

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	10 April 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2519
TITLE:	Primary School Admission Criteria 2014-15 Academic year	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p>List of attachments to this report:</p> <p>Appendix A – Proposed new Primary Admission Criteria</p> <p>Appendix B - Existing Rural Primary Schools Admission Criteria</p> <p>Appendix C – Existing Admission Criteria for Batheaston, Bathford and Bathampton Schools.</p> <p>Appendix D – Existing Non Rural Schools Admission Criteria.</p> <p>Appendix E – Summary of consultation responses.</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report asks the Cabinet to agree the primary school admission criteria for the academic year 2014-15.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

The primary admission criteria as shown in Appendix A are adopted for the 2014-15 academic year.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Each year the Council has a statutory duty to publish admission criteria for all schools for which it is the admission authority. The admission criteria are used to allocate places in the event of any school being oversubscribed.
- 5.2 In September 2005 the Council introduced the rural primary school admissions criteria. This change split the sibling criterion giving higher priority to siblings for whom the preferred school is the closest to the home address. For non-rural schools the criteria remained unchanged with all siblings continuing to have higher priority regardless of proximity. [See Appendix B].
- 5.3 In September 2008 a further change was proposed to include Batheaston Primary School in the rural schools admission criteria. This was due to pressure on places at the school with local children being refused at the expense of siblings living further away. An objection was made by parents to the Office of the School Adjudicator who ruled the change could be made but children whose sibling was admitted to the school before September 2008 should continue to receive higher priority. Bathampton and Bathford primary schools adopted the same criteria from September 2009. [See Appendix C].
- 5.4 Non rural schools kept the same admission criteria. [See Appendix D].
- 5.5 For September 2012 a particular issue occurred in respect of admissions to a rural Primary School. Two applications were received for siblings living under a mile from the school. However as it was not their closest school they were not considered under category B but Category D of the admission criteria. As the school was oversubscribed these 2 applications were initially refused as they did not qualify for the available places. It was not the intention when the admission criteria changed for siblings living this close to the school to be refused. After further discussion with the school it was agreed to breach the admission number to allow these children to be offered.
- 5.6 To avoid the above situation happening again we are proposing in future a sibling application has higher priority if they live within a 1.5 mile radius of the school. This will mean within this distance siblings still have higher priority under the admission criteria even if there is a slightly closer school. If a sibling application lives outside the 1.5 mile distance but they are still applying for their closest school they will also receive the higher priority.
- 5.7 Where a sibling link was established on or before September 2013 but the school is not the closest or within the 1.5 mile radius protection will be offered. Siblings will be given equal consideration with those within the 1.5 mile radius and those siblings outside but for whom it is still the closest school.

- 5.8 The proposal is to introduce the criteria for all primary schools for which Bath and North East Somerset Council is the admission authority. This will mean consistent criteria across all schools and still give protection to local children and local siblings. The new criteria should be easier for parents to understand and gauge their success of gaining a place at their preferred school.
- 5.9 After the sibling priority remaining places will be allocated to those children who live closest to the school regardless of whether they have a sibling connection.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

An EqIA has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 The criteria as set out in Appendix A are recommended for approval to allow local children and local siblings a good chance of obtaining a place at their local school.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 . To keep the existing criteria as shown in Appendices B, C and D.
- 9.2 If the existing criteria are maintained we will still be in a situation where siblings may be refused a place at one of their local schools as they live slightly closer to an alternative school.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Cabinet member; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer.
- 10.2 A Local Authority has a statutory duty to consult if it is proposing a change to the admission criteria.
- 10.3 Details of the proposed new criteria were sent to Schools, Chair of Governors, Diocesan Boards and our neighbouring authorities.
- 10.4 Details of the proposed criteria were placed on the Council Website and the electronic schools bulletin on Merlin the internet web based platform. Consultation took place over a 8 week period during December 2012 and January and February 2013.
- 10.5 A total of 5 responses were received. All were supportive of the proposal and are included as Appendix E.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People; Other Legal Considerations.

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	