

**By:** Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education  
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**To:** Cabinet – 29 March 2010

**Subject:** COORDINATED CASUAL ADMISSIONS SCHEME AND LOCAL AUTHORITY PROPOSED CO-ORDINATED SCHEMES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENT AND ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS 2011 /12

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** To report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed admission arrangements for transfer to Primary and Secondary schools in September 2011 and the proposed scheme for casual Admissions from September 2010.

Cabinet is also asked to determine the In Year Casual Admission process, the admission arrangements for the 2011 school year and determine the coordinated schemes for Primary & Secondary Admissions in Kent.

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) The Local Authority (LA), as the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, is required to consult on its proposed admission arrangements for these schools annually, and to determine its admission arrangements by 15 April each year.

(2) The Education Act 2002 introduced a duty on each LA, to formulate a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools in its area and to take action to secure the agreement to the scheme by all admission authorities. In addition a new requirement has been introduced to coordinate casual admissions from 2010. There have been a number of reservations to coordinating casual admissions expressed by both the LA and individual admission authorities. There is however a duty on the LA to do this from September and agreement has been reached by Kent Admission Authorities to work within the proposed arrangements if determined. Cabinet are requested to determine the Casual Admissions Scheme from September 2010 the Co-ordinated scheme for Admissions to Primary and Secondary schools in Kent for 2011 and the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

(3) All admission arrangements identified in this document are outside the arrangements for pupils with statements of special education need which take place in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2001) Paragraph 5.72.

(4) The LA has consulted the headteachers and chairmen of governors of all Kent primary and secondary schools; neighbouring LAs; diocesan bodies; independent schools (which have pupils transferring to secondary schools); parents and parental groups on its proposals to co-ordinate admissions to all Kent Primary and Secondary schools in September 2011.

(5) The LA consulted with the Admissions Forum on the content of the consultation and reported back to the forum on 12 February 2010. The Admissions Forum expressed its reservations at the introduction of the Casual Admissions process but recognising the legal duty on the LA supported the proposed schemes with a minor amendment to the proposed timescale for data exchanges between schools and the LA.

### **Consultation and Outcome**

2. (1) The consultations considered the following aspects:

- (a) The Coordinated In Year Casual Admissions Scheme 2010
- (b) The Primary Co-ordinated Admission Scheme for 2011/12;
- (c) The Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Scheme for 2011/12;
- (d) Over-subscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools 2011/12;
- (e) The relevant statutory consultation areas for Primary and Secondary schools 2011/12;
- (f) Published admission numbers for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools 2011/12.

#### **(a) The Co-ordinated In Year Casual Admissions Scheme**

3. (1) All Admissions Authorities in Kent agreed the Casual Admissions Scheme to be introduced from September 2010. Feedback to the consultation was very critical of the introduction of this new requirement which will increase bureaucracy for both schools and the LA and in some instances may actually make it harder for children to secure school places quickly. 60% of respondents initially refused to agree to the proposed arrangements as a result, but LA officers were able to broker agreement for a slightly amended scheme. This agreement has been secured primarily because it was recognized that if no agreement was reached locally a scheme would need to be imposed by the Secretary of State and on balance it was preferable to come up with something that we know will work locally. The introduction of this new requirement does however have the potential to improve the safeguarding of children, and research carried out elsewhere (Somerset) has shown that the majority of parents would prefer to have a single point of contact in relation to identifying school places as opposed to having to visit several different schools. This is especially the case where parents are seeking to identify a school place ahead of a move into a new area. Whilst this will prove to be a significant change to existing

practice and is understandably being met with concern and resistance, it has the potential to greatly simplify things for parents in the longer term when it becomes standard practice to go straight to the home LA for all school admissions enquiries. Whilst there has been little support for the introduction of this new process from schools, Kent admissions authorities have agreed to work to the proposed scheme, if determined. A copy of the agreed In Year Casual Admissions Scheme proposed for determination is attached in Appendix A.

#### **(b) The Coordinated 2011 Primary Admissions Scheme**

(2) All Admissions Authorities within Kent agreed to the proposed Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme for 2011. This is broadly in line with dates used for the 2010 process with the inclusion of the casual arrangements consulted on for introduction from September 2010. In addition the new scheme has included specific guidance on provisions for Children with Statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) so schools will be clear of their duties in relation to managing applications from SEN pupils and requirements relating to Children in Local Authority Care (LAC) these additions will improve understanding and in relation to LAC remind placing LA's of their duty to include education plans within the overall care plans of LAC children, before they are placed outside of their home LA. A copy of the Primary Admissions Scheme is attached in Appendix B

#### **(c) The Secondary Coordinated Scheme**

(3) The Secondary Coordinated Scheme was agreed by all Kent Admissions Authorities. No comments were received specific to the Secondary scheme. This is not unexpected because the scheme dates have remained broadly similar for the last two years, with no proposed changes other than the introduction of the coordination of casual admission arrangements and these have been commented on through the in year casual admission scheme. One concern is the introduction of a national closing date for Secondary Admissions; this has been set as 31<sup>st</sup> October. This is unhelpful for parents because it is the end of the October half term and no schools will be open and no teachers are available to assist parents in the week leading up to the closing date. The scheme proposes to accept applications up to 5 days after the National closing date as 'on-time' to give parents the opportunity to discuss options with their child's primary Headteacher. As with the Primary Scheme, the wording has been strengthened to include specific guidance on provisions for Children with Statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) so schools will be clear of their duties in relation to managing applications from SEN pupils and requirements relating to Children in Local Authority Care (LAC). These additions will improve understanding and in relation to LAC remind placing LA's of their duty to include education plans within the overall care plans of LAC children before they are placed outside of their home LA. The details of the proposed scheme for determination is attached in Appendix C.

#### **(d) The Oversubscription Criteria for Primary and Secondary Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.**

The oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools have one minor change to the wording of the 'Health and Special Access Reasons' criterion this was following legal advice relating to meeting our duties under the DDA. Nothing else has changed from 2010/11. The over subscription criteria for voluntary controlled primary

schools have a similarly worded change to secondary relating to Health and Special Access Reasons' and have changed in that siblings have been given a higher priority than children ticking the 'faith box' for church schools. This change has been agreed and supported by the Admissions Forum which has representation from all the relevant diocese and diocesan boards. Details of the oversubscription criteria for Primary Community and VC schools is outlined in Appendix B(2). Details of the oversubscription criteria for Secondary Community and VC schools is outlined in Appendix C(2).

#### **(e) Relevant Statutory Consultation Area**

Details of the relevant statutory consultation areas have not changed from 2010/11, details for the Primary arrangements are in Appendix B(3) and Secondary arrangements in Appendix C(3).

#### **(f) Published Admission Numbers**

6. The proposed Published Admission Numbers(PAN) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary schools are identified in Appendix B(4) and for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary schools they are detailed in Appendix C(4) . Please note that the LA can only determine the admission number for schools where it is the Admissions Authority for the school. Where there has been a proposed change from the current determined admission number these are 'bold' with the previous PAN indicated in brackets.

#### **Recommendations**

7. Cabinet is asked TO ACCEPT AND DETERMINE
- (a) The proposed In Year Casual Admissions Scheme from September 2010 as set out in Appendix A
  - (b) The proposed scheme to co-ordinate admissions to Primary schools in September 2011 as set out in Appendix B (1).
  - (c) The proposed scheme to co-ordinate admissions to Secondary schools in September 2011 as set out in Appendix C (1).
  - (d) The oversubscription criteria detailed in Appendix B (2) and Appendix C (2) relating to Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools.
  - (e) The relevant statutory consultation areas detailed in Appendix B (3) and Appendix C (3) relating to Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools.
  - (f) That the Published Admission Numbers for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools are determined as set out in Appendix B (4) and Appendix C (4).

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