

MEETING:	HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL ADMISSION FORUM
DATE:	7 JULY 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBERS
REPORT BY:	ADMISSION AND TRANSPORT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

Potentially countywide

Purpose

To consider changes to the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) at Ashfield Park and Mordiford Church of England Primary Schools and Lady Hawkins High School.

Recommendations

THAT the Committee considers the individual school requests and the change in PAN at:

1. Ashfield Park Primary School is agreed.
2. Mordiford CE Primary School is agreed.
3. Lady Hawkins High School is agreed.

Key Points Summary

Alternative Options

No alternative options other than to refuse individual school PAN change requests.

Reasons for Recommendations

It is the role of Herefordshire's Local Admission Forum to consider school requests for PAN changes and make decisions whether to agree or refuse such requests.

Introduction and Background

- 3 According to the new School Admissions Code section 1.17 "Admission authorities of maintained schools **must** set admission numbers with regard to the capacity of the school"

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Andrew Blackman, Admissions & Transport Manager on (01432) 260927

and “Admission authorities are required to consult before setting or amending a published admission number”.

Herefordshire is currently experiencing a continued decline in the overall pupil numbers. This affects schools in different ways, with the additional affects of the Schools Admissions Code presumption to meet parental preference, subject to certain conditions. Overall funding to support pupils, schools and services is determined largely by the overall number of pupils. Local Authority services and schools are facing a number of pressures as a result which have led to redundancies and reconfigurations of Local Authority and school staff. A number of schools over the past year have requested changes in PAN, in part as a result of these pressures, or alternatively to expand their PAN to provide for increased demand in pupil numbers in arrangements that can be met in staffing and organisational terms.

The following schools have made specific requests within the context set out above:

1. Ashfield Park Primary School

Ashfield Park has requested a decrease in its PAN from 68 to 60, giving rise to a revised school capacity of 420 pupils. For information the current makeup of offers made for places in its new year R starting in September 2011 is:

Category	Number
Stamented child	1
Catchment Sibling	22
Catchment	21
Sibling Out of Area	1
Out of Area	3
Total	48

There are currently 286 pupils on roll. Made up as follows:

Year Group	Number of pupils
Reception	31
1	31
2	43
3	57
4	45
5	46

6	33
---	----

The proposed decrease is in line with the official sufficiency (capacity) assessment for the school which has a range of up to 419.

A copy of the formal request from Ashfield Park Primary School is attached in Appendix 2.

A decrease in PAN will potentially have no impact upon other schools in the cluster/neighbouring primary schools:

School	PAN	Offered Sept 2011	Capacity	No. of pupils on roll (Summer 2011)
Bridstow	15	16	105	84
Gorsley Goffs	25	29	175	175
Kings Caple	10	4	70	29
Walford	28	28	196	185
Weston – under - Penyard	13	10	91	83

2. Mordiford CE Primary School

Mordiford CE Primary School has requested an increase in its PAN from 19 to 21. A PAN of 21 would give a school capacity of 147 pupil places.

For information the current makeup of offers for places for its new year R starting in September 2011 is:

Category	Number
Stamented child	0
Catchment Sibling	0
Catchment	4
Sibling Out of Area	14
Out of Area	4
Total	22

There are currently a total of 133 pupils on roll made up as follows:

Year Group	Number of pupils
Reception	19
1	20
2	19
3	20
4	18
5	18
6	19

The proposed increase is in line with the official sufficiency (capacity) assessment for the school which has a range of between 147 and 164 and may have an impact upon neighbouring primary schools.

A copy of the formal request from Mordiford CE Primary School is attached in Appendix 2.

School	PAN	Offers Sept 2011	Capacity	Pupils on roll (Summer 2011)
Ashperton	25	20	175	168
Fownhope	15	21	105	104
Holme Lacy	10	8	70	40
Lugwardine	30	30	210	171
St Martin's	60	59	420	324
Withington	15	8	105	59

3. Lady Hawkins High School

Lady Hawkins High School has requested a decrease in its PAN from 90 to 80.

For information the current makeup of offers for places in its new year 7 starting in September 2011 is:

Category	Number
Statemented child	0
Catchment Sibling	16

Catchment	26
Sibling Out of Area	1
Out of Area – Special Reasons	0
Out of Area	9
Total	52

The current sufficiency calculation for the school gives it a capacity in the range 393 to 444 i.e. a range in the PAN of 79 to 88.

Contextual data for the above mentioned school and Cluster schools:

School	PAN	Offers Sept 2011	Capacity	Pupils on roll (Summer 2011)
Fairfield	90	91	450	370
Weobley	100	88	500	467
Wigmore	90	92	450	464

There are currently a total of 398 pupils on roll made up as follows:

Year Group	Number of pupils
7	60
8	79
9	79
10	90
11	90

A copy of the formal request from Lady Hawkins High School is attached in Appendix 2.

Please note the four most relevant sections of the new School Admissions Code regarding PAN increases:

1.19 in the case of maintained schools, the local authority, as the strategic commissioner of school places, has the final decision over whether a school can admit above its published admission number. For Academies the final decision rests with the Secretary of State. Admission authorities **must** consider the overall effect on the school in continually

admitting over the admission number and where they admit more than a total of 26 children above their admission number in any three year period, they **must** determine a higher admission number at the next opportunity. Admitting above the admission number does not amount to an increase in the school's admission number which can only be changed via the determination of admission arrangements or once determined, for a maintained school, via a referral to the Schools Adjudicator.

1.20 It is proposed that statutory proposals will no longer be required for schools that wish to increase their published admission number by 27 or more pupils¹⁷. However, statutory proposals are still required for schools proposing an enlargement to their premises which would increase the physical capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and either by 25 per cent or by 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser). Any admission authority wishing to increase a school's published admission number can propose to do so during the consultation and determination of admission arrangements for all schools in the area. Consultation requirements are set out in paragraphs 1.25 to 1.30. The governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the local authority is the admissions authority can make representations to the local authority to increase their published admission number by writing to them with their proposal. Although the local authority, as the admissions authority, will determine the final published admission number of the school, section 88H of the SSFA allows for community and voluntary controlled schools to object to the Schools Adjudicator if they do not agree with the admissions number which has been determined for them (see Chapter 4).

1.21 If an admission authority for a maintained school wishes to increase the admission number of a school after their admission arrangements have been determined, as a result of a major change in circumstance, they **must** refer a variation to do this to the Schools Adjudicator (see paragraphs 4.23 to 4.27), except in very limited circumstances. The determination by the Schools Adjudicator **should** follow the approval by the local authority of any related proposals for enlargement of the school. A request to the Schools Adjudicator to increase admission numbers **should not** delay the local authority in co-ordinating admissions in order to make all offers to parents.

1.22 Local authorities and the Schools Adjudicator, when making decisions over setting an admission number or admitting above them, **should** have regard to the presumption that proposals to expand successful and popular schools, except grammar schools, **should** be approved. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring schools **should not** in itself be sufficient to prevent expansion, but the local authority **should** consider how they can take parallel action to remove surplus places.

Comment

It is noted that in the PAN reduction request cases from Ashfield Park Primary School and Lady Hawkins High School the revised PAN meets the needs of children from the catchment area.

In the PAN increase request case from Mordiford CE Primary School the revised PAN is not to meet demand from catchment children but rather from out of catchment parental preference children. The School Admissions Code expects Local Authorities to operate with a presumption of support to such requests to maximize parental preferences. Surplus capacity is meant to be addressed through other action in a strategic way pertinent to local circumstances.

Key Considerations

The request for a reduction in PAN reflects long term demographic trends.

Increases in PAN must be in accordance with the school's net capacity assessment, which is the case for Mordiford CE Primary School. The LA has a duty to maximize parental preferences where possible.

Community Impact

- 5 Potential impact on local traffic patterns caused by the movement of "out of catchment" pupils to schools where the PAN is increased and no spare capacity to buy "Vacant Seats" on contracted school transport exists.

Financial Implications

- 6 A PAN of 15 provides for a very financially efficient school of 105 pupils particularly when a school is full or nearly full. Provided the pupils are spread broadly evenly throughout the age range then a 105 pupil school can cater for 45 pupils in Key Stage 1 in two classes of 22/23 and 60 pupils in Key Stage 2 with two classes of 30. This class structure avoids mixing key stages and minimises the potentially significant extra costs resulting from staff teaching very small classes. The schools budget for Herefordshire is facing reductions from falling rolls and allowing small schools to organise classes in an efficient structure will strengthen their financial viability.

There would be a reduction in funding at schools "losing" pupils to "more popular" where their PAN is increased – the "money follows the pupils"

Legal Implications

- 7 See comments under Risk Management.

Risk Management

- 8 The LA may be challenged in respect of its role to maximize parental preference wherever possible. However the LA must consider the implications of maximising parental preference within a strategic context. The work that results from Cabinet recommendations and the work of school clusters will be key to providing an agreed strategy within which to consider increases in PANs in response to parental preferences.

Consultees

- 9 Not applicable

Appendices

- 10 Appendix – Copies of school PAN change request letters

Background Papers

None