

# Children and Young People Select Committee

## Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements (Phase 2)

### Outline Scope

<b>Scrutiny Chair (Project Director):</b> Councillor Carol Clark
<b>Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager):</b> Judy Trainer
<b>Departmental Link Officer:</b> Lynda Brown (Jane Wright, Darren Coulton)
<b>Finance Link Officer:</b> Garry Cummings
<b>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</b>  Council Plan Objective – Children and Young People - No Child Left Behind - Ensuring that all young people are in receipt of education, employment and training
<b>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</b> This is the second phase of this review. Phase one of the review took place between September 2014 and March 2015. The focus of phase one was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An understanding of school organisation, school place planning and the admissions process</li><li>- A consideration of the sibling link aspect of the over-subscription criteria for admissions</li><li>- A review of the admission zones for the 6 primary schools in Ingleby Barwick</li><li>- An examination of options relating to the admissions zone for Egglecliffe School.</li></ul> The outcomes of phase one were reported to Cabinet in April 2015.  Phase two of the review will focus upon the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Understanding and meeting the increased demand for primary places across the Borough, particularly in reception. It is proposed that this is prioritised as any changes to published admissions numbers in schools for 2017 will be subject to a consultation exercise that must now take place in an 8 week period between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> January (in previous years between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> March).</li><li>- Reviewing the wider aspects of the approach to school organisation in the Borough.</li></ul> <u>Increased demand for primary places</u> In 2008 there was a demand for 2100 reception places across the Borough. This has steadily increased with a projection of 2565 applications for reception places in 2016. In 2015 there were 2501 applications at the close of the Admissions round on January 15 <sup>th</sup> 2015. Although there were sufficient places available in the Borough as a whole, there was a significant increase in demand for places in North Stockton, Central Stockton, and Thornaby

and, to a lesser extent, Billingham. There was a corresponding decrease in demand for places in the South of the Borough, most notably in Ingleby Barwick, but also in Yarm and Eaglescliffe. To accommodate the additional demand in the over-subscribed areas, an additional 140 places were created.

The main issue and overall aim of this aspect of the Review is to consider the challenge which the Council will face in relation to reception intake in 2016, 2017 and subsequent years to provide assurances that there is sufficient capacity in each of the 6 planning areas so that we can meet parental choice at acceptable levels. In 2015 94% were allocated their first choice school and over 97% were allocated one of their schools of choice. Where we are not able to meet parental choice, the challenge is to provide places in schools close to their homes. The current policy states that children should be offered a primary place within 2 miles of home.

Reviewing key aspects of the wider approach to school organisation that prevails in Stockton

Within Stockton there are 6 planning areas. These are Billingham and Wolviston, North Stockton, Central Stockton, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Eaglescliffe and Yarm.

Schools are associated to one of these planning areas and the issues relating to sufficiency and place planning are conducted in the context of these planning areas.

Every school in Stockton has an 'admissions zone' which is a defined geographical area in which the school is located and from which it will draw most or all of the pupils who attend the school. In Stockton where you live determines your admissions zone school. Of course, parents are entitled to apply for a place at any school, although they do so on the understanding that strict criteria will apply where there is over-subscription and that children living in zone will have priority over those who live out of zone (with the exception of SEN, LAC and those with siblings in the school). Although Stockton has an excellent record of children securing a place at their in-zone school, there have been circumstances recently where this has not been possible.

An alternative approach to school organisation operated by some local authorities is known as a catchment/feeder system. In this system primary schools have catchment areas (like zones) and secondary schools have feeder primaries, with the primary school that a child attends denoting which secondary school they would go to. This is a very different arrangement to the zone system which operates in Stockton.

The main aim of this aspect of the review will be to listen to the views of parents, governors and school leaders as part of a consideration of options and alternatives in school organisation. This will take into account over-subscription criteria, boundaries and what constitutes an exceptional circumstance. The findings will be reported to Cabinet once the review is complete.

Predicting pupil numbers is fundamental to both aspects of the review and Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise the approach that is taken to predicting demand. This process and the relevant data will be set out in the School Organisation Plan which will be considered by Committee prior to presentation to Cabinet.

**The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

- To understand the demand for primary places in the 6 planning areas and to be assured of sufficiency and acceptable level of meeting parental choice
- To examine the wider aspects of school organisation, the different approaches that can be undertaken and the zone system which currently operates in Stockton.
- To have an open dialogue with parents, governors and school leaders on the different

approaches to school organisation and which is the best system for Stockton	
<b>Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?</b>	
N/A	
<b>Expected duration of review and key milestones:</b>	
<p><b>10 months:</b>          Agree Scope and Project Plan – July 2015          School Organisation Plan 2015- 2019, Background Presentation/ Consultation Proposals;          Admissions proposals for 2017 and additional capacity plans for 2016 – September 2015          Obtaining Evidence/listening to the views of parents, school governors and school leaders on the approaches to school organisation September – December 2015          Report on consultation and recommendations - January 2016          Consideration of views and evidence on the approach to school organisation March/April 2016          Report to Cabinet - March 2016</p>	
<b>What information do we need?</b>	
<p>Reports from phase one.          Existing background information and legislative framework etc.          School Organisation Plan 2013-17          Pupil data and projected numbers          School Capacity (SCAP) 2015 return (as submitted to DfE)          Summary of recent and planned capital investment in Schools          School Admissions Code          Primary and Secondary Admissions booklet          Applying for a primary &amp; secondary school place information sent to parents          Maps of zone boundaries/scatter grams showing take up of places</p>	
Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)	What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?
Lynda Brown Jane Wright Darren Coulton	Service Overview and feedback, Statutory Responsibilities, current Issues
Garry Cummings	Capital Programme
<b>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. Financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</b>	
Desk Top survey, meetings with parents, governors and school leaders. Discussion at Committee Meetings	
<b>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</b>	
Organised discussion/focus groups	

**How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?**

The review will seek where possible to ensure that children with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged by admission arrangements.

**How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?**

The review will contribute to the delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy key priority: 'giving every child the best start in life' and other related objectives set out in the Strategy Delivery Plan.

**Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:**

The review may help inform service redesign / planning / commissioning to meet current / emerging need and potentially increase value for money.

## Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements

## Project Plan

<b>Chair (Project Director)</b> Councillor Carol Clark	<b>Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager)</b> Judy Trainer
<b>Departmental Link Officers</b> Lynda Brown (Jane Wright, Darren Coulton)	<b>Finance Link Officer</b> Garry Cummings

KEY TASK	DETAILS/ACTIVITIES	DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>Scoping of Review</b>	Information gathering	May – June 2015	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	3 July 2015	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Corporate Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Agree Project Plan</b>	Scope and Project Plan shared with Committee	15 July 2015 19 September 2015	Select Committee
<b>Publicity of Review</b>	e.g. Press Briefing at start of review	N/A	Chair, Link Officer, Press Officer Scrutiny Officer
<b>Obtaining Evidence</b>		15th July 2015: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background/ Context Setting</li> <li>• Possible additional session[s]</li> </ul>	Select Committee

		<p>for new members of CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals for engagement sessions and further work</li> </ul> <p>19 September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorse scope</li> <li>Background Presentation/ Consultation Proposals</li> <li>Admission Proposals/ Capacity Plans (for information)</li> </ul> <p>14 October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of School Organisation Plan 2015 – 2019, School Capital Plan and Admissions consultation 2017 (for information)</li> </ul>	
<b>Hearing evidence and views</b>	Consultation meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening to the views of parents, school governors and school leaders on the approaches to school organisation September – December 2015</li> </ul>	Select Committee
<b>Recommendations</b>	Consideration of Consultation Feedback and Select Committee Formulate Recommendations	13 January 2016	Select Committee

<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss outcome of evidence gathering and any responses to consultation	27 January 2016 11am	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Corporate Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Final report</b>		17 February 2016	Select Committee
<b>Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee</b>	Consideration of report	8 March 2016	Executive Scrutiny Committee
<b>Report to Cabinet</b>	Report of Review to Cabinet	17 March 2016	Cabinet