

SUBJECT: Proposed changes to School Admissions Policy

MEETING: Single Member Decision

DATE: 23rd March 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Monmouthshire wards

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Local Authority in line with the School Admissions code Wales (July 2013) is required to consult on its School Admission arrangements annually.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet member with the proposed changes to the existing School Admission arrangements to reflect the recent consultation exercise. .

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet member agree the revised School Admissions arrangements (appendix 1) in order to implement the following changes with effect from September 2017:
 - A more flexible approach to administering applications for parents / carers who are in the process of moving property / been subject to an unexpected change of address as per pages 9/10 of the proposed School Admissions policy
 - A change to administering applications into Reception for children born during the summer term as per pages 11/12 of the proposed School Admissions policy which supports that children are admitted into their chronological year group unless exceptional circumstances apply. This mirrors the Local Authority' approach for year groups other than the normal year of entry.
 - The criteria to be applied to calculate home to school distances in the event of a Schools oversubscription as per pages 13/14 of the proposed School Admissions policy

- Revised timescales for processing application requests for year groups other than the normal year of entry, which permits school places to be offered up to a term in advance as per page 16 of the proposed School Admissions policy

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Local Authority is required by the School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013) to consult annually on its School admission policy and where changes to existing arrangements are proposed; seek political approval prior to their implementation.
- 3.2 The Local Authority engaged in consultation on 12th February 2016 and proposed minor changes to the Admission arrangements to firm up the processes. A list of the statutory consultees can be found on page 4 of appendix 1.
- 3.3 The closing date for consultation was Monday 29th February 2016. The Local Authority has not received any objections to the proposed changes. These are outlined below:
 - a) The current arrangements determine that an application will be considered as late where notification of a change of address has occurred after the closing date. The proposed change to policy acknowledges that there are often unexpected circumstances which result in a change of address and permits discretion to be applied prior to determining the application as late.
 - b) The Local Authority is receiving an increasing number of requests for children to be admitted into a year group outside of their chronological age range. This includes requests for children born during the summer term to delay their entry into Reception by a whole year. The current arrangements support that children are to be admitted into their chronological year group in recognition of longer term implications for children admitting to year groups outside of the chronological age. The exception to this would be where there is an evidence base supported by the local authority that would suggest that such placement would not be appropriate. Clarification is required to confirm extension of this approach to children born during the summer term who wish to delay admission into Reception.
 - c) The Local Authority is required to include in explicit detail the criteria for how home to school distances are calculated. Clarification on existing arrangements has been provided as part of these proposals.
 - d) Current arrangements do not permit school places for year groups other than the normal year of entry to be allocated more than 4 weeks in advance of the requested start date. The proposed change to policy would mean that places can be allocated

up to a term in advance, and supports families to plan arrangements for their child's education well in advance.

3.4 All proposals associated with this report are supported by and compliant with the School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013)

4. REASONS:

4.1 To comply with the School Admissions Code of Practice Wales (July 2013) which requires Admission Authorities to consult upon its arrangements on an annual basis, and seek political approval prior to implementing any changes.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no resource implications associated with these proposals, as the changes to administration will be met within existing resources

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The future generation's process has been completed and can be found under appendix 2.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report as the proposals do not impact current safeguarding arrangements / accountabilities.

8. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Members
DMT
SLT
Statutory Consultees (appendix 1)

Any comments received have been included in the body of the report

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013)
School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) regulations 2013

10. AUTHOR:

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