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**Meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny

**Date:** 11 December 2012

**Subject:** Consultation on proposed changes to the Council's Admissions Arrangements

**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services.

**Summary:** Attached at Appendix A is the Report considered by Executive on 6 November 2012 to approve the commencement of consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2014/15, specifically the Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission arrangements for Community and VC Schools.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services.

**Contact Officer:** Pete Dudley, Assistant Director for Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships

**Public/Exempt:** Public.

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Executive

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

1. The Council's admission arrangements and co-ordinated admissions scheme supports the Medium Term Plan priority to improve educational standards at key stage 4.

### **Financial:**

2. There are no direct financial implications arising from this proposal, although if approved, the proposal to change admissions criteria from catchment to straight line priority will support the parallel proposal to Executive regarding the provision of transport on a "nearest school" policy as outlined in that report, which could lead to budget savings.

### **Legal:**

3. Regulations contained within the School Admissions Code sets out the requirement for the Local Authority to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for the area. Admission Authorities must also determine their admissions arrangements by 15 April each year, for implementation in September of the following year. If an Admissions Authority proposes to make amendments to their arrangements they must consult between the 1 November and the 1 March for a minimum of 8 weeks of the year before the arrangements apply.

4. For Community and Voluntary Controlled schools the admissions authority is the Council acting as the Local Authority. Academies, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools are their own admission authority and are therefore responsible for their own admission arrangements.
5. Via the consultation as set out in this report, the Council will fulfil its statutory responsibilities by consulting within the timescales set out above and conducting a consultation with the relevant parties on changes to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, inviting thoughts and comments from all consultees which will be reported to Executive in February 2013 when the admissions arrangements for September 2014 will be determined

**Risk Management:**

6. This report sets out the statutory requirement for the Council to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme in place for the area. The risk of not having a co-ordinated scheme in place for Central Bedfordshire would entail the following key risks:
  - Failure to discharge statutory duty
  - Failure to provide an admissions process which allows parents to state preferences and apply by the national closing dates.
  - Failure to allocate school places for the normal year of entry by the national offer dates

All of the above would incur a negative perception of the Council which would also be a reputational risk.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

7. Not Applicable

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

8. The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective and which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
9. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. As part of the development of the Admissions Policy the Council will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment to check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

**Public Health:**

10. Not Applicable

**Community Safety:**

11. Not Applicable

**Sustainability:**

12 Not Applicable

**Procurement:**

13. Not applicable

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the content of the report.**

Appendices: Appendix A – Executive Report – Consultation on Admission Arrangements 2014/15