

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND PAN FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Committee name	Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
Officer reporting	Sarah Phillips, Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
Papers with report	Proposed Changes to the Admissions Criteria and Published Admissions Number (PAN) for some Community Schools - Cabinet Report
Ward	All

HEADLINES

Hillingdon Council has a statutory responsibility to secure sufficient early years and school places for children resident in Hillingdon. Over the last ten years the Council has worked closely with schools in Hillingdon to successfully deliver an ambitious programme of school expansion to ensure every child living in Hillingdon can be offered a school place as close to home as possible.

The proposed changes to the school admissions criteria contained in the Cabinet report will ensure that we continue to provide fair placement and review the impact, so that priority is given to children to access places at schools as close to their home as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

- 1. Review the proposed changes to Hillingdon's Admissions Arrangements detailed in the Cabinet report.**
- 2. Review the responses from the consultation on PAN changes to four community primary phase schools that are provided in the report below.**
- 3. Provide comments to be included in the Cabinet report which will be presented in February.**

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

There were only 5 different responses, and one of those was blank. The majority agreed with the proposals (3 of 4). This reflects that all the schools were contacted by the LA from February onwards and plans were discussed and prepared, including for headteachers to brief their governors and parents informally on the possibility of proposals to change PAN. In every case the schools are operating partly or wholly at the proposed reduced number now. The change will have no impact on current pupils, their siblings and other local parents wishing for future places at the school, though it will improve the use of resources to benefit pupils at the school. There have been similar discussions with the Foundation and Academy schools that decided to propose

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reductions, and the same points apply. All the schools will continue to be sustainable, viable and successful in their community.

One of the respondents raised concern at all the schools that choice and access would be reduced for residents. All these schools have large levels of vacancies and each has a handful of pupils travelling over five miles to them. Officers remain clear that all the proposed arrangements will still ensure that parents for whom it is their local school will all be able to secure a place and there will also be local choice. It is likely that some who live further away will also be able to secure a place, beyond the distance priority radius, which is set at 750m for a two-form entry school, and 1,000 metres for a three-form entry school. But no schools can afford to keep many empty places just in case parents from far away seek places. The School Admissions Brochure sets out in full the criteria that apply if schools that are oversubscribed.

A comment was made about Harefield village. It is uniquely isolated by miles of farmland around, and a comment was made that the reduced access to public transport impacts on residents having to travel to schools outside of the village. This is true and Harefield residents can be reassured that the aim is to always ensure sufficient primary places to meet the needs of residents living in Harefield. There are currently some parents travelling many miles into Harefield school, as it has spaces beyond meeting the local demand. There may still be some of these extra places, beyond the core role of the school to meet the needs of local residents.

All but one of the Community schools is graded 'Good' by Ofsted. Harefield Junior school is graded 'Requires Improvement' and is managed by a federated governing body and Executive headteacher together with Harefield Infants school (which is graded Good). In addition, though the proposal to reduce PAN was agreed, a concern was made about the quality of education. The LA is giving active support to this school in its improvement and Officers will consider the specific comments made.

To conclude, it is clear the consultation responses do not indicate any local residents would be unable to secure a place at their local preferred school, or than any particular group will be disproportionately affected by the proposed changes.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A public consultation was open between Monday 25 October 2021 and Monday 20 December, 12pm 2021. A summary of consultation responses is detailed below in Appendix 1.

Implications on related Council policies

A role of the Select Committee is to make recommendations to the Cabinet on service changes and improvements, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Over the past year officers have reviewed all schools and discussed proposals with headteachers and governors in the four community schools. Headteachers have updated parents over the summer term in newsletters that a reduction in PAN was being considered, referencing that the

schools already have many year groups operating at the proposed lower PAN and this proposal would give stability to classes and benefit pupils, and that siblings and other local parents would still be able to access the school. No parents expressed concerns. This was in advance of the formal consultation.

Once proposed changes are agreed it will ensure fair placement and that priority is continued to be given to children to access places at schools as close to their home as possible.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it will help reduce the financial pressure on these individual schools and the risk of these schools running into deficit. Additionally, it will also reduce the risk of maintained schools requesting contributions from the council to meet redundancy costs in relation to staffing restructures. The spare physical space can be used in future if rolls rise in the relevant areas, and will be used by the schools meanwhile, or kept empty.

It is important that the Committee considers cost effective proposals that benefit resident taxpayers in relation to this review, which would ultimately be determined by Cabinet as part of the Council's broader budget planning process.

Legal Implications

The proposals for changes to the Council's admissions criteria, which the Cabinet have been invited to consider comply with the DfE School Admissions Code 2021. Therefore, it is lawful for the Council to have commenced a consultation exercise in relation to these proposals.

APPENDIX 1:

Consultation Responses

Five responses were received in total during the consultation period, but one was a blank response. All were submitted via the online questionnaire. A summary of responses is detailed below:

1. Two respondents stated that they had children under the age of 18 living in their household. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide information on their interest in the proposals.
 1. Parent/carer/guardian - 2
 2. An Early Years Professional - 1
 3. Other – 1
 4. Did not specify - 1
2. Respondents were invited to state which school(s) their child(ren) currently attend and the responses were as follows:
 - Harefield Junior School – 1
 - Deanesfield Primary School - 1
 - Did not specify - 3
3. Respondents were invited to state why they had chosen their child(ren)'s current school(s) and the responses were as follows (where a response was received):
 - Close to home - 1
 - Other (no further detail supplied) – 1
 - Did not specify - 3
4. Two respondents gave contact details, neither of these respondents had made comments to which required further explanation. All responses have been given due consideration and have assisted with a review of additional improvements which can be implemented.

Below are the responses to specific questions on each individual change proposed:

Do you agree with the proposed admission arrangements for Hillingdon Community Schools?

- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 1*
- Blank: 1

**The respondent who disagreed suggested that the Council review the education settings that have fewer admission numbers against the quality of teaching in these provisions.*

Proposal 1: Change to measuring point - Whitehall Infant & Nursery School.

Amendment to the point of measurement for school applications for Whitehall Infant & Nursery School.

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- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 3
 - Disagree: 0
 - Blank: 1
 - Not applicable response: 1

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 1*
 - No: 2
 - Blank: 2

**The respondent who answered 'yes' that changes would disadvantage residents stated that the change may reduce access for parental preference.*

Proposal 2: Change to measuring point Yeading Infant School

Amendment to the point of measurement for school applications for Yeading Infant School.

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 3
 - Disagree: 0
 - Blank: 1
 - Not applicable: 1

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 0
 - No: 3
 - Blank: 2

Proposal 3: Change to measuring point Yeading Junior School

Amendment to the point of measurement for school applications for Yeading Junior School.

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 3
 - Disagree: 0
 - Blank: 1
 - Not applicable: 1

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 0
 - No: 3
 - Blank: 2

Proposal 4: Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) Harefield Infant School

The Local Authority is consulting to reduce the PAN for Harefield Infant School from 90 to 60 from September 2023

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 2
 - Disagree: 2*
 - Blank: 1

**The respondents who disagreed with the changes stated:*

- 1) *that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*
- 2) *that the Council review the education settings against the quality of teaching in this provision.*

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 2*
 - No: 2
 - Blank: 1

**The respondents who disagreed with the changes stated:*

- 1) *that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*
- 2) *the reduced access to public transport impacts on residents having to travel to schools outside of the village.*

Proposal 5: Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) Harefield Junior School

The Local Authority is consulting to reduce the PAN for Harefield Junior School from 90 to 60 from September 2023.

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 2
 - Disagree: 2*
 - Blank: 1

**The respondents who disagreed with the changes stated:*

- 1) *that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*
- 2) *that the Council review the education settings against the quality of teaching in this provision.*

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 2*
 - No: 2
 - Blank: 1

**The respondent who answered 'yes' that changes would disadvantage residents stated:*

- 1) *that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*
- 2) *parents are seeking school places outside of the local area.*

Proposal 6: Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) Harlyn Primary School

The Local Authority is consulting to reduce the PAN for Harlyn Primary School from 90 to 60 from September 2023.

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 2
 - Disagree: 1*
 - Blank: 1
 - Not applicable: 1

**The respondent who disagreed with the changes stated:*

- 1) *that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*

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- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 1
 - No: 2
 - Blank: 2

**The respondent who answered 'yes' that changes would disadvantage residents stated:
1) that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*

Proposal 7: Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) Field End Infant School

The Local Authority is consulting to reduce the PAN for Field End Infant School from 120 to 90 from September 2023.

- Do you agree with this proposed change to the above admissions criteria?
 - Agree: 2
 - Disagree: 1*
 - Blank: 1
 - Not applicable: 1

**The respondent who disagreed with the changes stated:
1) that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*

- Do you think this proposed change will disadvantage any residents in Hillingdon?
 - Yes: 0
 - No: 2
 - Blank: 3*

**One of the respondents who left this question blank did go on to provide the following feedback:
1) that the reduction in PAN may disadvantage residents to access a preferred school.*

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL