

DECISION RECORD

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

Subject: To initiate a public consultation on a proposal to change the age range of Oxhey Early Years Centre (a community school), Eastbury Road, Watford, WD19 4RL ("the school") by altering the lower age limit. This will change the age range from 3 to 5 years to 2 to 5 years, enabling the school to start offering places to 2-year-old children from January 2022.

Staff Contact:
Melany Knowles, Head of Early Years
Tel: 01992 555874

Executive Member:
Terry Douris Portfolio: Executive Member
for Education, Libraries & Localism

1. Decision

To initiate a public consultation on a proposal to change the age range of Oxhey Early Years Centre (a community school), Eastbury Road, Watford, WD19 4RL ("the school") by altering the lower age limit. This will change the age range from 3 to 5 years to 2 to 5 years, enabling the school to start offering places to 2-year-old children from January 2022.

2. Reasons for the decision

By lowering the admission age of the school, we can ensure that 2-year-old children in the local community, particularly the most vulnerable, are able to access the free place that they are entitled to. The ability of the school to offer this entitlement from January 2022, combined with effective marketing and a good working relationship with the family centre service will ensure that families are offered this provision, and increased awareness of the offer will stimulate demand and increase take-up.

Children access either a morning or afternoon session, each running for 3 hours. The school has sufficient and suitable space and correct staff ratios to accommodate 2-year-old children. Therefore, no additional spaces, buildings or staff are required to implement this proposal.

The proposed change of age range will bring the school in line with the vast majority of other maintained nursery schools in the county which admit children from the age of 2.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that lowering the admission age to the age of 2, will have a negative impact on children aged 3 and 4 who are currently attending the Oxhey Early Years Centre, nor will it have a negative impact going forward on provision for this cohort.

3. Alternative options considered and rejected

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None

4. **Consultation**

(a) Comments of Executive Member

The Executive Member has no comments other than to concur with the Director's intention to agree the proposal.

(b) Comments of other consultees

None

5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed:

Title: Jenny Coles, Director of Children's Services

Date: 22 April 2021

6. Copies of agreed document to:

- Elaine Shell, Democratic Services Manager, Room 213, Old Block, County Hall (signed paper original).
Electronic copy to: Democratic.Services@hertfordshire.gov.uk

and following the expiry of the call-in period to:

- Executive Member - Councillor Terry Douris
- Local Member – Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Chair Councillor David Andrews, and Vice-Chairs, Councillors Lynn Chesterman OBE and Nigel Quinton
- The governing board of Oxhey Early Years Centre - email to head teacher to forward to the Chair of governors for distribution to governing board members
- The local Church of England diocese - Canon David Morton, Diocesan Director of Education, Diocese of St Albans (dde@stalbans.anglican.org)
- The local Roman Catholic diocese - Mr Peter Sweeney, Director of Education, Diocese of Westminster (petersweeney@rcdow.org.uk)