

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE****CONSULTATION ON SURREY'S ADMISSIONS
ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008 FOR COUNTY AND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS****27 FEBRUARY 2007****KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

Subsequent to the statutory annual consultation on Surrey's Admissions Arrangements for September 2008 the Executive is asked to consider the responses and recommend to the County Council Surrey's admissions arrangements, some of which vary in order to meet local need, for County and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the September 2008 intake.

BUSINESS CASE:

1. In November 2006 the following proposals were circulated for consultation with a closing date for response of 15 December 2006 for County and Voluntary Controlled schools and 5 January 2007 for Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools. The proposed admissions arrangements included:
 - i. Surrey's proposed admissions criteria for September 2008 (attached Annex 1);
 - ii. Primary Voluntary Aided / Foundation schools giving priority to local applicants (attached Annex 2a);
 - iii. Secondary Voluntary Aided / Foundation schools giving priority to local applicants (attached Annex 2b);
 - iv. Surrey's coordinated admissions scheme for Primary schools for 2008 (attached Annex 3);
 - v. Surrey's coordinated admissions scheme for Secondary schools for 2008 (attached Annex 4);
 - vi. The proposed Published Admissions Numbers (PANs) for 2008 for Community and Voluntary Controlled primary and secondary schools (attached Annex 5);
 - vii. Surrey's Admissions Relevant Area (attached Annex 6).
2. A summary of Surrey's proposed admissions criteria is outlined below:
 - A. All Surrey Community and Voluntary Controlled schools will operate an Equal Preference System.
 - B. The majority of Surrey's Community and Voluntary Controlled schools will use the following criteria when a school is oversubscribed:
 1. Looked After Children

2. Exceptional Arrangements
3. Siblings
4. Children for whom the school is the nearest
5. Any other applicant

C. Local Admissions Arrangements – should continue to include:

Named feeder schools in Waverley for:

South Farnham Junior School
Weydon School, and
Woolmer Hill School

Fixed catchment areas in Tandridge for:

Oxted School, and
Warlingham School

In Mole Valley:

The admissions arrangements piloted for The Acorns and Brockham Schools should be discontinued for September 2008 and those schools should now fall in line with the Local Authority's criteria outlined in paragraph 2 B. above.

D. Waiting Lists

It was proposed that waiting lists be re-opened after the first academic year where there is more than one request for places and the school is full in the appropriate year groups.

E. Measuring Home to School Distance

In view of recent challenges about how the Local Authority measures from children's home addresses to their school preferences and subsequent legal advice it is proposed changing to measuring these distances by straight line.

3. The consultation documents listed in paragraph 1. were sent to:

- i. Headteachers/Chairmen of Governors and parent governors of all Surrey's maintained Nursery / Primary/ Infant / Junior and Secondary schools.
- ii. Neighbouring Local Authorities
- iii. Dioceses
- iv. All schools within Surrey's Relevant Area.

By the closing date(s) 121 responses in total had been received. Of these responses:

- v. 79% (96) were from the primary sector
- vi. 13% (16) were from the secondary sector
- vii. 66% (80) were from headteachers
- viii. 27% (33) were from governors
- ix. 3% (3) were from neighbouring Local Authorities
- x. 3% (4) were from out-county schools
- xi. 1% (1) were from other stakeholder group

NB: Throughout this report where total numbers do not tally and where percentages do not total 100%, this will usually be because the respondents were able to give more than one answer. Small differences may be due to rounding percentages up or down.

4. A summary of the responses can be seen in the table below and the full file is available for Members to see if they so wish.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2008						
	Agree		Disagree		No comment	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1. Proposed criteria outlined in Annex 1 and paragraphs 2 A and B	81	67	16	13	24	20
2. Proposed criteria outlined in Annex 1 Section B: Local Arrangements for Waverley	46	38	13	11	62	51
3. Proposed criteria outlined in Annex 1 Section C: Local Arrangements for Tandridge	48	40	6	5	67	55
4. Proposed criteria in Annex 1 Section D: Local Arrangements for Mole Valley	47	39	4	3	70	58
5. List of Foundation / VA schools in Annexes 2a) and 2b)	67	55	1	1	53	44
6. Proposal to measure home to school distances radially*	81	67	28	23	12	10
7. Proposal to maintain waiting lists for more than one academic year	79	65	24	20	18	15
8. Proposal to maintain Surrey's Relevant Area as agreed in April 2005	93	77	0	0	28	23

* Further analysis of responses in paragraph 11.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES:

5. Overall, 67% agreed that we should continue with the admissions arrangements outlined in paragraph 2 A (ie Surrey should maintain an equal preference system for all its schools and use the admissions criteria outlined in paragraph 2B for the majority of our schools which do not have different local arrangements).
6. Whilst 13% disagreed with these proposals, 20% made 'no comment'.
7. 38% agreed with the Local Arrangement for Waverley whilst only 11% disagreed and 51% made no comment. However the Weyside Confederation of schools in Waverley proposed that this local arrangement be extended to include them as feeder schools.
8. 48 (40%) agreed with the Local Arrangements for Tandridge whilst 6 (5%) disagreed and 67 (55%) made no comment. Oxted School on reflection felt their fixed catchment area was disadvantageous to them whilst advantageous to Warlingham and deStafford Schools. There was also a request from the Governing Bodies of Hamsey Green Infant and Junior Schools to have the 'feeder school criterion' extended to them.
9. 47 (39%) agreed with the discontinuation of the Local Arrangement for Mole Valley whilst 4 (3%) disagreed and 70 (58%) made no comment. However, the Brockham School (one of the schools that piloted this local arrangement) has requested that they now revert to using Surrey's admissions criteria outlined in

paragraph 2B. The Acorn School (the other school piloting the local arrangements) did not respond to the consultation.

10. 67 (55%) agreed with the list of Voluntary Aided / Foundation schools that give priority to local children living nearest to the school, whilst only 1 (1%) disagreed and 53 (44%) made no comment.
11. In response to the proposal to change to measuring the Home to School distance to the nearest school from 'walking route' to a radial or straight line distance 67% supported or agreed that change, 23% disagreed and 10% made no comment. Of the 67% supporting the change to measurement by radial distance:
 - i. 81% were from primary schools
 - ii. 14% were from secondary schools
 - iii. 67% were from community and voluntary controlled schools
 - iv. 22% were from governors
 - v. 73% were from headteachers
12. The proposal to maintain or reopen waiting lists for more than one academic year was supported by 65%, 20% disagreed and 15% made no comment.
13. 77% agreed to maintain Surrey's Relevant Area (Annex 6) which was agreed in September 2005 for the next 2 years.
14. Finally there were no responses received to the proposed PANs for September 2008 nor to either the primary or secondary coordinated admissions schemes. In the case of the latter (Annexes 3 and 4) the Local Authority has on reflection changed some dates (noted in italics) to allow schools more time to prioritise their applications during the coordinated process. Also under both coordinated schemes, it is proposed that we support the new School Admissions Code of Practice which states that once a PAN has been set by the admissions authority children should not be admitted above the PAN unless exceptional circumstances apply or as part of in year fair access protocols or a closing school.

CONCLUSION:

15. From the responses to the consultation, the majority (67%) agreed to maintain the 'status quo' and keep the admissions arrangements for the majority of Surrey's Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, thus giving priority to:
 1. Looked After Children
 2. Exceptional Arrangements
 3. Siblings
 4. Children for whom the school is the nearest
 5. Any other applicant
16. Although not a huge response to the proposed Local Arrangements for Waverley, Tandridge and Mole Valley the majority of those who responded made no comment or deleted those options as "not applicable" since these arrangements only affected the local schools concerned in the areas in questions. However, schools in the Weyside Confederation in Waverley wanted the feeder school criterion extended to include them. This would not seem an unreasonable request given that currently 3 other schools in the borough include a 'feeder school criterion' in their admissions criteria.
17. Given the response to maintaining the pilot arrangements for Mole Valley (39% agreeing to its discontinuation including one of the schools involved) and the

fact that these local arrangements have only been used once in the last 4 years it is reasonable to propose their discontinuation.

18. A majority of responses (67%) supported a change to measuring Home to School distances to the child's nearest school by radial/straight line distance.
19. There was also a majority response (65%) in support of maintaining waiting lists beyond the period of one academic year.
20. 77% agreed to keeping Surrey's Relevant Area unchanged, no respondents disagreed and 23% made no comment.
21. On 1 January 2007 Surrey's Admission Forum considered the responses to the consultation on the admission arrangements for September 2008. The members of the Forum were opposed to a "feeder school criterion" but very much in support of home to school measurements being done radially and schools adhering to their PAN. They also supported keeping waiting lists for more than one year where there was a need.
22. Members of the Executive may therefore wish to consider one or more of the following options before reaching a decision on Surrey's Admissions arrangements for the September 2008 intake:
23. **OPTION 1:** Keeping Surrey's Admissions Arrangements unchanged from those agreed for September 2007 (except for the Mole Valley local arrangement). This would involve operating an Equal Preference System and having admissions criteria for the majority of oversubscribed schools as follows:
 1. Looked After Children
 2. Exceptional Arrangements
 3. Siblings
 4. Children for whom the school is the nearest (measured by walking route)
 5. Any other applicant
24. Keeping the Local Admissions Arrangements for Waverley and Tandridge (as there is no evidence that the fixed catchment area for Oxted disadvantages the schools intake nor advantages Warlingham and deStafford School) and to discontinue the pilot scheme for The Acorns and Brockham Schools in Mole Valley.
25. Keeping Surrey's Relevant Area as agreed in 2005 unchanged.
26. **BENEFITS:**
 - i. It would give the opportunity to consolidate the new admissions arrangements agreed in 2007 and no change would be less threatening to the stakeholder groups;
 - ii. Giving priority to those for whom it is the nearest school supports Surrey's 'green' policy;
 - iii. It minimises disruption for parents and pupils since many already attend their nearest school if it is perceived as a successful/popular school.
27. **RISKS:**
 - i. Nearest school will include where appropriate giving some priority to Out-county pupils whose nearest schools is a Surrey school;
 - ii. The Local Authority will continue to be challenged about measurements by walking route to the nearest school.

28. **OPTION 2:** Keeping Surrey's Admissions Arrangements for 2008 unchanged as outlined above in OPTION 1 except for the following:
- i. Change to measuring Home to School distances radially/by straight line;
 - ii. Maintain waiting lists for more than one academic year;
 - iii. Extend the 'feeder school' criterion to other Waverley schools in the Weyside Confederation to include the following:
 - Farnham Heath End School
 - William Cobbett Junior School
 - Hale Primary School
 - Potters Gate CE Primary School
 - Folly Hill Infant School
 - Weybourne Infant School
 - Badshot Lea Village Infant School
29. Extend the Local Arrangements in Tandridge to allow Hamsey Green Infant School to be a 'feeder school' for Hamsey Green Junior School.
30. **BENEFITS:**
- i. Measurements using radial/straight line distance will be a more objective way of measuring Home to School distance and is less open to challenge. Radial distance is used by the majority of Voluntary Aided/Foundations schools and by some of our neighbouring authorities.
 - ii. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will be consistent with practice in Voluntary Aided/Foundation schools and benefit parents of pupils, particularly those moving into the County after the initial year of entry.
 - iii. Extending the 'feeder school' criterion to schools in the Weyside Confederation would be in keeping with their objective to 'enhance the learning opportunities for the children, young people and families within the scope of the locality' and enable the schools to 'consolidate their partnership arrangements'. It would also be consistent with the other schools in Waverley who have a 'feeder school criterion'.
 - iv. Extending the feeder school criterion to Hamsey Green Infant and Junior Schools would alleviate concerns that all children from the Infant school may not be able to transfer to the Junior school in the future due to the planned reduction in the PAN at the Junior school. Given that Hamsey Green Infant and Junior Schools share the same site a 'feeder school criterion' would be sensible and protect past admissions trends.
31. **RISKS:**
- i. Measuring Home to School distance radially may change admissions patterns including those for schools situated near the Surrey boundaries.
 - ii. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will create more admissions work for the Local Authority and schools and may encourage pupils to move schools more frequently.
 - iii. Extending the 'feeder school criterion' to schools in the Weyside Confederation (Waverley) and Hamsey Green Infant and Junior schools (Tandridge) may result in pupils in particular communities who have always expected to attend a particular school not being able to do so.
32. **OPTION 3:** Keeping Surrey's Admissions Arrangements for September 2008 as outlined in OPTION 2 (paragraphs 28 – 31) with the **exclusion of 28 i. measuring Home to School distance radially/by straight line.**
33. **BENEFITS:**
- i. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will be consistent with practice in Voluntary Aided/Foundation schools and benefit parents of pupils, particularly those moving into the County after the initial year of entry.

- ii. Extending the 'feeder school' criterion to schools in the Weyside Confederation would be in keeping with their objective to 'enhance the learning opportunities for the children, young people and families within the scope of the locality' and enable the schools to 'consolidate their partnership arrangements'. It would also be consistent with the other schools in Waverley who have a 'feeder school criterion'.
 - iii. Extending the feeder school criterion to Hamsey Green Infant and Junior Schools would alleviate concerns that all children from the Infant school may not be able to transfer to the Junior school in the future due to the planned reduction in the PAN at the Junior school. Given that Hamsey Green Infant and Junior Schools share the same site a 'feeder school criterion' would be sensible and protect past admissions trends.
34. **RISKS:**
- i. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will create more admissions work for the Local Authority and schools and may encourage pupils to move schools more frequently.
 - ii. Extending the 'feeder school criterion' to schools in the Weyside Confederation (Waverley) and Hamsey Green Infant and Junior schools (Tandridge) may result in pupils in particular communities who have always expected to attend a particular school not being able to do so.
 - iii. The Local Authority will have increasing challenges with regard to measurements to the nearest school which may have cost implications for Key Stage 1 legislation (30 in a class) if we have to correct any errors thus leading to 31+ in infant classes.
35. **OPTION 4:** The Forum proposed a 4th Option as follows:
- i. OPTION 1 no change: keep the admissions arrangements as agreed for September 2007;
 - ii. Change to radial/straight line for measurements in respect of admissions to school;
 - iii. Maintain waiting lists beyond the academic year;
 - iv. Schools should adhere to their PAN.
36. **BENEFITS:**
- i. It would give the opportunity to consolidate the new admissions arrangements agreed in 2007 and no change would be less threatening to the stakeholder groups;
 - ii. Giving priority to those for whom it is the nearest school supports Surrey's 'green' policy;
 - iii. It minimises disruption for parents and pupils since many already attend their nearest school if it is perceived as a successful/popular school.
 - iv. Measurements using radial/straight line distance will be a more objective way of measuring Home to School distance and is less open to challenge. Radial distance is used by the majority of Voluntary Aided/Foundations schools and by some of our neighbouring authorities.
 - v. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will be consistent with practice in Voluntary Aided/Foundation schools and benefit parents of pupils, particularly those moving into the County after the initial year of entry.
 - vi. Schools adhering to PANs supports the new Code of Practice on School Admissions.
 - vii. The local authority has regard to the view of the Admissions Forum in line with the new Code of Practice.
37. **RISKS:**
- i. Nearest school will include where appropriate giving some priority to Out-county pupils whose nearest schools is a Surrey school;

- ii. The Local Authority will continue to be challenged about measurements by walking route to the nearest school.
- iii. Measuring Home to School distance radially may change admissions patterns particularly for those schools situated near the Surrey boundaries.
- iv. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first academic year will create more admissions work for the Local Authority and schools and may encourage pupils to move schools more frequently.
- v. If schools did not adhere to PAN the local authority could be challenged, as the Code of Practice states that local authorities must have regard to the decisions/advice of the Admissions Forum.

38. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The Equalities Impact Assessment for Surrey's proposed Admissions Criteria has been completed and is attached in Annex 7.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Executive **RECOMMENDS** to the County Council that Surrey County Council maintains the current admissions arrangements for September 2008 as outlined in OPTION 2 – paragraphs 28 – 29 as follows:

OPTION 2: Keeping Surrey's Admissions Arrangements for 2008 unchanged as outlined above in OPTION 1 except for the following:

- i. Change to measuring Home to School distances radially/by straight line;
- ii. Maintain waiting lists for more than one academic year;
- iii. Extend the 'feeder school' criterion to other Waverley schools in the Weyside Confederation to include the following:
 - Farnham Heath End School
 - William Cobbett Junior School
 - Hale Primary School
 - Potters Gate CE Primary School
 - Folly Hill Infant School
 - Weybourne Infant School
 - Badshot Lea Village Infant School

Extend the Local Arrangements in Tandridge to allow Hamsey Green Infant School to be a 'feeder school' for Hamsey Green Junior School.

Also schools should adhere to their PAN (OPTION 4 iv)

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The above are recommended for the following reasons:

- i. It is now a statutory requirement to operate an Equal Preference System and this benefits parents in that they have a better chance of getting one of their school preferences.
- ii. Maintaining the current admissions arrangements allows for last year's changes to be 'bedded' in and monitored and reviewed more realistically.
- iii. In recognition of the diverse nature of Surrey it enables some schools to have different admissions arrangements in order to meet local need.
- iv. A 'feeder school criterion' where appropriate supports confederations working in partnership and ensures consistency between the phases of education.
- v. Measuring Home to School distances radially (straight line) is more objective and leaves space to challenge. It is also consistent with practice in Voluntary Aided / Foundation School and some neighbouring Local Authorities. The Admissions Forum also supports this change

- vi. Maintaining waiting lists beyond the first admission year ensures parents and pupils moving into Surrey after the initial admissions round are not disadvantaged and this promotes parental preference.
- vii. Schools adhering to their PAN reflects the advice in the new School Admissions Code of Practice. The Admission Forum also supports this.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?:

- i. The recommendations of the Executive of 27 February 2007 will be considered by the County Council on 6 March 2007 and the Admissions Arrangements for September 2008 agreed.
- ii. Early in the Summer Term:
 - a) A bulletin will be sent to all schools advising them of the new admission arrangements and any variations.
 - b) All consultees within Surrey's Relevant Area will be advised of Surrey's Admission Arrangements for September 2007.
- iii. Surrey Admissions arrangements will be published in our information for parents and be circulated to schools for distribution to parents in September 2007.

Responsible: Anne Macavoy, Principal Manager for Admissions & Transport (Strategy), 01483 517689

Accountable: Nick Wilson, Head of Schools & Learning

Consulted: See paragraph 3 on page 2 and Members of the Admissions Forum

Informed:

Sources/background papers: Reports to Executive on 28 March 2006
Responses to consultation
