

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

28 MAY 2021

APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE OF OFFMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor M J Hart

Relevant Officer

Interim Director of Children's Services

Local Member

Councillor B Hopkins

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education is recommended:

(a) to approve the publication of Public Notice of the proposal to alter the age range of Offmore Primary School by one-year group from 3-11 years to 2-11 years in accordance with delegated authority to prescribed alterations to maintained schools.

(b) to note that in accordance with the delegation of authority given by the Leader on 25 April 2018 the Director of Children Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education will determine the proposals following no objection to the Public Notice being received; and

(c) to review all representations received during the Public Notice stage should objections be received in order to decide on the proposal.

Background

2. A request has been made by Offmore Primary School to the Local Authority to consider a change of age range at the school from 3-11 years to 2-11 years.

3. Offmore Primary School currently offers 2-year-old provision as a Governor-led, non-maintained nursery. Under this proposal, the provision would become part of the school. This would enable the school to improve communication and administration and bring the nursery currently on site fully under the school umbrella. This would have no impact on the amount of nursery places in the area.

4. As per the prescribed alterations regulations outlined in 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for

proposers and decision makers October 2018' any proposal to alter the age range of a community school must follow the statutory process, which includes a 4-week representation period before a decision is taken. In this instance, only the Local Authority can be the formal proposer and decision maker of such alterations.

5. In April 2018 the Leader of the Council delegated authority for the publication of statutory proposals for prescribed alterations to maintained schools to the Director of Children Services and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education (Previously Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) as set out in Appendix 1. This delegated authority was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2020.

6. The Council's revised policy on responding to change of age range requests (approved by Cabinet 30 January 2020) identified several criteria that must be considered and satisfied prior to a decision being taken to propose such a change. These conditions have been reviewed in relation to this proposal and summarised below:

- a) *The school has a good or outstanding Ofsted judgement, or can demonstrate how the change would support improvement at the school*

Under the Council's Policy, we would not ordinarily support a Requires Improvement school to make such a change unless it can be shown that the change would support the school to improve quality. In this instance, Officers are confident in the current leadership at the school and that this change *would* support the school to continue to improve outcomes for pupils. This decision was confirmed by the Director of Children's Services on 28 January 2021. The latest monitoring visit on 2 March 2021 confirms the school is taking effective action.

- b) *Open and fair consultation has taken place with parents and other relevant stakeholders and the school can clearly demonstrate how any objections or issues raised will be managed*

The school has undertaken an appropriate and fair consultation which ran from 22 February 2021 to 2 April 2021 as the process has progressed. The school received no responses.

- c) *The school involved can demonstrate the capacity to manage any curriculum changes or has secured appropriate support to do so*

Staff currently at the Governor-led nursery will be retained and therefore will continue to deliver the same quality of provision.

- d) *The school involved can demonstrate that appropriate facilities, staff, and systems will be in place, including how they will manage additional revenue costs*

The nursery will continue to be based in in the same purpose built part of the school Staff currently at the Governor-led nursery will be retained and therefore will continue to deliver the same quality of provision.

- e) *There is an agreed, clear, and practical pathway for children to move on from each school affected by the change. The consultation document should clearly inform parents of all their options for future school places for their children. Where a pathway school has not formally changed its admissions policy but has committed in writing to do so, this should be attached to the consultation document and it*

made clear to parents that this is subject to a formal consultation on admissions change by the pathway school

This change has no impact on pathways for children.

f) Any reduction in Published Admission Number or change in admission criteria required has been consulted upon and agreed, or a clear and transparent timetable for this change has been provided to stakeholders as part of the consultation process

No admissions changes are required.

g) There is no significant detrimental impact on other local schools

This change does not change the amount of nursery provision in the area and will not impact on any alternative schools.

h) The proposal is clear and precise on how the school will continue to work with other local schools to the educational benefit of all children

Officers are satisfied that the school has made it clear that it can demonstrate intention to continue to work collaboratively with other local schools and providers.

i) Where the proposer is a small, rural school, as defined by the DfE rural schools' policy and WCC small schools' policy, the proposal makes it clear how the proposed change will support the school to stay viable and so support local need and parental preference

Offmore Primary is not a small, rural school.

j) Any proposals should support the best education for all children in the area. Proposers should be clear how their proposal will work alongside the existing school systems operating in the area

The change will ensure the continued provision of 2-year-old nursery places in this area, supporting the best start in life for children.

k) Funding for any necessary accommodation changes has already been secured

No additional accommodation is required.

l) Appropriate planning permission and any other consent required have been secured or a clear and transparent timetable for this change has been provided to stakeholders as part of the consultation process

No planning permission is required.

m) Individual factors for specified school

No individual factors are to be considered.

Recommendations

7. Given the above information, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education is recommended to approve the publication of public notices for this proposal and

approve the publication of the representation stage documents for a significant change in line with the prescribed alterations regulations.

8. The Public Notice period is proposed to begin on 7 June 2021 and will end at noon on the 4 July 2021, following which, a final decision on the approval of this proposal will be made, taking into account any representations received during this period.

9. If no objection is received in this period, then the final decision will be made by the Director of Children's Services in accordance with the agreed delegation. Should objections be received, all representations will be reviewed by and final decision made by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

10. Funding will be provided through the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

11. There are no legal or HR implications. Staff are already employed by the school delivering the provision through the Governor led setting.

Privacy and Public Health Impact and Equality and Diversity Implications

12. A Joint Impact Assessment (JIA) screening was completed in respect of the change of age range proposal. The screening did not identify any potential concerns requiring further consideration during implementation (Appendix 2).

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Delegation of authority given by the Leader on 25 April 2018, endorsed by the Cabinet on 30 January 2020 [8. Cab 20200130 Change of age range-final.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Appendix 2 – Joint Impact Assessment Screening

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Interim Director of Children's Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

'Prescribed Alterations' regulations: *Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers October 2018*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756572/Maintained_schools_prescribed_alterations_guidance.pdf