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To: Cabinet – 19 March 2012

Subject: PROPOSED CO-ORDINATED SCHEMES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENT AND ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS 2013 /14

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed admission arrangements for transfer to Primary and Secondary schools in September 2013 and the scheme for In Year Casual Admissions. Cabinet is asked to determine the In Year Casual Admission process, the admission arrangements for the 2013 school year and determine the co-ordinated schemes for Primary & Secondary Admissions in Kent.

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, 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. The School Admissions Code 2012 removes the requirement for each LA to co-ordinate casual in year admissions. As the LA and many individual admissions authorities expressed a number of reservations when this requirement was introduced, casual in year co-ordination has been removed from the Primary and Secondary schemes. Cabinet are requested to agree the Co-ordinated scheme for Admissions to Primary and Secondary schools in Kent for 2013 and determine 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 2013.

(5) The LA consulted with the Admissions Forum on the proposed changes prior to consultation on 10 November 2011. The admissions forum was supportive of the proposed arrangements.

Consultation and Outcome

2. (1) The LA consultation ran from the 1 November 2011 to 14 January 2012 and considered the following aspects:

- a) The Primary Co-ordinated Admission Scheme including a revised In Year admissions process for 2013/14;
- b) The Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Scheme including a revised In Year admissions process for 2013/14;
- c) Over-subscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior schools 2013/14;
- d) Over-subscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary schools 2013/14;
- e) Published admission numbers for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior Schools 2013/14;
- f) Published admission numbers for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools 2013/14;
- g) The relevant statutory consultation areas for Primary and Secondary schools 2013/14;

(a) The Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme 2013 incorporating the revised In Year admissions process

(2) All Admissions Authorities within Kent agreed to the proposed Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme for 2013. The scheme dates are set out in a similar way to last year following broadly similar scheme dates. Primary National offer day does not come into effect until 2014/15, however, Primary offer day has been moved to early April in this scheme in preparation for the transition. The LA will cease to co-ordinate in year admissions from September 2013, in line with the removal of the requirement in the School Admissions Code 2012. The scheme still specifies a process for schools to follow when making offers and includes a requirement to inform the LA of all applications and offers to allow continued monitoring and maintain safeguarding practices.

The details of the scheme for determination is located in Appendix A

Feedback from this section of the consultation can be summarised as follows:

No Infant Junior and Primary schools refused to accept the proposed scheme.

One school raised concerns that returning the in year process to schools could result in some parents receiving offers from multiple schools. *(While it is understood that a return to schools overseeing in year admissions could result in some parents receiving more than one offer, the disadvantages of the process, namely, increased length of time children kept out of school and the significant burden on the LA to facilitate, outweigh this issue. The LA has ensured that safeguarding of vulnerable children is better monitored than when schools previously processed in year applications, but it is not possible to hand this process back and also co-ordinate by proxy to ensure multiple offers are not made.)*

(b) The Co-ordinated Secondary Admissions Scheme 2012 incorporating the In Year admissions process

(3) The Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme was agreed by all Kent Admissions Authorities.

The details of the proposed scheme for determination are located in Appendix B

Feedback from this section of the consultation can be summarised as follows:

One school initially did not accept the scheme (Orchards Academy) raising concerns about the five day timescale for schools to respond to in year applications. They felt that it often takes longer for existing schools to send over supporting information, meaning timescales were often missed. *(Officers explained that these timescales provided sufficient time for a decision to be taken whilst recognising that there will be exceptional circumstances leading to delays when schools fail to provide pupils' details. It was however explained that extending timescales for all applications to be processed by schools would be detrimental to the process which in most circumstances could be completed more quickly – the Academy agreed to comply with the scheme.)*

No other issues were raised.

(c) The Oversubscription Criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant Junior and Primary schools in Kent

The oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled Infant Junior and Primary Schools is broadly the same to that used in 2012. Wording for the distance criterion has been slightly amended to better reflect the current process used to calculate it. Children in Local Care has been amended to include children no longer looked after following an adoption and Health and Special Access Reasons has been amended to reference the Equality Act 2010 following changes in the School Admissions Code.

Details of the oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled Infant. Junior and Primary Schools are located in appendix C (1)

Feedback to this part of the consultation can be summarised as follows:

Two schools had issues with the exception for siblings from multiple births (twins, triplets, etc) that apply for a school and the school would reach its Published Admission Number (PAN) after admitting one or more, but before admitting all of those siblings, where the LA will offer a place to each of the siblings, even if doing so takes the school above its PAN. They felt that it was unfair on the school if the exception continued into the next school year, whereby the school would be responsible for funding additional support. One school commented that the exception should continue until the end of Key Stage 1. *(The new school admissions code has relaxed the duty on schools in regard to excepted pupils and in future the child will remain excepted whilst in infant classes. In effect the financial burden schools faced the following year if numbers didn't fall below 30 is no longer an issue. It remains a concern however for schools having to teach class sizes above 30.*

Two schools requested that priority should be allowed for children that have attended their nursery. *(Admissions arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are designed to support local communities to attend their local schools. There are many reasons why a parent may not be in a position to send their child to a school's nursery and often parents will choose nurseries close to work rather than home. Introducing such a policy could unfairly disadvantage parents that want to care for pre school children at home and live near to the school).*

One school requested that the new option to give priority to children of teachers should also be included. *(This could unfairly exclude local children from gaining a place at the school, so is not in line with the other arrangements).*

One school queried whether there was a limit to how long a child could apply under the Children in Local Authority Care criterion once they had been adopted. *(There is no time limit on children applying under this criterion and it is mandatory).*

One school requested that the faith criteria tick box be reinstated. *(This criterion was removed last year following consultation. It caused significant confusion for parents, was widely regarded as unfair and was found to be unlawful under the previous admission code).*

One school disagreed with a sibling link being broken if a parent moves more than 2 miles from the school between applications. *(This has been a long standing caveat to the sibling criterion and is in place to ensure schools continue to support their local communities. It is not proposed that this be changed.)*

(d) The Oversubscription Criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary schools in Kent

The proposed wording for the oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled Secondary Schools is broadly similar to that used in 2012. Wording for the distance criterion has been slightly amended to better reflect the current process used to calculate it. Children in Local Care has been amended to include children no longer looked after following an adoption and Health and Special Access Reasons has been amended to make appropriate reference to the Equality Act 2010 following changes in the School Admissions Code. Reference to Schemes of Education have also been removed when

calculating home to school distance. The changing educational landscape in Kent has rendered the Schemes of Education largely irrelevant for admissions purposes.

Details of the oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled Secondary Schools in Kent are located in appendix D (1)

Feedback to this part of the consultation can be summarised as follows:

One school raised its concerns (again) in regard to the Dover Grammar Schools being able to admit pupils both through the LA testing arrangements and through their own 'Dover Tests'. It considered that as a result those children at the higher end of the ability range were being drawn out of local non selective schools disproportionately which impacted negatively on those schools. The LA considers this to be a valid point, but the Schools Adjudicator has not upheld either of the challenges brought against the admission arrangements for Dover Grammar School for Boys in recent years.

(e) Published Admission Numbers

The proposed Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior schools are identified in Appendix C (2) and for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary schools are detailed in Appendix D (2). Please note that the LA can only determine the admission number for schools where it is the Admissions Authority and the schools listed fall into this category.

(f) Relevant Statutory Consultation Area

Details of the relevant statutory consultation areas have not changed from 2012/13, however, the wording has been amended to reflect the new timescales for consulting when no change has been made. Details for the Primary arrangements are in appendix C (3) and Secondary arrangements in appendix D (3).

Recommendations

7. Cabinet is asked TO ACCEPT AND DETERMINE
 - a) The Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme 2013 incorporating the In Year admissions process as detailed in Appendix A
 - b) The Co-ordinated Secondary Admissions Scheme 2013 incorporating the In Year admissions process as detailed in Appendix B
 - c) The oversubscription criteria relating to Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant, Junior and Primary schools in Kent as detailed in Appendix C (1)
 - d) The oversubscription criteria relating to Community and Voluntary controlled Secondary schools in Kent as detailed in Appendix D (1)
 - e) The Published Admissions Number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant, Junior and Primary Schools as set out in Appendix C (2)
 - f) The Published Admissions Number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools as set out in Appendix D (2)
 - g) The relevant statutory consultation areas for Kent primary schools as detailed in Appendix C (3) and the relevant statutory consultation areas for Kent Secondary Schools as set out in Appendix D (3)

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