

CONSULTATION ON RELEVANT AREAS 2007/08

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1. Purpose of the Report

To ask the Admissions Forum to comment on the proposal for consultation on the Relevant Areas for Hertfordshire for admissions for 2007-2008.

2. Summary

2.1 The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 place a responsibility on LEAs to determine Relevant Areas, after due consultation. The purpose of these areas is to ensure that all admission authorities are properly consulted about the admission arrangements which affect them and the communities they serve.

2.2 LEAs are required to consult on and review relevant areas every two years. The last consultation in Hertfordshire was in November 2003.

3. Current Arrangements within Hertfordshire

3.1 There are currently twenty one relevant areas within Hertfordshire for admissions in 2005-6.

3.2 The current relevant areas were developed in 2003 to reflect recent patterns of allocation at secondary transfer, with primary schools being linked to those secondary schools to which a significant proportion of their pupils had transferred in recent years.

3.3 At the time of developing these relevant areas in 2003 the Admissions Forum came to the view that it would be appropriate for the County to be divided into smaller Relevant Areas for admission purposes on the basis of the following principles:

1. they should reflect recent patterns of allocations from primary to secondary school,
2. they should reflect travel to school patterns and geographical proximity,
3. they should be as small as possible in order to reduce bureaucracy on schools.

3.4 The Resources Panel at that time endorsed these principles, but added a fourth one:

- They should not cut across urban areas.

As a result of these principles, twenty one relevant areas were created.

4. Review of Priority Areas

4.1 In order to proceed and complete the consultation on relevant areas this term, it is proposed to:

Maintain the status quo of 21 Relevant Areas which are well established, meet the set of principles established two years ago and serve the purpose of providing reasonable geographical areas within which to consult upon admission arrangements, but to adapt the following relevant areas to reflect changes in some priority areas:

Relevant Area	Parish/Town out of County but included in priority areas	LEA
1	Edworth	Bedfordshire
6	Birchanger	Essex
6	Elsenham	Essex
6	Great Hallingbury	Essex
6	Little Hallingbury	Essex
16	Nazeing	Essex
18	Northwood	Hillingdon
18	Pinner	Harrow
10	Sheering	Essex

The Forum should note that including out-County areas in relevant areas allows the neighbouring LEAs whose geographical areas are included to object to the consultation on relevant areas.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is concluded from the above that the LEA should consult upon the above. It is therefore planned to consult with all statutory consultees on the twenty one relevant areas commencing on 20 October 2005 for an eight week period. This timetable would ensure the relevant area consultation is completed in time for the annual statutory admissions consultation due to commence on 3 January 2006.

5.2 However, although it is felt that the status quo should be maintained for the 2007-2008 admission arrangements, inclusive of the minor changes outlined above, there are a number of issues relating to the relevant areas which would benefit from further complex modelling work. The Forum may be aware that the priority areas and relevant areas do not align. There may be circumstances where a parent lives in a priority area, but is not included in the relevant area, and should they wish to object to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, their objection would be invalid. This would be addressed by:

- looking at the alignment of priority areas and relevant areas,
- looking at the correlation between relevant areas and single-sex priority areas.

Other areas which should be examined include:

- identifying changing patterns of applications and allocations, particularly to faith schools as these are likely to change with the opening of Hertsmere Jewish High School in Borehamwood in 2007,
- identifying patterns of cross border traffic, especially where the nearest school is over the County boundary.

This will be carried out to inform proposals for relevant areas for 2008-09.