

DECISION RECORD

Decision Ref. No.
B002/24

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: Whether to initiate a consultation on a proposal to change the age range of Maple Grove Primary School, a Maintained Nursery School in Hemel Hempstead, to allow children to be admitted from the age of 2

Staff Contact: Melany Knowles, Head of Early Years Tel: 01992 555874
David Shevlane, Development manager Early Years Tel: 01992 556199

Executive Member: Caroline Clapper

Portfolio: Executive Member for Education, Libraries & Localism

1. Decision

To initiate a public consultation on a proposal to change the age range of Maple Grove Primary School (a community school), St Agnell's Lane, Grove Hill, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7BG by altering the lower age limit. This will change the age range from 3 to 11 years to 2 to 11 years, enabling the school to start offering places to 2-year-old children from January 2025.

2. Reasons for the decision

Maple Grove Primary School ("the School") is a maintained school in Hemel Hempstead. The school has a nursery class which offers places to children aged 3 and 4 years old. On the school site there was an independent pre-school offering childcare places for children aged 2 years and above including free places to disadvantaged younger children. The pre-school due to issues with staffing has closed and places for our most vulnerable families have been lost as a result.

The school wish to continue this offer and by lowering the school admission age will support the long-term sustainability of the school and enable the most disadvantaged children to have access to early years education in the community. The school have confirmed they have the necessary staffing to act on this proposal and it will not impact on the financial stability of the school.

The proposal has the full backing of the schools governing body and the interim Headteacher and is not expected to be met with any objections from the local community as this will not directly impact any other provision. There are no financial implications with this proposal.

In order for this proposal to be agreed a full statutory process will need to be completed which will be administered by the School Planning Team alongside the Early Years Service.

3. Alternative options considered and rejected

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: Jo Fisher

Title: Executive Director of Children's Services

Date: 2 February 2024

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 Caroline Clapper
- Local Member – Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Chair County Councillor David Andrews, and Vice-Chairs, County Councillors Tina Bhartwas and Sandy Walkington
- The governing boards of Southfield Special School and Colnbrook Special School - 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)