

**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
SCHOOL ADMISSION RULES 2002-03**

Report of Director of Education

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1. Purpose of the report

To consider proposals for

- a) reviewing the existing admission rules for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools; and
- b) consulting on and determining the rules to be used for the academic year 2002-03.

2. Summary

The report sets out a process which must end on 15 April 2001 in order to meet the DfEE deadline for consulting on community and voluntary controlled secondary, primary and nursery admission rules for 2002-03.

3. Conclusions

3.1. That the Student Services Panel should be asked to:

- a) review the secondary admission rules; and
- b) review the primary admission rules and, in so doing, involve a wide range of interested parties in focus group discussions across the County. The Panel should also consider using MORI or NFER to undertake these discussions in order to demonstrate independence.

3.2. That the rules for nursery schools and classes should be the same as for primary schools.

- 3.3. That the outcomes of the review should be reported to Cabinet 18 December to allow the Executive committee on that day to make a decision:
- a) on the admission rules it prefers for September 2002; and
 - b) to authorise and decide on the consultation to be undertaken during January and February 2001.
- 3.4. The results of consultation should be considered by the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 28 March 2001 and then by a special meeting of:
- the Cabinet on (to be agreed)
 - the County Council on (to be agreed, but before 15 April 2001)
- 3.5. The Cabinet is asked to indicate whether it wishes any particular aspect of the rules to be reviewed.

1.0 **Background**

Each year the County Council needs to consult on and determine the admission rules for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The way in which it does this needs to:

- a) conform to the DfEE timetable for consulting on and determining admission rules which is:
 - consult on admission rules to end February 2001
 - determine rules by 15 April 2001
 - notify consultees of rules by 29 April 2001
- b) fit in with the County Council's decision making process.

2. **Proposals**

2.1 Cabinet should ask a Panel to undertake the following during October and November 2000 and to report back to the Cabinet on 18 December 2000:

- a) To review the existing secondary admission rules in the light of this year's admissions and, if appropriate, make proposals for changes for September 2002.
- b) To take forward the Education Committee resolution of 12 July: "that the Director of Education undertake appropriate consultative discussions with a view to developing proposals for a sustainable and balanced Primary Admissions Policy for September 2002.....".

This should involve holding focus group discussions across the county with a very wide range of interested parties. The issues to be explored would include the relative importance of keeping siblings together and ensuring that local children can be admitted to their local school. A standard format for these discussions would be adopted and responses recorded. To demonstrate independence it is proposed that an organisation with expertise in securing the views of the public should be used to undertake this task, for example NFER or MORI.

2.2. On 18 December, the Cabinet should receive the views of the Panel, and then:

- a) decide on the secondary admission rules it prefers for September 2002
- b) decide on the primary admission rules it prefers for September 2002; and

- c) authorise consultation on these proposed rules during January and February 2001. The nature of the consultation would depend upon the extent of any changes proposed. For example, if existing admission rules were to continue to be used, statutory consultees only would be required as was the case this year. On the other hand, if an important change were to be proposed, consultation with a wide number of parents and interested parties should be undertaken.
- 2.3. The results of consultation for secondary schools should go to a Panel and then to the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 28 March 2001.

It should be noted that the Education Committee resolution of 12 July stated that the Select Committee of 24 January 2000 should be used. The proposed timetable does not allow for this because it would not allow sufficient time for consultation and the DfEE timetable requires consultation to the end of February 2001.

- 2.4. The views of the Select Committee of 28 March should then be received by a special meeting of the Cabinet in early April and then a special meeting of the County Council would need to be held by 15 April in order to agree the rules.

The necessity for these two special meetings arise because of the DfEE requirement to determine the rules by 15 April and there being no County Council meeting between 15 February and 22 May 2001.

3. Other Considerations

- 3.1. A Student Services Panel is due to meet on 19 September. This Panel has traditionally considered admission issues and it would be helpful to start the first stage (October – November) of the process as soon as possible. While a report cannot go to the 19 September meeting because a decision has not been taken by the Cabinet, the Panel could receive an oral report and then a series of meetings could be set up to undertake the work.
- 3.2. Consultation on rules for admission to nursery would be run alongside the above. Previous consultees have shown a wish for nursery rules to be the same as primary and that has been the approach taken by the County Council. There is no statutory requirement on consult on admission rules.
- 3.3. The Cabinet is asked whether it wishes any particular aspect of the admission rules to be reviewed.

Background information referred to by the author.

None.