

Report to Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Decision to be taken on or after 18th July 2019

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

Cabinet Member Report No. ED07.19

Title:	Iver Village Infant school, Iver: Proposed change of age range.
Date:	10 th July 2019
Author:	Sarah Callaghan (Director of Education) 01296 387849
Contact officer:	Paula Campbell-Balcombe 01296 382896
Local members affected:	Cllr Luisa Sullivan: The Ivers and Richings Park

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Summary

Iver Village Infant school (the school) is a maintained infant school. The school's governing board and the Local Authority (LA) are proposing that from 1 September 2019 the age range of the school is changed. The present age range is 2-7 years of age and if the change is agreed the age range would become 4-7 years of age.

The school would continue to admit 2 and 3 year old children but the provision would be run under Section 27 of the 2002 Education Act which allows schools to run their Early Years provision in this way. The proposed change is supported by the LA's Early Years service.

The school held a public consultation from 18 March 2019 to 6 May 2019. Details of the proposed change were distributed widely to the local community, other early years providers, parents/carers and other interested local parties. The governing board received 36 responses to the proposed change. 100% of people replying were in favour of the change. A public meeting was also held, to which 5 people attended.

In line with the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance for such changes, a statutory notice was published in the 10 May 2019 in the Slough, Windsor and Eton Express and details of the proposed change placed on the school's website. The publication instigated a four week representation period for people to support, comment on or object to the proposal. 7 representations were received, all in favour of the change. 2018 DfE guidance states that the decision maker (LA) has 2 months from the end of the representation period to make a decision on the proposal.

Recommendation

To AGREE that, as the Local Authority have followed the Department for Education statutory guidance, permission is granted for the proposed change of age range at the school.

To AGREE that the change takes place from 1 September 2019.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

1. When a Local Authority or governing board wish to implement a prescribed alteration to a school that changes its status, they must firstly make people aware of the proposed change and then publish a statutory notice in a local newspaper and place details on the school website. The Department for Education guidance on such changes was republished in 2018: Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposer and decision makers 2018. A governing board, LA or the Schools Adjudicator must have regard to this guidance when exercising functions under the School Organisation Prescribed Alterations to Maintained schools (England) regulations 2013 (the prescribed alterations regulations). It should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 and prescribed alterations regulations. The process followed by Iver Village Infant governing board and the LA has followed the current statutory guidance.
2. If implemented the proposal would mean that the school's provision for 2 and 3 year old children would be managed by a staff and governor committee. This change should not have an adverse impact on the quality of provision. Section 27 of the 2002 Education Act allows for early years provision for 2 and 3 year old children to be managed by a staff and governor committee. This change is also a more efficient financial model for the school.
3. In line with DfE guidance on school reorganisations, the Local Authority and governing board held a public consultation from 18 March 2019 to 6 May 2019 on a proposal to change the school's age range. During that period a public meeting was also held at which 5 people attended. At the end of the public consultation 36 responses had been received, all of which were in favour of the proposal. Details of the consultation were sent to parents/carers, local county councillor, staff, governors, Iver parish council, local early years providers, the local MP and a number of County Council teams and other organisations connected to the school.
4. Following the end of the public consultation the outcome was reviewed. The decision was taken to move to the next stage of the DfE's statutory process and in line with their statutory guidance the Local Authority published a statutory notice in the Slough, Windsor and Eton Express on 10 May 2019. Following the publication of the statutory notice there was a four week period for people to make representations (i.e. to comment on, object to or support the proposed expansion). 7 representations were received during the four week period and all were in favour of the proposed change.
5. The DfE statutory guidance states that the decision-maker (the LA) should be guided by the views of parents when taking a decision. Almost 50% of the responses to the consultation period were from parents and 100% of parents were in favour of the proposed change.
6. When making the recommendation the Local Authority has taken account of the Public Sector Equality Duty. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and forwarded to the Head of Equalities who raised no objection or comment. If the

expansion takes place, the school will continue to offer places to children of any faith or no faith and they will continue to welcome and support children and their families/carers with special educational needs and disabilities.

7. When the school was inspected by Ofsted on 26 March 2019 it retained its Good judgement.
8. As the statutory process has been followed, the Cabinet Member is recommended to agree to the change of age range at the school, effective from 1 September 2019.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

9. The only alternative option would be to not agree to the change of age range. However the proposed change will support the school to deliver high quality early years provision for 2 and 3 year old children and at the same time, is making progress in regularising its financial position.
10. As almost 50% of the responses to the public consultation were from parents who supported the proposed change, agreeing to the changed age range would mean that the LA was being guided by the views of parents.
11. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is in the circumstances outlined above, recommended to agree to the change of age range at the school.

C. Resource implications

12. As the provision is nursery provision and not for reception aged children, revenue funding for the change of age range will come from the early years funding block for those children accessing the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, as the children joining the provision will not initially be of statutory school age. There are no redundancy costs arising from the proposal and if implemented, the change of age range would help the school to start to regularise its financial position. Advice has been sought from the Director of Finance and Procurement who supports the action proposed.

D. Value for Money (VFM) Self Assessment

13. Effectiveness: This approach will ensure that the Local Authority is able to effectively manage its resources.
14. Efficiency: This approach will ensure that the Council does the minimum to satisfy its legal obligation in this area of work and meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.
15. Economy: This approach has limited impact on service delivery.

E. Legal implications

16. When an LA or governing board wish to implement a prescribed alteration to a school that changes its status, they must firstly make people aware of the proposed change and then publish a statutory notice in a local newspaper and place details on the school website. The Department for Education guidance on such changes was revised in 2018. Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools: Statutory Guidance for proposer and Decision Makers 2018. A governing board, LA or the Schools Adjudicator must have regard to this guidance when exercising functions under the School Organisation Prescribed Alterations to

Maintained schools (England) regulations 2013 (the prescribed alterations regulations). It should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 of the education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 and prescribed alterations regulations. The process followed by Iver Village Infant governing board and the LA has followed the current statutory guidance.

In line with Department for Education guidance a public consultation was held, followed by the publication of a statutory notice by the Local Authority in the Slough, Windsor and Eton express on 10 May 2019 inviting people to make representations on the proposed closure. In addition, advice has been sought on the contents of this report from the Head of Legal Services.

F. Property implications

17. There are no property implications for the LA arising from the proposal.

G. Other implications/issues

18. Under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, as subsequently revised, the Local Authority is the decision maker for this proposal having regard to the relevant Department for Education decision makers statutory guidance. The Department for Education statutory guidance has been followed in the consultation process, the publication of a statutory notice and the subsequent four week representation period.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

19. The LA held a public consultation from 18 March 2019 to 6 May 2019 on the proposal to make the proposed change of age range. Following a review of the outcome of the consultation period the decision was taken to publish a statutory notice, followed by a four week representation period. The representation period ran from 10 May 2019 to 7 June 2019 and 7 representations were received. All of these were in favour of the proposed change. Details of the proposal were sent widely to local organisations, the local member, staff, governors and parents/carers.

20. Cllr Sullivan was contacted and stated “I have no objections to this proposed decision. As the process of consultation seems full and thorough, where parents, staff and governors had the opportunity to contribute to the decision process”.

I. Communication issues

21. The outcome of the Cabinet Member decision will be communicated to the school, governors, local community and interested local parties.

Background Papers

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 17th July 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343) or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk