

REPORT TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE APPROACH TO THE REVIEW OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide updated information on the approach to the priorities proposed as part of the review of School organisation and admission arrangements for community, voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools in Stockton-on-Tees for the school year 2016/17.

2. KEY ISSUES

Members are requested to consider the following:

1. The key principles that will be considered as part of developing the proposals for consultation.
2. The current information being provided to parents for admissions in September 2015 in readiness for the September 2016 main round.
3. The pre-statutory and statutory consultation timetable.
4. Details of those to be consulted as part of the informal pre-statutory consultation programme.
5. The inclusion of the following as part of the process:
 - a. A review of the current over subscription criteria.
 - b. The policy on in year transfers and movers.

3. BACKGROUND

Priorities

Further to the presentation to Members at the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting of the 16th July 2014 the following proposals were agreed:

1. To undertake a borough wide review beginning in the municipal year of 2015/16 concluding in 2016/17
2. The priorities that require further work and impact on the September 2016 admission round to be considered during 2014, namely:
 - a. Ingleby Barwick Primary admission zones;
 - b. Secondary Admission zones for south Stockton and Ingleby Barwick;
 - c. Primary places for north/central Stockton;

3. The current process for School Admissions – opportunity to comment upon and improve arrangements.

In addition to the above, it is also proposed that the following is included as part of this review:

4. Consideration of the current oversubscription criteria, specifically in relation to sibling link and distance.
5. Policy on in year transfers and movers.

This report will focus on the work associated with priorities 2 and 3 as detailed above and will include the following:

1. An overview of the key principles to be considered as part of the review process.
2. An update on the information being provided to parents in the admissions round for September 2015 – with examples.
3. Information on the consultation process required to be undertaken in order to comply with the Admissions Code.
4. Proposed timescales for both the pre-statutory and statutory consultation process.
5. Proposals in relation to who needs to be consulted with, how and when.

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

It is suggested that the following key principles will be considered as part of developing proposals for consultation, the weight and relevance of which could change depending on the priority:

1. Parental choice.
2. Traffic issues and impact as a result of any proposed changes to admission zone boundaries.
3. The logic for zones in terms of community boundaries.
4. Impact of approved and proposed housing developments where possible.
5. Existing sibling link arrangements.
6. Faith zones.
7. Projected pupil numbers.

5. INFORMATION TO PARENTS FOR ADMISSIONS ROUND – SEPTEMBER 2015

The School Admissions Team reflected on the information historically provided to parents for each admissions round. Based on some of the issues that had arisen during the September 2014 process, this was reviewed and updated. Examples of the secondary information are detailed below and copies will be tabled at the meeting.

In terms of the secondary main admissions round for September 2015, each parent will receive the following documents in a pack, delivered to all 59 primary schools during week commencing 1st September. The packs are handed out to all children on roll and those children not in our schools, but who are Stockton residents, will receive the same information through the post to their home address:

- Covering letter with their unique reference number.
- Open Evenings leaflet - **amended to include reference to EHC Plans.**
- FAQ re applying for secondary places - **new document.**
- Transport information – **amended layout.**
- A letter sent to all Egglecliffe School admission zone residents – **a new letter from this year sent this week using known addresses as per the Admissions ONE system.**
- Copy of the Common Application Form (CAF) – **amended paper version for parents without access to internet.**

In terms of the primary main round, each parent will receive the documents listed below in their pack, which will go to all 59 primary schools in the first week in November, handed out to all children on roll in the nursery. Where known to us, those children not in our schools, but who are Stockton residents, will receive a pack through the post to their home address:

- Covering letter with their unique reference number
- FAQ re applying for a primary place
- Transport information

The new and amended Admissions booklet is available on the Council's website from week commencing 8th September, for the public to read and download. A copy will be circulated to all schools, libraries, Councillors and other relevant council officers.

6. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The proposal is to undertake the consultation in two phases:

- Phase 1 – Informal, pre-statutory consultation with any schools that may be affected by the proposed changes; this would include the Head Teacher and staff, the Governing Body and parents and relevant Council Members.
- Phase 2 – Once proposals are finalised the formal, statutory consultation process will be undertaken, (see below).

The following is an extract from the Schools Admissions Code, which details the statutory consultation process:

*“a) All schools **must** have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities.*

*b) Admission authorities **must** set (‘determine’) admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority **must** first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they **must** be consulted on at least every 7 years. Consultation **must** be for a minimum of 8 weeks and **must** take place between **1 November** and **1 March** of the year before those arrangements are to apply. For example: for arrangements which are*

to apply to applications in 2015 (entry in September 2016), consultation **must** be completed by 1 March 2015.

The LA will consult with:

- i) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- ii) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- iii) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- iv) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;
- v) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and
- vi) in the case of faith schools, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

For the duration of the consultation period, the LA will publish a copy of the full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed Published Admissions Number (PAN)) on our website together with details of the person within the LA to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are sought. The LA will also send, upon request, a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed previously, inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

All admission authorities **must** determine admission arrangements by **15 April** every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.

Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made). Admission authorities must send a copy of their full, determined arrangements to the local authority as soon as possible before 1 May. Admission authorities for faith schools must also send a copy of their arrangements to the body or person representing their religion or religious denomination.”

7. PROPOSED TIMETABLE AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The following table provides detail on the proposed timetable for the scrutiny review process including information on the intention to undertake some informal consultation and the timescales and details of those to be consulted, including:

1. Relevant Council Members
2. Head Teachers
3. School Governing bodies
4. School staff
5. Parents of pupils of any schools affected.

Timescale	Activity
Early to mid-September	Communication plan prepared
17 th September	Paper presented to CYP for approval
By 30 th September	Proposals on the following developed ready for informal pre-statutory consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingleby Barwick Primary admission zones • Secondary Admission zones for south Stockton and Ingleby Barwick • Primary places for north/central Stockton • Possible review of oversubscription criteria in relation to sibling link and distance • Policy on in year transfers and movers
October	Attend any appropriate school cluster meetings to consult on proposals. Informal, pre-statutory consultation to take place in appropriate areas Ingleby Barwick (IB) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with IBIS members • Meeting with each IB primary school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 – 4pm Head Teacher and Chair of Governors • 4 - 5 pm Governing Body • 5 – 6pm School Staff • 6 – 7pm Parents of children within that school This process would also take place in South Stockton and Ingleby Barwick secondary schools if there is a proposal to change admission zones.
7 th October	Tri-partite meeting update
End October	Proposals finalised.
Early November	Report prepared for Children & Young People Select Committee and Formal Consultation document produced ready for statutory process.
19 th November	Report and consultation document presented to Children and Young People Select Committee.
1 st December - 8 th February	Statutory consultation process undertaken (8 weeks) and in accordance with the Code, the LA will consult with those detailed in paragraph 5 above.
March 2015	Cabinet – final approval for proposed admission arrangements.

8. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is proposed that as part of this review, consideration is also given to the following:

1. The current over subscription criteria, particularly in relation to 'sibling link' and 'distance'.
2. The current policy on in year transfers and movers.

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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