



CABINET MEMBER -
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

TONY SMITH

CABINET

22 February 2016

**ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR
COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
COORDINATED SCHEME FOR 2017-
2018 AND UPDATE ON SOMERVILLE
FEDERATION**

Councillor Tony Smith Cabinet Member - Children and Families, said:

‘The power to create a single or joint governing body across two or more schools was introduced in 2003 and has been very effective in raising standards, strengthening education in the wider community and protecting smaller schools.

‘Federation helps build capacity and promotes sharing of learning. The federation also offers opportunities both for staff development and for children to take part in joint activities.

‘Consultation on the co-ordinated scheme for admissions took place according to guidance and only minor amendments have been made to bring the content of the secondary scheme in line with the new arrangements for selective testing.’

REPORT SUMMARY

This report invites the Cabinet to determine the Authority’s admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the coordinated schemes for 2017-2018. This is a statutory requirement.

The report also provides an update on the outcome of the governing bodies decisions on the federation of Somerville Primary School and Brentwood Early Years Centre.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1. That Cabinet agree the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2017-2018.
2. That Cabinet note the decision by the governing bodies of Somerville Primary School and Brentwood Early Years Centre to enter into a hard federation from 31st January 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Authority is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) also require the Authority to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2017-18. The proposed schemes are attached along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.2 On 2nd July 2015, an advisory report was brought which set out the intention of the governing bodies of Somerville Primary School and Brentwood Early Years Centre to consult on entering into a hard federation. This consultation has taken place and the governing bodies have met to discuss the outcome of the consultation period which is reported here for information. Federations are a decision made by school governing bodies, not by the Council, however officers are required to offer clear advice as to appropriate action in order to spend public money wisely and ensure all Wirral's children benefit equitably from the funding available. Federation of these two schools could provide more sustainable provision for the benefit of Wirral's pupils.

2 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The consultation on the co-ordinated scheme for admissions took place according to guidance (see 8.0 below).
- 3.2 There were no changes to the School Admissions Code this year and only minor amendments have been made to the schemes in relation to the definition of terminology in relation to residence and home address, the medical criterion for the secondary scheme and to bring the content of the secondary scheme in line with the new arrangements for selective testing. This is set out in more detail in the Cabinet report of 9th October 2015.
- 3.3 No responses to the consultation were received.
- 3.4 The governing bodies of Somerville Primary School and Brentwood Early Years Centre have met separately and jointly to discuss the outcome of the consultation on federation and on 10th December

2015 notified the Council that they had decided to proceed with the federation, with a modification to the implementation date to 31st January 2016, and one amendment to the proposed constitution of the federated governing body to increase the size from 9 governors to 12 governors.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1

There are no savings for the Council from the federation. The federated schools would jointly make a saving roughly equivalent to the salary of one headteacher, which would then be re-distributed into the budget of the federated school.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. A Voluntary Aided primary school and a Community primary school have already made the conversion to Academy status. This additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and FAP correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the School's Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State.

5.2 Regulations on the procedure for schools entering a federation are set out in the Guidance on the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007. The consultation complied with all statutory guidance.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The Fair Access Protocol requires a Local Authority Clerk to organise Fair Access Panels, prepare paperwork and disseminate Panel decisions to parents and schools. The cost of this is met from the Admissions budget which is part of the overall Schools budget.

7 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. A Voluntary Aided primary school and a Community primary school have already made the conversion to Academy status. This additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and FAP correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the School's Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State.

7.2 Failure to determine the admission arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year would contravene the 2014 Admissions Code and

associated guidance.

8 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation on the co-ordinated scheme has taken place with all Wirral schools, other relevant admission authorities and all statutory consultees.
- 8.2 The consultation period took place for 6 weeks between 28th October and 9th December 2015, which complies with requirements set out in the School Admissions Code 2014.
- 8.3 The date by which the arrangements must be determined is 28th February. These admission arrangements must then be published on the Council's website by 15th March. The deadline for objections against the admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator is now 15th May.
- 8.4 The federation consultation by the governing bodies of Somerville Primary School and Brentwood Early Years Centre began on 30th September 2015 and ended on 11th November 2015. This included a public notice in a local newspaper, a printed leaflet to all staff, governors and parents as well as on the school websites, and public meeting held at Somerville Primary School on 13th October 2015.

9 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has been completed and can be found at:
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-families-wellbeing>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scheme for the coordination of admission arrangements for primary schools 2017-2018

Appendix 2 – Scheme for the coordination of admission arrangements for secondary schools 2017-2018

Appendix 3 – Somerville Consultation leaflet

REFERENCE MATERIAL

School Admissions Code 2014

School Admissions Appeals Code 2012

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Authority	9th October 2015
Delegated Authority	7th July 2015 (federation)
Cabinet	15th March 2015
Delegated Authority	6th November 2014
Cabinet	13th March 2014
Delegated Authority	7th November 2013