



Report to Cabinet Member for Achievement and Learning

Decision to be taken on or after 10 April 2007

Cabinet member Report No. AL05.07

This decision will be taken under **Special Urgency** procedures as outlined in the County Council's constitution under 'Access to Information Standing Orders', Paragraph 16. This means that although the decision has appeared on the County Council's Forward Plan - five clear days notice cannot be given before the decision is taken. Permission has been sought from the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services. The decision has been delayed because of late responses from some schools to the recent consultation on Admission Arrangements, which had to be taken into account. The Cabinet Member for Achievement and Learning is required to determine the Admissions Arrangements by 15 April 2007. Under these circumstances the five clear days notice cannot be given, and it is expected that the Cabinet Member will sign the decision on Tuesday 10 April 2007. Representations before this date can still be made in the usual way.

Please note there are various appendices to this Decision which may be accessed via the following link :-

www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/cabinet/sch/cab_sdtbt_20070417_al05_07.htm

**Title: Primary and Secondary School
Admission Arrangements 2008**

Date: 5 April 2007

**Contact Officer: Louise Goll
Divisional Director Achievement and Learning**

Electoral Divisions Affected: All

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Children's Services

Summary

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, requires admission authorities for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools to consult on their 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 2008.

The proposed admission arrangements and admission numbers for voluntary controlled and community primary and secondary schools are attached. The council is required to determine its admission arrangements by 15 April 2007 in readiness for the 2008 admissions round.

In addition, Section 89 of the 1998 Act requires each Local Authority to determine and publish a relevant area for consultation about proposed admission arrangements in advance of any admissions processes; the County Council therefore needs to establish their relevant area for 2009.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet determines the proposed admission arrangements as follows:

Recommendation A: Primary Arrangements

- 1. The Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions in Buckinghamshire, to commence with the normal admission round for 2008 as set out in Appendix A, Section 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 A, Section 2.**
- 3. The proposed admission numbers for maintained primary schools in Buckinghamshire set out in Appendix A, Section 3.**

Recommendation B: Secondary Arrangements

- 4. The Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions in Buckinghamshire, to commence with the normal admission round for 2008 as set out in Appendix B, Section 1.**
- 5. The proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools (including sixth form admissions) as set out in Appendix B, Section 2.**
- 6. The proposed admission numbers for maintained secondary schools in Buckinghamshire set out in Appendix B Section 3.**

Recommendation C: Relevant Areas for 2009

- 7. The proposed relevant area for consultation about school admission arrangements from September 2009 as set out in Appendix C.**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

A full list of the responses received and the Council's response is attached as Appendix D. A summary follows:

Primary

1. Following consultation with the governing body of Chesham Bois School, the school has asked to retain its 7+ intake of 5, as well as the main intake of 30 at Rising 5. The Council will agree to this for 2008 but plans to review of the arrangements in the area at junior transfer, as whilst it does not wish to make the school's budget position more difficult, it would wish to explore any arrangement that leads to significantly large class sizes in Key Stage 2.
2. For 2007 admission, following a review of the proposed intake at 7+ for Monks Risborough where the Admission Number was too large to be taught in one class, admission points were created at Longwick CE Combined (4) and Princes Risborough Primary (8) schools as well as a reduced number at Monks Risborough (6). In all, a total of 18 places exist. The Governing Body of Great Kimble asked the Council to match the total number of places to their admission number of 20 and expressed concerns about the number of schools the children were scheduled to join. The allocation has been reviewed and as there are still 5 places in the three receiver schools, the Council considers the current arrangements gives sufficient flexibility to accommodate the local pressure for places at junior transfer. The Council has therefore proposed no change.
3. The governing body of Iver Heath Junior School asked to cease the inclusion of Iver Heath Infant School as a linked feeder school. The Council considered this request but returned to the original reasons for setting the feeder rules in place, which was to facilitate junior transfer for families, offering greater certainty to families with children in the infant provision, and on this basis proposes not to accede to the junior school's request.
4. The governing body of Denham Village Infant School requested that the area to the south of Denham Village (New Denham and Willowbank) be included in their catchment area and shared with Tilehouse Combined. The Council have noted this request but do not feel that current arrangements are affecting families ability to chose Denham Infant and on this basis proposes no change to the catchment areas of Denham Infant and Tilehouse at this time.
5. The governing body of Jordans expressed concern about the loss of an Admission point at junior transfer to Seer Green VA Combined School, and asked the Council to consider creating a point of entry at other local schools. Since this request was received once the council had gone to consultation, and there is no clear alternative strategy, no action is planned for this year, but this will be the subject of further consideration.
6. The governing body of Maids Moreton expressed concern about the higher admission number at the new St James and St John Combined School (increased from 15 to 20 in 2006). The Governing body were concerned

about the possible impact on pupil numbers at Maids Moreton School. The Council did receive an application from St James and St John requesting a request to increase to 25 in Key Stage 2, which was refused, but believes 20 at Key Stage 1 (which was agreed in January 2006) should continue.

7. Due to the redefinition of accommodation on the school site and the commensurate increase in capacity, the governing body of Drayton Parslow School has requested an increase in admission number from 12 to 15. In the light of the increased capacity, local arrangements in place and the possibility of future adjustments, this has been agreed.
8. In the light of the speed of building development on the large Weedon Hill housing development site to the north east of Aylesbury, which is a green-field area that is located in the Whitchurch School catchment area the Council has recently sought local schools views on strategies for managing the early part of the build before a new school is built on the site. This consultation exercise is attached as Appendix E. The feedback from local schools indicates a strong preference for the inclusion of the area of Weedon Hill into the catchment area of the newly configured Elmhurst School in the short term with a further review when the schooling arrangements for the site are finalised.
9. The Governing Body at Halton Combined School has asked that the LA reduce the admission number from 30 to 15 for the foreseeable future. At present the school has no headteacher and is in a loose federation arrangement, sharing a headteacher with John Hampden Infant School. The move to 15 is not expected to result in any families being unable to secure their preferred school and will facilitate and simplify the management of teaching on the Halton School site. The Council is receptive to this request, which will continue, with annual reviews, until the future of the school is secured once the planned development of the hospital site for housing goes ahead.
10. In 2006, the primary allocation process worked very well on the whole, but there was difficulty in the Fairford Leys area of Aylesbury, where a small number of parents were not able to secure a place at their catchment school. In line with the commitment to review the new admission arrangements after one year of operation, officers were asked to investigate whether there were changes that could be made to improve outcomes for children currently unable to access their catchment school, without creating a problem in other school's areas. In brief, their proposal was to identify an area of the development that was close to alternative provision and move the identified area to the catchment area of Thomas Hickman School. The proposals were discussed at the Admissions Forum of 23 January 2007 and it was agreed that a consultation with parents should be carried out on the basis of the proposals. The consultation booklet was sent to St Mary's School and local nursery providers week beginning 15 January 2007 for distribution to all parents in the schools as the views of these parents were considered to be a representative sample, inviting responses within a period of six weeks. The document and maps can be viewed at <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/content/index.jsp?contentid=657970117> In

addition a public meeting was attended by officers and the Cabinet Member. It became clear at that meeting that the local parents did not consider that the Council had considered all possible options before adjusting the catchment area, and as a consequence the Council agreed to delay any decision until further investigation could be undertaken with local parents into alternative strategies.

Secondary

11. For 2008 the Council did not propose any significant changes. However comment was received from a number of sources.
12. Downey School requested the inclusion of all their catchment area into the shared catchment area of Holmer Green and Sir William Ramsay School. Currently part of the catchment area is within Cressex school catchment area. This request was noted, but the Council does not wish to vary the Cressex Community School catchment area at this point.
13. The Royal Grammar School expressed concern about the inclusion of the boarding place arrangements into the main secondary admissions scheme. This adjustment was made in order to comply with the new Admissions Code so the Council has no flexibility to act in any other way. However, officers will consider ways of ensuring that the school can continue to retain control of boarding place admissions.
14. Hertfordshire County Council expressed concerns about the Council's proposed timeline, as they did not feel that it enabled Buckinghamshire to comply with the PAN London Scheme. The Council will only continue to work within the PAN London Scheme if it feels this is appropriate and the secondary scheme, as phrased, gives officers the option to decide on the basis of value for money once the annual subscription charge is advised.
15. Two schools requested a variation in their admission numbers. The Grange School requested a reduction to 210 from 240 on the basis of reduced demand for places from within the catchment. However, there is growth in and around the town of Aylesbury, therefore the Council wishes to continue to admit to 240 for 2008, to ensure sufficient places in the town as a whole. Future arrangements will need reviewing after this date. The Royal Latin School requested an increase to their admission number from 168 to 174. This effectively alters the school from 6 forms of 28 to 6 forms of 29. There is not sufficient capacity on the school site to sustain this – therefore it was not agreed.
16. Two Schools (Aylesbury Grammar School and Royal Latin School) asked for changes to their 6th form arrangements. The Council has agreed to the required amendments and the attached Appendix B, Section 2 reflects these changes.

C. Resource implications

Primary

17. It is not expected that there will be any negative resource implications as a result of the identified changes, and it is expected that the adjustments will support schools in the use of their resources.

Secondary

18. It is not expected that there will be any negative resource implications as a result of the identified changes, and it is expected that the adjustments will support schools in the use of their resources.

D. Legal implications

19. The County Council sought legal advice on aspects of the draft consultation documents before deciding upon the formal consultation documents.
20. Regulation made under Section 89 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 provide that the County Council has a statutory duty to implement admission arrangements for 2008 by 15 April 2007.

E. Property implications

21. None.

F. Other implications/issues

22. 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.

G. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

Primary

23. All local admissions authorities (including neighbouring LAs), have had an opportunity to comment upon the arrangements, as have all school governing bodies. Appendix D shows all feedback from consultees. Local members have also had the opportunity to comment on responses to the consultation.
24. Parents in Fairford Leys were consulted on proposed changes and the proposals were discussed with local members for the area affected.

Secondary

25. All local admissions authorities (including neighbouring LAs) have had an opportunity to comment upon the arrangements, as have all school governing bodies. Appendix D shows all feedback from consultees. Local members have also had the opportunity to comment on responses to the consultation.

H. Communication issues

26. All schools will be advised once the policy has been determined and the public website will be updated to include the final admission arrangements and schemes.

I. Progress Monitoring/ Review

26. The policy will be monitored via the normal admissions consultation process. In addition, the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Admissions Group will be provided with regular updates on the admissions rounds as they progress.

Background Papers

Admissions Forum:

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/other_bucks_schools_admissions_forum/saf_20070123_agenda.htm

Cabinet Member decision regarding contents of consultation document:

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/cabinet_papers/cabinet/sch/cab_sdtbt_20070109_al11_06.htm

County Council's summary of all admissions consultation process for 2008:

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/content/index.jsp?contentid=-1700404118>

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Tuesday 10 April 2007. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383604 or 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk