

Agenda Item: (a)

Meeting: ADMISSIONS FORUM

Date: 22 March 2011

Subject: Consultation Process and Responses

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning

Summary: The purpose of this report is to inform the Forum of the outcome of the consultation process.

Contact Officer: Rosa Bonwick

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To note the outcome of the consultation**
- 2. To seek the views of the Forum on the response relating to the admission of a twin or children from multiple births**

Background

1. The School Admissions Code and The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, require admission authorities to consult, every three years, on their proposed admission arrangements unless the admission arrangements are not the same as those determined following the last consultation. The consultation must last for a minimum of eight weeks and must take place between 1 November and 1 March.
2. Members of the Forum will recall from the meeting on 11 November 2010 that no significant changes to the admission arrangements are proposed.
3. However, following consultation with community and voluntary controlled schools about the admission arrangements, a number of schools requested changes to their oversubscription criteria. The local authority had no objections to some of the changes, details of which are provided in a later report.
4. The local authority consulted on the proposed changes and that process took place between 4 January and 1 March 2011.

5. In accordance with the Regulations the local authority consulted the following:
 - the governing bodies of all community and voluntary controlled schools
 - the governing bodies of all voluntary aided schools
 - the governing bodies of all foundation schools
 - the governing bodies of all trust schools
 - the governing body of the Academy
 - all neighbouring local authorities
 - parents (through publication of a notice in local newspapers)
 - local community and voluntary groups (through publication of a notice in local newspapers)

 6. The consultation included the proposed changes to the oversubscription criteria for some community and voluntary controlled schools. The change to the definition of 'very exceptional' medical grounds, in the standard admissions policy, was provided for information purposes only. As no significant changes were proposed to the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes those also were provided for information purposes only.

 7. Only one response to the consultation was received from a parent of pre-school aged twins. That parent suggested that the local authority introduce a rule (oversubscription criterion) which would prevent children from multiple births being separated. The parent referred to the admission rules for community and voluntary controlled schools in Hertfordshire. The penultimate criterion for those schools identifies children for whom the school is their nearest community or voluntary controlled school and for infant class size entry gives priority to twins or children from multiple births. That priority is not accorded to other year groups not subject to Key Stage 1 infant class size limits where the tie break is distance from the school.

 8. The change suggested would not guarantee the admission of a twin or children from multiple births. If there is only one place remaining then only one child would be offered a place, irrespective of whether twins or children from multiple births are given priority over the distance tie break. Members of the Forum will recall their agreement to the admission number of a school being exceeded to enable the admission of a twin or children from multiple births, provided the admission would not breach infant class size limits (see later report). This agreement gives a twin or children from multiple births as much chance of gaining a place as the suggested change.

 9. The local authority would welcome the views of the Forum
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