

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES RESOURCES PANEL
WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2002 AT 2.00 PM**

<p>Agenda Item No:</p>

**REVIEW OF ADMISSIONS RULES FOR COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS
2003/04**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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Executive Member: Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of report

- (a) To provide an interim analysis of the results of statutory consultation
- (b) To invite proposals for Cabinet consideration (to follow on completion of consultation)

2. Summary

Initial indications are that the proposed admissions rules are generally supported. The main area of concern has been the proposal to generate a revised priority area for Harpenden, Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

3. Conclusions

Members of the Resources Panel will wish to make recommendations to the Cabinet for consideration on 22 March.

1. Background

- 1.1 An extensive informal consultation exercise took place between 1 November and 17 December which put forward proposals based on:
- (a) Amendments to existing rules to:
- keep siblings in the same year group together when one of them is given the last place at an oversubscribed school
 - measure distances from the nearest non-faith co-educational school rather than the nearest alternative which is under-subscribed with first rank applications
 - measure along roads and lit paths for journeys in both rural and urban areas.
- (b) New concepts:
- Broad priority areas
 - Priority for the children of staff to reduce recruitment and retention difficulties
 - Selection of up to 10% of pupils by aptitude in schools with a specialism.
- 1.2 27 meetings were held which were attended by 950 people. 1205 written responses were received along with 79 letters. All of the proposals received some degree of support (summary attached as Appendix A).
- 1.3 As a result of further modelling and comments received during the consultation process, a number of adjustments were made to the priority areas for both single-sex and co-educational schools. A set of detailed proposals was then discussed by the Resources Committee on 10 January and formed a basis for recommendations to the Cabinet on 28 January.
- 1.4 Statutory consultation began on 1 February and will finish on 15 March.

2. Statutory consultation proposals

- 2.1 On the basis of the informal consultation and further modelling work, the following rules have been proposed for co-educational community schools:
- Rule 1:** Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school
- Rule 2:** Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school
- Rule 3:** Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application.
- Rule 4:** Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties.

Rule 5: Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies

Rule 6 : Children who live in the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.

This rule will be applied until 90% of places at the school have been allocated.

Rule 7: Children who live in the priority area who live closest to the school.

Rule 8: Children who live outside the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.

Rule 9: Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.

2.2 The proposed co-educational priority areas on which the statutory proposals are based are as follows:

- (1) Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth
- (2) Buntingford, Puckeridge and Royston
- (3) Hertford and Ware
- (4) Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Broxbourne and Hoddesdon
- (5) Baldock and villages
- (6) Hitchin and Letchworth
- (7) Stevenage
- (8) Welwyn, Hatfield and Potters Bar
- (9) St Albans
- (10) Harpenden, Sandridge and Wheathampstead
- (11) Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead
- (12) South West Herts
- (13) Hertsmere West

A more detailed description of the constituent towns/parishes in each co-educational priority area is attached as Appendix B.

2.3 The development of a revised priority area for Harpenden, Wheathampstead and Sandridge was based upon the need to make appropriate provision for families in Wheathampstead and the fact that 65% of allocations to Sandringham school over the last 3 years have been from Sandridge and Wheathampstead. There are 1352 school places in the remainder of the St Albans area for an annual cohort of approximately 960 pupils. Consequently there should be sufficient capacity for those who are not allocated a place at Sandringham providing the number of children allocated places

from outside the area is moderated, which the establishment of a separate priority area will help to achieve.

2.4 The proposed rules for single sex community schools are as follows:-

Rule 1: Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school

Rule 2: Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school

Rule 3: Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application

Rule 4: Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties.

Rule 5 : Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies

Rule 6: Children who live in the priority area. Places will be allocated to each parish or town in proportion to the number of applications made. In the event of there being more applications than places available to a particular parish or town, places will be allocated in the following order:-

- (i) to those who would have to travel further to another non-faith maintained school than the one applied for.
- (ii) to those living closest to the school

Rule 7: Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.

2.5 Further details of the proposed priority areas for single-sex schools are attached as Appendix C.

3. **Interim consultation outcomes**

3.1 Consultation proposals were agreed by the Cabinet on 28 January. Headteacher briefings were held on 30 and 31 January and 20,000 copies of the consultation document were distributed to schools on 6 February for all Year parents. The consultation process has involved all statutory consultees and a wide range of parents and others

3.2 A round of Public Meetings began on 11 February and finished on 7 March. Attendance at the meetings was variable although more than 350 people attended the meeting at Sandringham School.

3.3 As of 5 March, 571 response booklets and 40 letters had been received. Of the 453 response booklets analysed to date approximately 80% of respondents either agree or largely agree with the proposals as a whole. The responses to individual questions are as follows :-

Question	No. of responses	% agreeing or largely agreeing
1. Do you agree with our new proposals for Priority areas?	442	83.03%
2. Do you agree with our new rule to give priority for the children of staff permanently employed at the school when the Governors feel it is necessary to reduce recruitment or retention difficulties?	444	77.03%
3. Do you agree with our new rule to allow schools with a specialism to select up to 10% of pupils on the basis of aptitude when the Governors request it?	439	73.58%
4. Do you agree with our new rule to prioritise places for children living in the priority area to attend their nearest non-faith school?	433	89.15%
5. Do you agree with our new rule to distribute places for single sex schools to towns and parishes in the priority area according to the number of applications received?	419	83.05%

(* % of figures relate to the number of people responding to each question)

3.4 Most of the letters and other comments received to date relate to the proposals for the St Albans Priority Area. This is an extremely difficult issue for which there is no easy answer. The basis for the proposal is the need to improve the chances of parents in Wheathampstead and other villages to secure places in their Priority Area. Pressure on places in Harpenden from a very wide geographical area makes this very difficult to achieve.

3.5 The arguments for and against the proposals are finely balanced according to which community is being considered. The main arguments raised against the proposal for a Harpenden, Sandridge and Wheathamstead priority area have been:-

- (a) the fact that Sandringham is seen by local people as a St Albans school;
- (b) the split from Marshalswick, Birchwood and New Greens areas caused by the parish boundary;

- (c) a reduction in choice for St Albans residents;
- (d) the possible knock-on effects for other St Albans schools and Beaumont in particular;
- (e) the possibility of longer and more hazardous journeys for some St Albans pupils who are no longer able to get a place at Sandringham – particularly the Birchwood and New Greens areas for whom Beaumont would be very difficult to reach;
- (f) the potential impact of further house building in the area, and
- (g) worries by the school about the impact on consortium arrangements, its application to become a specialist arts college in collaboration with Beaumont and Verulam, its long term pupil recruitment prospects and possible changes in the demography of its population.

3.6 On the other hand the proposals do help Wheathampstead which has a traditional link with Sandringham School. Also, by reducing the pressure on Harpenden schools, the proposal increases the likelihood of other villages such as Markyate, Flamstead and Kimpton securing places in the Priority Area. Other considerations are that:-

- Sandridge is part of St Albans and modelling on historical patterns of applications suggest that there are still likely to be places allocated to other parts of St Albans.
- Children living in close proximity to Sandringham (for instance in the Marshalswick area) will have priority under rules 8 and 9.
- There are 1352 places available in the remainder of St Albans for a typical cohort of around 960 pupils.
- Planning and building programmes will take the future needs of St Albans into account in their own right but the options to increase capacity in Harpenden is very limited.

4. **Conclusion**

4.1 At the time of writing, the consultation is still underway and a significant number of questionnaires and letters are expected in the next 2 weeks. Trends will be analysed and reported in full to the meeting of the Panel on 20 March.

4.2 The position of Sandridge is a complex one. On the one hand there is very significant rejection of the proposals by St Albans residents and Sandringham School itself, whereas feedback to date is that those living in the proposed Harpenden, Sandridge and Wheathampstead Priority Area are in favour of the proposals.

5. **Financial Implications**

None.

If you would like to know more about the issue referred to in this report please contact Alan Sapsford on 01992 588500 or Nick Powley on 01992 555933

APPENDIX A - RESULTS OF THE INITIAL INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Who responded?

Parents	1066
Hertfordshire Schools	77
Local Councillors	32
Other statutory consultees	23
Not indicated	7
TOTAL	1205

What did they say?

Question	YES	NO	% of total responses in favour	% answering this question in favour
Q1a. Do you think we should introduce broad priority areas for co-educational schools?	932	227	77	80
Q1b. If yes, do you agree with the areas that we have proposed for co-educational schools in the consultation document?	667	297	55	69
Q2a. Do you think that we should introduce priority areas for single sex schools?	720	336	60	68
Q2b. If yes, do you agree with the areas that we have proposed for single sex schools in the consultation document?	505	278	42	64
Q3. Do you think that we should allocate 25% of places to pupils living in the priority areas for single sex schools?	730	260	61	74
Q4a. Do you think it would be fairer not to use church schools for measurement purposes?	838	221	70	79
Q4b. Do you think it would be better if the measurement was between the nearest non-church co-educational school and a child's home?	788	220	65	78
Q5. Do you think we should make sure that children from the same family in the same year group (for example twins) should be able to attend the same secondary school?	1131	45	94	96

Question	YES	NO	% of total responses in favour	% answering this question in favour
Q6a. Do you think that specialist schools should be able to select up to 10% of pupils using aptitude, if the Governing Body is in favour?	664	473	55	58
Q6b. Do you think that all specialist schools should select up to 10% of pupils on the basis of aptitude?	636	569	53	53
Q7. Do you think that we should give priority to the children of staff working permanently at the school if the Governing Body feels that this is important to help recruit and retain staff?	677	476	56	59
Q8. Do you think it would be better to use the same criteria for measuring the home to school journeys for all Hertfordshire children?	808	254	67	76
Q9. If we were to include a rule relating to partial selection, should the places be restricted to children living in the priority area?	655	352	54	65
Q10. If we were to include a rule relating to children of staff should be places be open to children of staff living outside the priority area?	588	528	49	53

APPENDIX B – DETAILS OF PROPOSED CO-EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

These areas are based on the pattern of first rank applications for admission in the 1999,2000 and 2001 school years. For a parish or community to be included in the Priority Area, the following tests will have been met:

- Did the majority of parents want a place in a Hertfordshire school?
- Is this the area which the majority of parents within the parish or community made their first ranking over the past 3 years?

Further adjustments have then been made in response to informal consultation responses.

Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth (1)

Schools affected by the proposals: Birchwood High
Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Hockerill, Leventhorpe, St Mary's Catholic

Albury	Furneux Pelham	Little Hallingbury
Birchanger	Gilston	Much Hadham
Bishop's Stortford	Great Hallingbury	Sawbridgeworth
Eastwick	High Wych	Sheering
Elsenham	Little Hadham	Stocking Pelham
		Thorley

Buntingford, Puckeridge and Royston (2)

Schools affected by the proposals: Edwinstree, Freman College, Greneway, Meridian, Ralph Sadleir, Roysia

Anstey	Buckland	Nuthampstead
Ardley	Buntingford	Reed
Aspenden	Cottered	Royston
Barkway	Great Munden	Standon
Barley	Hormead	Therfield
Braughing	Kelshall	Westmill
Brent Pelham	Meesden	Wyddial

Hertford and Ware (3)

Schools affected by the proposals: Chauncy, Sele, Simon Balle

Bayford	Hertingfordbury	Tewin
Bengeo Rural	Hunsdon	Thundridge
Bramfield	Little Berkhamsted	Ware
Brickendon Liberty	Little Munden	Wareside
Great Amwell	Sacombe	Watton-at-Stone
Hertford	Stanstead St Margarets	Widford
Hertford Heath	Stapleford	

Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Broxbourne and Hoddesdon (4)

Schools affected by the proposals: Broxbourne, Sheredes, Turnford
Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Cheshunt, Goffs, John Warner, St Mary's High.

Broxbourne	Nazeing	Waltham Cross
Cheshunt	Northaw & Cuffley	
Hoddesdon	Stanstead Abbots	

Baldock and villages (5)

Schools affected by the proposals: Knights Templar

Ashwell	Clothall	Rushden
Baldock	Hinxworth	Sandon
Bygrave	Newnham	Wallington
Caldecote	Radwell	Weston

Hitchin and Letchworth (6)

Schools affected by the proposals: Fearnhill, Highfield, Norton, Priory

Hexton	Langley	Pirton
Hitchin	Letchworth	Preston
Holwell	Lilley	St Ippolyts
Ickleford	Offley	Wymondley
King's Walden		

Stevenage (7)

Schools affected by the proposals : Barclay, Barnwell, Collenswood, Heathcote, Marriotts, Nobel, Thomas Alleyne
Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: John Henry Newman

Aston	Datchworth	Knebworth	Walkern
Benington	Graveley	Stevenage	

Welwyn, Hatfield and Potters Bar (8)

Schools affected by the proposals : Monks Walk, Onslow St Audreys, Sir Frederic Osborn, Stanborough
Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Chancellors, Dame Alice Owen, Mount Grace

Ayot St Peter	Hatfield	Welwyn Garden City
Codicote	North Mymms	Welwyn

Essendon

Potters Bar

Woolmer Green

St Albans (9)

Schools affected by the proposals: Beaumont

Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Francis Bacon, Marlborough, Nicholas Breakspear, Townsend,

Colney Heath
London Colney
Ridge

St Michael
St Stephen

St Albans
Shenley

Harpenden, Sandridge and Wheathampstead (10)

Schools affected by the proposals: Roundwood Park, Sandringham, Sir John Lawes

Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: St Georges

Ayot St Lawrence
Flamstead
Harpenden
Harpenden Rural

Kimpton
Markyate
Redbourn

Sandridge
St Pauls Walden
Wheathampstead

Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead (11)

Schools affected by the proposals: Adeyfield, Astley Cooper, Bridgewater, Cavendish, Hemel Hempstead and Longdean

Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: John F Kennedy; Ashlyns, Thomas Coram

Voluntary Controlled schools within the area not affected by the proposals: Tring

Aldbury
Berkhamsted
Bovingdon
Great Gaddesdon

Hemel Hempstead
Little Gaddesdon
Nash Mills
Nettleden with Potten End

Northchurch
Tring
Tring Rural
Wiggington

South West Herts (12)

Schools affected by the proposals: Francis Combe, Kings Langley, Westfield

Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Parmiters, Rickmansworth, St Clement Danes, St Joan of Arc, St Michaels

Abbots Langley
Chipperfield
Chorleywood
Croxley Green

Flaunden
Kings Langley
Maple Cross
Northwood

Pinner
Rickmansworth
Sarratt
Watford
Watford Rural

Hertsmere West (13)

Schools affected by the proposals: Hertswood

Foundation/VA schools within the area which set their own rules: Bushey Hall, Bushey Meads, Queens

Aldenham

Bushey

Elstree and Borehamwood

APPENDIX C – DETAILS OF PROPOSED SINGLE-SEX PRIORITY AREAS

These areas are also based on the patterns of first rank applications for the 1999, 2000 and 2001 school years. For a parish or community to be included in the Priority Area, the following tests will have been met:

- Did the majority of parents want a place in a Hertfordshire school?
- Did an average of more than 6% of parents make first rank applications to the school over the last 3 years?
- In the case of Hitchin and St Albans schools, did more than 6% of parents apply for a single sex school of either sex over the last 3 years?

Further adjustments have then been made in response to informal consultation responses.

Hitchin Boys and Hitchin Girls

Baldock	Hitchin	Knebworth	Offley	St Pauls Walden
Codicote	Holwell	Langley	Pirton	Weston
Graveley	Ickleford	Letchworth	Preston	Wymondley
Hexton	King's Walden	Lilley	St Ippolyts	

St Albans Girls and Verulam

Aldenham	Kimpton	Sandridge	St Michael
Colney Heath	London Colney	Shenley	St Stephen
Harpenden	Redbourn	St Albans	Wheathampstead

Richard Hale (Boys) Hertford

Bayford	Hertford	Sacombe	Ware
Bengeo Rural	Hertford Heath	Stanstead Abbots	Wareside
Bramfield	Hertingfordbury	Stanstead St Margrets	Watton-at-Stone
Brickendon Liberty	Hunsdon	Stapleford	Welwyn
Datchworth	Little Berkhamsted	Tewin	Widford
Essendon	Little Munden	Thundridge	Woolmer Green
Great Amwell			

Bishop's Hatfield Girls

Hatfield	North Mymms	Welwyn	Welwyn Garden City
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Presdales (Girls) Ware

Aspenden	Great Amwell	Little Berkhamsted	Stapleford
Bayford	Great Munden	Little Munden	Tewin
Bengeo Rural	Hertford	Much Hadham	Thundridge
Bramfield	Hertford Heath	Sacombe	Ware
Brickendon Liberty	Hertingfordbury	Stanstead Abbots	Wareside
Datchworth	Hunsdon	Stanstead St Margarets	Watton-at-Stone
Essendon			Widford

The following single sex schools are Foundation or Voluntary Aided and so will continue to set their own admission rules: Bishops Stortford High, Herts and Essex High, Loreto, Watford Boys Grammar, Watford Girls Grammar.

