mole Valley

32. It is proposed to formally consult on introducing a Year 3 PAN of 4 at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School. 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 2023 admission.
33. A Year 3 PAN at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School will help offset the reduction in Year 3 PAN at West Ashtead Primary School and will current help alleviate any pressure on places in Fetcham and Bookham at Year 3.
34. Surrey's Education Place Planning team are supportive of this proposal, as are the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

Felbridge Primary School – Tandridge

35. It is proposed to formally consult on introducing a Year 3 PAN of 2 at Felbridge Primary School. 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 2023 admission.
36. A Year 3 PAN at Felbridge Primary School will formalise the arrangement that already takes place, whereby two additional children are offered a place from the waiting list at Year 3. However, the existence of a published PAN will ensure parents know about the intake and they will be invited to apply for a place as part of the Junior intake to the school.

37. Surrey's Education Place Planning team are supportive of this proposal, as are the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school, who have requested this change.

Priority for children of staff for community and voluntary controlled nurseries

38. In January 2020, Surrey's Cabinet agreed to give priority to children of staff for entry to Reception at community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021 admission. However, the proposal at that time did not extend to community and voluntary controlled nurseries.
39. It is now proposed to consult on introducing priority for children of staff for community and voluntary controlled nurseries, as set out in Section 20 of Enclosure 1 so that the criteria are aligned with those for entry to Reception in this regard.
40. 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.
41. The definition of a member of staff and the conditions to qualify will be the same as those that apply for Reception, as set out in Section 11 of Enclosure 1.

Supplementary Information Form for Social/Medical applicants

42. The School Admissions Code allows for the use of supplementary information forms when they are needed to gather additional information that is not collected on the common application form.
43. It is proposed to introduce a supplementary information form for parents to complete if they wish to apply on the basis of social/medical need. This will ensure applicants can be guided through this process, enable them to understand what information they will need to provide to support a social/medical claim and give them opportunity to declare details of their case in more detail than is allowed on the application form or as part of the coordinated admissions process.
44. The supplementary information form is referenced in Sections 7 and 10 of Enclosure 1.

Other changes that are not subject to consultation

Increase in PANs

45. 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 2023 admission.
46. Surrey is proposing to increase the Year 7 PAN at Oakwood School from 300 to 330 to meet forecast demand in Horley and to support the demand in the adjacent secondary planning area in Reigate and Redhill.

Points of clarification

47. The fourth criterion in Section 7 of Enclosure 1 has been updated to read 'Children who **are expected to** have a sibling at the school or at an infant/ junior school

which will operate shared sibling priority for admission at the time of the child's admission' from 'Children who **will have**'. As it is not possible to determine categorically that a sibling will be on roll at the time of a child's admission, this is a more accurate reflection of the decision. This is in line with the explanatory text in Section 12.

48. Linked to this, Section 12 has been updated to reflect the fact that Surrey reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if information comes to light that an applicant knew about a sibling leaving the school or linked school at the time of a sibling claim, or if they failed to tell the local authority of a change that might affect their sibling claim.
49. Section 11 has been updated to clarify what the definition is of a parent in relation to priority for children of staff and confirmation that the member of staff might be employed full or part time.
50. Section 16 has been updated to clarify the process for a child's name being added to the waiting list at the end of the academic year.

CONSULTATION:

51. The Education Place Planning team has been involved in considering the proposals for change.
52. All schools directly affected by the proposed changes have been consulted.
53. All schools have been consulted on the PAN that is to be proposed for 2024 admission.
54. 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.
55. 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:

56. 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:

57. 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:

58. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook is uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which are not fully funded in the current year. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected from next year onward, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the proposed consultation to ensure the most effective allocation of school places.

Legal implications – Monitoring Officer:

59. The proposed admission arrangements comply with legislation on School Admissions and the requirements of the School Admissions Code.
60. The local authority will carry out a consultation on all changes for a period of six weeks between 20 October 2021 and 1 December 2021, which is in accordance with statutory requirements.
61. 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.
62. The local authority will give due regard to the responses to the consultation before considering the recommendations to put before Cabinet.
63. 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:

64. 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.
65. Measures have been taken to reference vulnerable groups both in terms of exceptional arrangements within admissions, the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) 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.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications:

66. 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 arrangement

order or a special guardianship order, including those who have been adopted from state care outside England.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications:

67. The efficient and timely administration of the school admissions 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

68. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

69. 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 20 October 2021 and 1 December 2021.
 - 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 Surrey's Cabinet on 25 January 2022 for decision and then to Full Council on 8 February 2022 to ratify the decision so that the admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023 can be determined before the statutory deadline of 28 February 2022.
 - 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 2023 will then be published by 15 March 2022 on Surrey's website and a notice will be sent to all those consulted.
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Contact Officer:

Claire Potier, Service Manager, School Admissions
claire.potier@surreycc.gov.uk

Consulted:

Education Place Planning Team
Schools affected by the proposals
Director – Education and Lifelong Learning
Assistant Director for Education

Annexes:

ENCLOSURE 1	Proposed admission arrangements for C&VC schools
APPENDIX 1	Proposed published admission numbers
APPENDIX 2	Proposed schools to be considered for shared sibling priority
APPENDIX 3	Proposed schools to be excluded from nearest school
APPENDIX 4	Proposed catchment map for Southfield Park
APPENDIX 5	Proposed catchment map for Walton on the Hill
APPENDIX 6	Supplementary Information Form for social/medical applicants
APPENDIX 7	Supplementary Information Form for children of staff applicants
ENCLOSURE 2	Modelling on the removal of use of nearest school
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 2021
 - Equality Act 2002
 - OSA determination on Stamford Green - ADA3589
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