

Report to: **Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness**
Date: **9 February 2015**
By: **Director of Children's Services**
Title of the report: **Proposed change of age range at four primary schools in East Sussex**
Purpose of Report: **To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at four primary schools to enable them to take 2 year olds in their nursery provision.**

Recommendation:

Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at All Saints CE Primary School, East Hoathly CE Primary School, Polegate School and St Paul's CE Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. All proposals to take effect no later than 1 September 2015; and**
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**
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1. Background

1.1 All children aged three and four are entitled to be funded for up to 15 hours free early education or childcare per week. In 2013/14 this offer was extended to approximately 20 per cent of two year olds. From 2014/15 this entitlement is being rolled out to around 40% of two year olds. The eligibility criterion means that the numbers receiving the two year old offer are likely to be skewed towards the more deprived areas of the county.

1.2 The introduction and roll out of the two year old offer means that the numbers of children receiving funding for a free early education and childcare place is rising significantly. This increase is further fuelled by the recent rises in births in the county. The number of funded children is predicted to rise from 9,600 in 2013/14 to approximately 11,300 by 2017/18, an increase of around 19%. What happens longer term is more speculative, but we are at least likely to witness a continued increase in Early Years numbers in parts of the county where significant volumes of new housing are planned.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Department for Work and Pensions have since July 2013 provided East Sussex County Council with detailed information of the addresses of families who potentially have an eligible 2 year old entitled to access up to 15 hours free early education or childcare per week. This information has been used to assess where our 'hot spot' areas are and has been the focus for developing new early year's places. The identified 'hot spot' areas (Children's Centre area) include Sidley, St Leonards and Polegate. Schools with the capacity to expand and offer additional places for 2 year olds have been identified in each 'hot spot' area and feasibility studies undertaken. All Saints CE Primary School (Sidley), St Paul's CE Primary (St Leonard's) and Polegate (Polegate) have been identified as having capacity to expand. A new modular building is being provided at All Saints, St Paul's will have an extension to its main building and Polegate will use the former Children's Centre on site after it was de-designated by Lead Member on 10 September 2014 to deliver places for 2 year olds. East Hoathly CE Primary School is not in an identified 'hot spot' area but is a school whose governing body wishes to lower its age range to take over the management of the on site nursery which is currently managed by a third party provider.

2.2 In response, the Governing Body of each school recently undertook a period of consultation on a proposal to lower their age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to allow them to take 2 year olds in their nursery provision. The findings of each consultation are set out below.

- All Saints CE Primary School, Bexhill - the consultation period ran from 17th November, 2014 to 15th December, 2014. The school consulted with parents, staff, governors, and local nurseries. No responses were received.
- East Hoathly CE Primary School - the consultation period ran from 6th October, 2014 to 10th November, 2014. The school consulted with parents, staff, governors, local nurseries, parent and toddler groups, local community. In total, 22 responses were received, all of which supported the proposal. No concerns were expressed.
- Polegate School - the consultation period ran from 3rd November, 2014 to 1st December, 2014. The school consulted with families, governors, staff, local nurseries and pre-schools. In total, 9 responses were received, all of which supported the proposal. Polegate will begin accepting 2, 3 and 4 year olds from the middle of February 2015 as a pilot scheme ahead of a final decision on the formal proposal.
- St Paul's CE Primary School, Hastings - the consultation period ran from 3rd November, 2014 to 1st December, 2014. The school consulted with governors, staff, families, local pre-schools and nurseries. In total, 5 responses were received, of which 4 supported the proposal and 1 did not. The main concern was around parking.

2.3 The next stage of the process is to publish a statutory notice for each proposal. The publication of notices would trigger a further 4 week period of consultation, known as the representation period, when people can again have their say on the proposal. The notices would be published in the local paper, on the ESCC website and on the entrance gates at each school. Within two months of the end of the representation period, the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness must determine each proposal taking into account the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it, including for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers. It is envisaged that a final decision would be made at the Lead Member meeting on 20 April 2015.

2.4 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. The process set out above complies with these requirements.

Financial Appraisal

2.5 Revenue: revenue support from trajectory funding designated for Early Learning funded places and development is being provided for three of the four schools to furnish and equip new Early Years provision. The revenue costs of each project are: All Saints CE Primary School £15,000, St Paul's CE Primary School £30,000 and Polegate £12,500. Additional revenue funding is being sought to support with staff start up costs at each of the three schools. East Hoathly is a transfer of management from an existing nursery on the school site and therefore does not require funding support.

2.6 Capital: capital investment is required at three of the four schools to create early years provision on site. The costs of each project are: All Saints CE Primary School £267,379, St Paul's CE Primary School £508,334 and Polegate £40,000. Capital funding for each of the projects comes from the Expansion of EYEE Places to Eligible 2 Year Olds Capital Expansion Grant.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation:

3.1 The Council has a legal duty to secure sufficient Early Learning Places, i.e. 570 hours per year of free early year's education (EYEE), for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Lowering the age range at the four schools listed above will help to facilitate the supply of Early Learning Places in areas of demand. Therefore, the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at All Saints CE Primary School, East Hoathly CE Primary School, Polegate School and St Paul's CE Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. All proposals to take effect no later than 1 September 2015; and.

- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

STUART GALLIMORE
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LOCAL MEMBERS:

Councillor Nick Bennett
Councillor Michael Ensor
Councillor Michael Phillips
Councillor Daniel Shing
Councillor Stephen Shing
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None