

Open Report on behalf of Peter Duxbury, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Executive Councillor, Cllr Mrs P A Bradwell
Date:	30 March 2011
Subject:	Primary and secondary school admission policies for 2012 to 2013
Decision Reference:	01846
Key decision?	No

Summary:

The Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and controlled schools in the county. The purpose of this report is to enable the Executive Councillor to determine the final admission policy for entry into primary and secondary community and controlled schools for the academic year 2012 to 2013. This policy only comes into force if a school has more applications than places available.

Officers are recommending a number of minor amendments to the schools admission policy:

1. As recommended by the Schools Adjudicator we are proposing that where there are two applicants for the last place and the final criterion is distance and where the distance from home to school is identical for both applicants, then the final place will be allocated by random allocation between the two applicants.

For example this could be used if the last two applicants lived on the same floor of a block of flats.

2. For controlled schools, which have a church connection, there is a criterion in the admission policy that states there must be regular worship at the local church. This has excluded a number of families who have moved to the area and have not had time to attend the local church for any length of time. It is proposed that regular attendance should be for at least a year and for families moving into the area attendance at their previous church should be taken into account, provided the family have started to worship in the local area.

The wording in the policy is recommended as follows:

" All schools require regular monthly attendance at the place of worship for at least a year before making the application. The attendance should be verified by a signed letter from an officiating minister at the place of worship. If you have only recently moved to the area the school can also consider written

evidence of an equivalent commitment to a place of worship at your previous address, provided you have started to worship in the area you have moved to."

With this proposed change the criterion for William Lovell Church of England School is recommended to be as follows:

"For entry into Stickney William Lovell Church of England School priority may be given to children whose parents are actual regular worshipping members of the Church of England, or of a Christian denomination which does not provide for denominational education nearer to the child's home. In this case the Governing Body will need written supporting evidence from the relevant clergy. Guidance from the Diocesan Board of Education indicates that regular worship means that you attend church at least once a month for at least a year before making your application. If you have only recently moved to the area the school can also consider written evidence of an equivalent commitment to a place of worship at your previous address, provided you have started to worship in the area you have moved to."

Recommendation(s):

The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the amended admission policies in appendix A.

Alternatives Considered:

1. To retain the existing admission policies and application process without accepting the proposals in this report.

Advantages: The existing policy and application process meets all statutory requirements.

Disadvantages: There may be a very small number of parents who may be disadvantaged because of the operation of the policy.

2. To accept the proposals.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Option 2 is recommended as it removes some potential anomalies from the admission policy that could affect a small number of parents. There are no disadvantages in accepting the proposed changes to the policy.

1. Background

The Executive Councillor has to consider the admission policy each year along with any comments received through the consultation process.

The first proposal was a recommendation from the national Schools Adjudicator and it has been included because theoretically there could be a situation where the

last two applicants lived the same distance from their home to the school. Currently the admission policy does not state how this situation will be resolved. The proposal makes it clear that there is a process should the situation ever develop.

All controlled schools were informally consulted about the proposals that affect them. There was acceptance of the proposal and it was therefore included in the formal consultation process. It allows families that move into an area to be considered for a school place on religious grounds and not be disadvantaged because they have moved house.

2. Conclusion

That the amended admission policy shown in appendix A, which contains the proposals above, be approved.

3. Legal Comments:

The County Council is required to have and update an Admissions Policy which complies with the Admissions Code. The decision is consistent with the policy Framework and is within remit of the Executive Councillor.

4. Resource Comments:

There are no new financial implications arising from the proposal in this report.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

No

c) Scrutiny Comments

Not applicable

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

None

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Primary and secondary community and controlled admission policies

7. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
School Admission Code, February 2010	Pupil Services Manager

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