



APPENDIX 3

Report to Cabinet Member for Schools

Decision to be taken on or after 6 April 2005

Decision can be implemented at least 3 working days after decision has been signed.

Cabinet Member Report No. S06.05

Title: Determination of Admission Arrangements 2006
Date: 29 March 2005
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Electoral Divisions Affected: All

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Lifelong Learning

Summary

1. The Education Act 2002 requires admission authorities for community and voluntary controlled schools to consult on admission arrangements each year. Buckinghamshire County Council has completed the consultation process and is now required to determine the arrangements that will be used for all school admissions from September 2006.
2. The proposed admission arrangements for voluntary controlled and community schools are attached. The Council is required to determine its admission arrangements by 15 April 2005.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member determines the proposed admission arrangements as follows:

1. The Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions in Buckinghamshire, to commence with the normal admission round for 2006 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. The proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled primary schools (including nurseries) including the proposed catchment areas as set out in Appendix 2.

3. The Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions in Buckinghamshire, to commence with the normal admission round for 2006 as set out in Appendix 3.
4. The proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools (including sixth form admissions) as set out in Appendix 4.
5. The proposed policy for the management of admissions of vulnerable children as set out in Appendix 5.
6. The proposed relevant area for school admission arrangements from September 2006 as set out in Appendix 6.
7. The proposed admission numbers for maintained primary and secondary schools in Buckinghamshire set out in Appendix 7.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

3. During 2003 an extensive consultation with governing bodies and parents on secondary school admission arrangements was carried out. Following the consultation revised admissions arrangements, including new secondary catchment areas, were agreed and determined ready for the legal deadline of 15 April 2004. The decision included a commitment to review the policy after 1, 2 and 5 years of operation.
4. The secondary school admission process for 2005 has commenced and the first round of allocations has been made. Whilst it is too soon to assess fully the impact of the major changes put in place for the 2005 procedure, the secondary allocation process worked very well on the whole, with 94% of Buckinghamshire children being offered one of the schools ranked by their parents on allocation day. The arrangements did not work as well as was expected in the Gerrards Cross and Denham area, where a relatively small number of parents were not able to secure a place at either of their catchment schools. As a result, it is proposed to add Burnham Grammar School, as a third catchment school for all children in area 11 (as described on the boys' catchment map) http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/documents/admissions/secondary/boys_grammar.pdf While this goes against the initial proposals to limit the number of catchment areas available to parents it should maximise the opportunities for children in that area to be offered a catchment area school. It is recommended that this situation be reviewed again in one year.
5. In preparation for 2006 admissions there has been a consultation with parents regarding proposed amendments to the primary catchment areas. These amendments were formally approved at the County Council meeting of 25 November 2004. Subsequently there has been correspondence from Swanbourne School and Little Horwood Parish Council objecting to the proposal to add Little Horwood School to the Great Horwood catchment area. Since

Swanbourne School is voluntary aided, the governors of the school are able to determine the school's catchment area. Therefore there is no reason why Little Horwood should not be included in the catchment area of both schools. On this basis, the proposal to include Little Horwood in the catchment area of Great Horwood stands.

6. During January and February 2005, the LEA placed the proposed policy for 2006 admissions on the Schoolsweb and alerted all schools as part of the consultation process. Feedback was received from the Oxford diocese and four primary schools broadly supporting the proposals, but in one case requesting a catchment amendment. In response to the Diocese, a proposal is made to retain the definition of sibling used in the 2005 admission rules. The appendices have been adjusted to reflect this.
7. There were a small number of Admission Number changes following consultation with the relevant governing bodies.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

8. The Council is required to determine and publish its admission arrangements for September 2006 by 15 April 2005, by statute, having regard to the views of the Admissions Forum and statutory consultees.

C. Resource implications

9. It is not expected that there will be any resource implications as a result of the identified changes, except where primary catchments have changed. These implications were fully considered during the primary catchment decision-making process, up to the consideration of the policy at County Council on 25 November 2004. The proposed primary catchment area changes are a better match for the admission numbers and capacities of the schools. In the long term it is likely there will be a reduction in the cost of transporting children.
10. The resource implications of the policy were fully considered by Cabinet and County Council when deciding upon the policy on which to consult.
11. The retention of the 2005 sibling definition will have no extra resource implications.

D. Legal implications

12. The County Council sought legal advice on aspects of the draft consultation documents before deciding upon the formal consultation documents.
13. The County Council has a statutory duty to implement admission arrangements for 2006 by 15 April 2005.

E. Other implications/issues

14. Issues relating to human rights, disability discrimination, equality, diversity and implications for schools were considered in deciding upon the consultation document. The drafting changes do not alter any of these issues.

F. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

15. Local members extensively contributed to the original consultation with parents during the summer of 2003 (secondary) and 2004 (primary) and their comments have been incorporated, where possible.
16. All local admissions authorities (including neighbouring LEAs) have had an opportunity to comment upon the arrangements, as have all school governing bodies. Comments were received from: the Oxford Diocese, and 4 primary schools (Radnage C of E, Speen C of E, Swanbourne C of E, Broughton Junior School).

G. Communication issues

17. All schools will be advised once the policy has been determined via the schools' extranet. Additionally the public website will be updated to include the final admission arrangements and schemes. Parents of children affected in the 2006 admission will receive full details in a parents' guide in advance of the procedure.

H. Progress Monitoring

18. The policy will be reviewed annually and the required changes will be embedded into the arrangements for 2006 admissions.

I. Review

19. The policy forming part of this decision will be reviewed after one year in the first instance.

Background Papers

The final version of the admissions arrangements and coordinated schemes with the proposed drafting changes annotated is attached.

Other papers:

'Getting a Primary School Place' – consultation document June 2004

Report to Cabinet 8 November 2004

Report to County Council 25 November 2004

(Currently can be viewed on

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/extranet/schools/admissions_consult/index.htm)

SOURCE : LEA