

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **24 May 2022**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Wivelsfield Primary School change of age range**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to publish a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Wivelsfield Primary School by two years to enable the governing body to provide early years provision on the school site.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Wivelsfield Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. The proposal to take effect from 1 January 2023.**
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposal prior to its publication if required.**
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1 Background

1.1 The village of Wivelsfield lost its only early years provision when the voluntary run pre-school located in the village closed in July 2020. The governing board of Wivelsfield Primary School wishes to lower the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to accommodate families who wish to access funded early years provision in the area. The East Sussex Early Years Forecasting model is showing a need for early years provision within the town.

1.2 The aim of the proposal is to integrate fully nursery provision into the Early Years Foundation Stage within the school. The governing board wishes to ensure that there will again be nursery provision to support the local area and offer high quality early education delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the Early Years Foundation Stage. The aim is to build on the work already done by the school to secure good outcomes for all children in the future.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The governing board consulted between 8 November and 5 December 2021 on a proposal to lower the school's age range. The governing board consulted with staff, families of children at the school, the local community, and other interested parties.

2.2 By the close of the consultation period 16 responses had been received. All of the responses received fully supported the school's proposal to lower the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to provide early years provision for children within the village. A full list of responses can be viewed in Appendix 1.

2.3 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 (as amended). The next phase of the process is to publish a statutory notice in relation to the proposal. It is intended that the notice

would be published on the Council's consultation hub on Friday 2 September 2022. The notice would also be published in the Mid Sussex Times and posted on the entrances to the school. A four-week period of representation would follow, giving interested parties a further opportunity to comment on the proposal. The Council has a duty to determine each proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. We anticipate that a final decision on the proposal would be taken at the Lead Member meeting on 17 October 2022.

2.4 The nursery will initially be provided in temporary accommodation which is being provided to the school to enable them to accommodate additional Year Reception pupils from September 2022. This temporary accommodation will be in place for the next 7 years as this class moves through the school. For the longer term officers will work with the school to implement a longer term solution for permanent accommodation for the nursery provision within the school. The school have already identified a potential area in the school for this.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 In conclusion, we believe the proposal to lower the age range at Wivelsfield Primary school would meet the need to provide sufficient early years places in the village and help to build on work already done by the school, ensuring a fully integrated Early Years Foundation Stage to help secure good outcomes for all children.

3.2 For this reason, the Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Wivelsfield Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. The proposal to take effect from 1 January 2023.
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposal prior to its publication if required.

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LOCAL MEMBER

Councillor Matthew Milligan