

Cabinet

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	18 January 2017
<p><u>Lead Member</u> Deborah Croney – Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children’s Safeguarding</p> <p><u>Local Members</u> All Members</p> <p><u>Lead Director</u> Sara Tough - Director for Children’s Services</p>	
Subject of Report	Admissions Arrangements 2018-2019 and Transport Policy 2017-2018
Executive Summary	<p>As a result of successive Acts and associated Regulations admission authorities are required to consult on proposed admissions arrangements prior to determination. Consultation has to be carried out by the 31st January 2017, the outcomes determined by the 1 March 2017, published by the 15 March 2017 for admissions into schools in September 2018.</p> <p>December 2014 Admissions Code requires admission authorities to consult for a minimum period of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January and to include relevant parents and other groups in that consultation.</p> <p>The current Admissions code has removed the need to consult on the increase in the Published Admission Number (PAN), but still requires a consultation when an Admissions Authority intends to lower their PAN.</p> <p>Consultation on changes to Dorset’s admissions arrangements was completed on 20 November 2016. This report summarises the consultations that have taken place and invites members to approve the changes as a result of those consultations in order to meet the Local Authority’s statutory duties.</p> <p>In addition The Home to School Transport and the Post 16 Transport Support Policy that will come into effect for September 2017 have also been consulted upon.</p>

	<p>Elected members are also recommended to approve the outcome of a consultation on the decrease in the Pupil Admission Numbers at Ferndown Upper School and Bincombe Valley Primary School.</p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>This process is bound by the New 2014 School Admissions Code and the statutory guidance on Home to School Transport including support access to Post 16 education and training.</p> <p>An EQIA has been carried out for the Home to School Transport and the Post 16 Transport Support Policy for September 2017.</p> <p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>Consultation responses have directly fed into the admissions consultation process.</p> <p>The latest guidance from the Department of Education with regards to Admissions Law has been used.</p> <p>There has been a review of the legislation as it pertains to Post 16 and Post 18 transport responsibility.</p> <p>Budget:</p> <p>There are no significant budget risks arising from the report. The implementation of Section 7 for cost recovery for SEN Post 16 transport is projected to reduce the SEN transport allocation by approximately £40,000. This budget is currently facing a significant overspend.</p> <p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p> <p>Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk LOW</p> <p>Other Implications:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That The Cabinet formally agrees to the adoption of the following:</p> <p>(a) Dorset County Council Admissions Arrangements including the Co-Ordinated Scheme, the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2018-2019, the In Year Fair Access Policy, the Admission of Armed Forces Community Children Policy and the Guidance on the</p>

	<p>Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group, the 6th Form Admissions Policy and the Nursery Admissions Policy.</p> <p>(b) The Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy for Children Attending Mainstream School 2017-2018 and the Dorset Post 16 Transport Support Policy for 2017-2018 which includes a rise in the surplus seat price from £510 to £640.</p> <p>(c) Changes to the Pupil Admission Number for Ferndown Upper School, reducing from 260 to 210, and Bincombe Valley Primary reducing from 48 to 45.</p> <p>(d) The Guidance on Consulting on Admissions Arrangements (incl Relevant Areas)</p>
<p>Reason for Recommendation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine admissions arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements including the Schools Admissions Code December 2014. • To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.
<p>Appendices</p>	<p>Appendix 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Co-Ordinated Scheme Timetable 2018-2019 - Local Authority Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2018-2019 - Dorset In Year Fair Access Policy - Dorset Admission of Armed Forces Community Children Policy - Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group - 6th Form Admissions Policy - Nursery Admissions Policy <p>Appendix 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy for Children Attending Mainstream School 2017-2018. - Dorset Post 16 Transport Support Policy 2017-2018 - Equality Impact Assessment for Post 16 Transport Support Policy 2017-2018 <p>Appendix 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from Dorset Studio School - Letter from The Swanage School <p>Appendix 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in Pupil Admissions Number for Ferndown Upper School and Bincombe Valley Primary School - Guidance on Consultations for Admissions Arrangements
<p>Background Papers</p>	<p>DFE Schools Admissions Code - <i>December 2014</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2</p> <p>DFE Guidance on Summer Born Children - <i>December 2014</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission</p>

	<p>DFE Guidance on Post 16 Transport – <i>February 2014</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training</p> <p>DFE Guidance on Admissions and The Armed Forces Covenant – <i>April 2013</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admissions-to-schools-in-england-and-the-armed-forces-covenant</p>
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1. Co-Ordinated Schemes

- 1.1 The new timetable for the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable meets with the requirements of the Schools Admissions Code of Practice and is attached in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The scheme co-ordinates with neighbouring local authorities and the national offer dates as set out in the code of practice. There have been no responses to this consultation

Elected members are asked to support the adoption of the co-ordinated scheme in order to meet statutory requirements.

2. Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2018-2019 including The Sixth Form Admissions Policy and the

- 2.1 Admissions arrangements for all maintained schools are bound by the Schools Admissions Code, which was revised and updated in December 2014.
- 2.2 Local Authorities are required under the School Admissions Code to have a Fair Access Protocol. This process ensures that the most vulnerable children are placed quickly. These children often have challenging circumstances and may experience difficulty being placed using normal in-year application processes.
- 2.2 DCC has made no changes to the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.
- 2.3 DCC has made no changes to the Sixth Form Admissions Policy, The Nursery Admissions Policy and the In Fair Access Policy.
- 2.5 There was a single response with regards to the Admissions Arrangements: A concern was raised by an individual member of the public with regards to verification of a family address. They were concerned that a family may temporarily find accommodation in the area of an oversubscribed school, gain a place at the school and then move out again. The responder suggested that a family needed to show each year that they are still resident in the catchment. **LA Response:** The Admissions Code does not allow the removal of a school place should a family move out of catchment having secured a place at their catchment school.

Elected members are asked to adopt the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2016-2017 and note that Local Authority Sixth Form Admissions Policy, Local Authority Nursery Admissions Policy and the In Year Fair Access Policy are unchanged.

3. Dorset Admissions of Armed Forces Community Children Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all schools where Dorset is the admissions authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) – it is also promoted for adoption with Dorset Schools which are their own admissions authorities (academies, foundation, voluntary aided, studio and fee schools). A copy of the policy is found in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 This policy recognises the Armed Forces Covenant and reflects the DFE Guidance issued in April 2013.
- 3.3 The Guidance from the DFE and DCC's policy is designed to ensure that admissions arrangements do not disadvantage service families, and the policy provides the

admissions authority flexibility in how they may process applications from service families.

- 3.4 The policy ensures that an admission authority has flexibility in determining main residence when managing place allocations using base and future addresses where a family is subject to a new posting/rotation.
- 3.5 There is flexibility in the application of the Infant Class Size (ICS) legislation, which allows admissions authorities to place over number as an 'exception', though it is still incumbent on the admissions authority to respect the philosophy of ICS and not to necessarily make an 'exception' of every service family.
- 3.6 The policy also allows and requires an admission authority to act flexibly when an allocated school place through a future service or base address is then not appropriate to the residential address that the service family has once they are finally settled.
- 3.7 There have been no responses to the consultation including the Ministry of Defence who were consulted.

Elected members are asked to adopt the attached policy in order to support military families and to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant.

4. Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group

- 4.1 This policy applies to all schools where Dorset is the admissions authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) – it is also promoted for adoption with Dorset Schools which are their own admissions authorities (academies, foundation, voluntary aided, studio and fee schools). A copy of the policy is found in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 There have been no responses to the consultation

Elected members are asked to adopt the policy that relates to the placement of children outside of their normal age group, thus ensuring that DCC is adhering to latest DFE statutory guidance.

5. Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy 2017-2018 and the Post 16 Transport Support Policy

- 5.1 School Transport is currently subject to the Dorset wide Holistic Transport Review under the auspices of the Holistic Transport Board. While this process is underway no substantive changes to either the Home to School Policy or the Post 16 Transport Policy (Appendix 2) are being proposed with the exception of the following:
- 5.2 The price of a surplus seat rises annually and it is proposed that the cost rises for the academic year starting September 2017 to £640, a rise from £510 in the previous year.
- 5.3 Cost recovery for SEN Post 16 will be activated from September 2017. It should also be noted that many SEND families will also qualify for the 50% on a surplus seat cost where they comply with the terms and conditions of such a discount in section 2.3 of the Post 16 Transport Support Policy.
- 5.4 There were three responses to the School Transport Consultation (See Appendix C):
 - 5.4.1 The Swanage School currently has a catchment area that covers Swanage and areas West towards Corfe Castle. In terms of transport the LA at the inception of the

proposal for the Swanage School, stated that the LA would provide transport to families for whom the Swanage School was the closest school. The Swanage School in their response suggest that while they have spaces, the LA should not be transporting children to the Purbeck School – though this does remain one of the catchment schools for children in the area.

DCC has maintained that the Swanage School was a parent demand driven establishment and its existence should not deny parents who prefer to remain with the historical catchment school, the opportunity for transport.

LA Response: Given the extent of the change that the Swanage School is proposing, it is suggested that this is discussed with all parties during the rest of the 2016-2017 academic year with a view to have an agreed set of proposals out for consultation in the Autumn of 2017 for implementation in September 2018 should they be required.

5.4.2 The Dorset Studio School raised 3 concerns:

a) The school has a broad catchment area to attract children interested in the specialist curriculum they offer. The local authority is discriminating by only offering transport to students for whom the school is the nearest and consideration should be given to having an agreed catchment area and that catchment or nearest school criteria should be used for the entitlement to transport. **LA Response:** Given the extent of the change that the Studio School is proposing, it is suggested that this is discussed with all parties during the rest of the 2016-2017 academic year with a view to have an agreed set of proposals out for consultation in the Autumn of 2017 for implementation in September 2018 should they be required.

b) Concerns were raised about the definition of safe walking routes and specifically the lane that accesses the Dorset Studio School. **LA Response:** As part of the planning process it is assumed that a travel plan was produced and issues of pedestrian access and provision of suitable pedestrian routes would have been part of the design brief/planning permission.

c) They have raised concerns on the faith element of the Home to School Transport Policy, suggesting that two elements are contradictory – 1.1.5 which allows families with Working Tax Credits or Free School Meals to gain transport to one of their three nearest schools if that school is between 2-6 miles and the section 1.1.16 that allows similar families to gain transport to their nearest school on denominational grounds if the school is between 2 miles shortest walking and 15 miles shortest driven. **LA Response:** Both of these elements are stipulated within the Home to School Transport Guidance as issued by the Department of Education – Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The LA is satisfied that the Home to School Transport Policy is compliant in ensuring the LA duties are fulfilled.

5.6 A parent raised a specific concern with regards to the safety of a walking route to West Moors School. They also raise the concern that West Moors Middle School will not be a popular choice of school unless children from the St. Ives, Ashley Heath and St. Leonards area are given free transport – this being positive for the school and safer for the children. **LA Response:** This route was reviewed as part of a Schools Transport Appeal to the Children's and Adults Services Appeal Panel and was found to be safe and the LA would not be permitted to offer free transport to children who live within 3 miles of West Moors Middle School.

5.5 A review of the tendering of school transport contracts is underway. It is likely that the way many bus routes are managed may change and this might have implication for the Surplus Seat Travel Scheme. Currently many of the routes into secondary schools are closed routes and families may purchase a surplus seat if there is spare capacity from the LA. From September 2017, a greater proportion of routes into Secondary Schools may be open public service routes, with families who are not entitled to free

transport then having to purchase a seat from the relevant bus companies if they wish. It is likely that the number of routes that will be applicable to the Surplus Seat Travel Scheme will reduce.

Elected members are asked to adopt the transport policies, note the implementation of the cost recovery from SEND Post 16 families for September 2017 and confirm the cost of £640 as the price of a surplus seat with effect from September 2017.

6. Guidance on Consultations for Admissions Arrangements (See Appendix 4).

- 6.1 DCC are required to consult on the relevant areas. This details the duties of various admission authorities when consulting on their admissions arrangements.
- 6.2 This Guidance also includes further detail on how the Local Authority will fulfil its duty to engage with families of 2-18 year olds when consulting on Admissions Arrangements and Home to School Transport.
- 6.3 Schools and Admissions Authorities were consulted on the document in September/October 2016. The principles agreed were then used to guide the formal consultation on the LA Admissions Arrangements for September 2018.
- 6.4 The Guidance was published as one of the documents that the wider public could comment on during this consultation. No responses were received.

Elected members are asked to agree the adoption of the 'Guidance on Consultation for Admissions Arrangements'.

7. Reduction in Admissions Number (Appendix 4)

- 7.1 Ferndown Upper School has a historical Pupil Admission Number of 260. The school currently has year groups of no more than 180. It seemed appropriate to reduce the PAN to 210, which is the likely level of intake at Year 9 within the next 2 to 3 years. This will allow the school to plan more appropriately going forward.
- 7.2 Bincombe Valley Primary School has historically had a Pupil Admission Number of 48. The school has managed to organise without breaching infant class size legislation as not all year groups would have reached this level. As the numbers of children are rising in the area, it is likely that they will have to admit to PAN, which when mixing Year 1 and Year 2 will be very problematic. A reduction to a PAN of 45 will remove this and allow the school to plan its staffing resources more appropriately.
- 7.3 Any responses to these consultations would have been made through the Schools Adjudicator. They have not informed the LA of any objections to either proposal.

Elected members are asked to agree the reduction in the Admissions Number for Ferndown Upper School (FUS) from 260 to 210 and for Bincombe Valley Primary School from 48 to 45 for September 2018.