

Admissions and Appeals Budget 2014/15

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Author: Glenda Hardy – Head of Admissions and Transport
Simon Newland
Tel: 01992 555862

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 In November Schools Forum agreed the centrally-retained budget for Admissions and Appeals, and requested further detailed information on the makeup of the costs of these DSG-funded services.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Schools Forum is asked to note the report.

3. Background

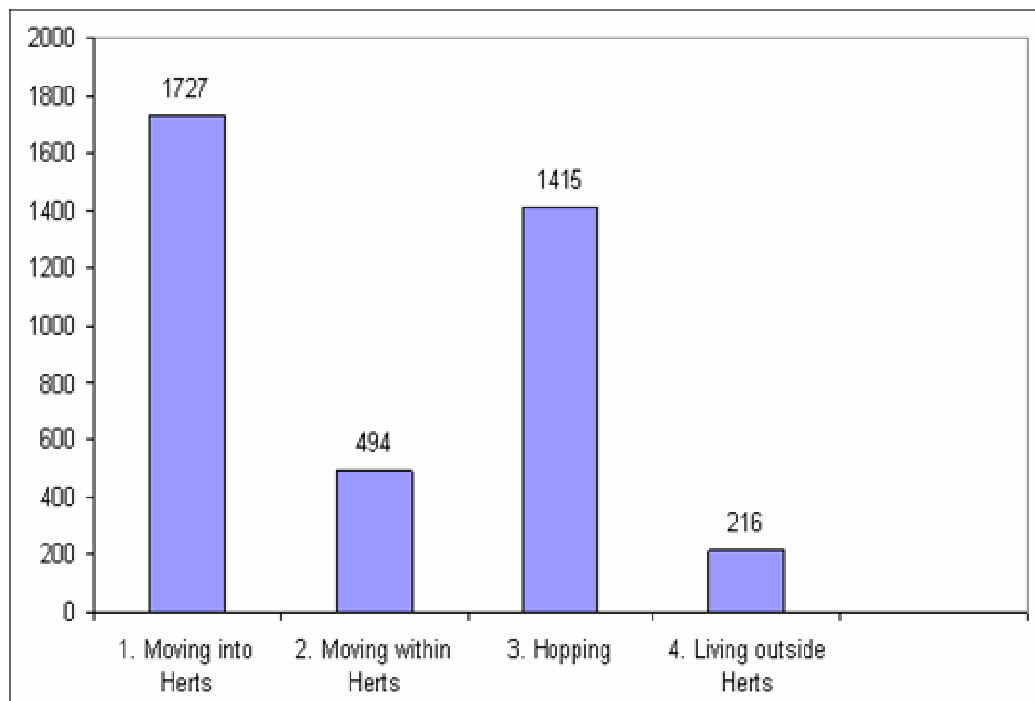
- 3.1 DSG funding described as being for Admissions covers two elements of service; Administration of appeals, and Admissions. These are managed separately, the former by Health and Community Services, and the latter by E&EI. This report does not cover appeals in any depth.
- 3.2 The Admissions and Transport team is responsible for the administration of all applications from Hertfordshire residents for reception places, Junior, Middle Secondary transfer and Upper schools. They also co-ordinate with other LAs where there is cross border traffic and a Hertfordshire resident wishes to attend school in another LA or an application is made for a Hertfordshire school by an out county resident. The annual volume of applications is around 40,000 (including in year admissions). The service includes the Integration Team, where we regularly seek feedback from schools round the quality of service offered, with positive results.
- 3.3 The admissions service remains at the leading edge of 'channel-shift' and strives to maintain its national lead for online admissions. Almost 100% of applications are now conducted online thus dramatically reducing the

volume of telephone contact necessary. Further paperless systems and processes have been developed and implemented over the past three years including email notification of allocations and an on-line acceptance facility.

- 3.4 Schools Forum may be aware from national media reports of the substantial increase in In Year admissions (particularly in the primary sector). Hertfordshire is currently experiencing this with extreme pressure on places. The below table shows the year on year comparison for in year applications received for the first half term in each academic year (i.e. September to mid October).

Application forms received	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Total	814	893	1161	1225

The table below shows that the increase in applications for the last academic year was predominantly from families moving into Hertfordshire.



- 3.5 Over the past few years a number of savings have been made in service costs through efficiencies, in part to offset the consequences of the steady rise in the number of pupils (and thus allocations), of in-year moves, of the challenges of placing pupils in times when there are very few spare places, and of unavoidable cost pressures such as the increase in the

LGPS contribution rate. As more and more schools become their own admitting authorities, complexity further increases.

- 3.6 Additionally the teams deal with transport entitlement and discretionary transport applications. The increase in pressure on local places is causing a knock on effect on the number of pupils entitled to transport. Under the statutory home to school transport policy the LA is responsible for providing transport to school if it is not possible to offer a school place within 2 miles up to 8 years of age and 3 miles for older pupils. However, the costs of the transport aspects of the service are not included here as transport and its administration are not funded from DSG.

Service costs

- 3.7 At the last meeting of Forum members commented on benchmarking data showing the costs of service per pupil as being £11 per head, compared with an England average of £9. The Table at Appendix 1 shows that there is considerable variability in per head costs, and we would expect these to be greater in a county with many admitting authorities and pressure on places, compared with authorities with similar challenges.

- 3.8 Over time the cost of service per pupil will continue to fall, as pupil numbers increase but the budget is capped in cash terms at its current level.

- 3.9 The costs of the services charged to DSG in detail are as set below.

Admissions service direct costs:	£1.254m -- £6.85p per pupil
Overheads/corporate recharges:	£0.419m -- £2.29p per head
Appeals:	£0.324m -- £1.77p per head

- 3.10 The direct cost of the admissions service (which includes the customer service centre) is not unreasonable by comparisons with the apparent national averages.

- 3.11 Overheads/corporate recharges were reported on in some detail to Forum in January, but include costs such as ICT, accommodation, legal and HR advice.

4. Financial Implications

The total cost for the services charged to DSG is £1,997,000.

5. Conclusion

Forum is asked to note the report.

**Total pupils aged 3- 19 from maintained schools and all academies

UPPER TIER AUTHORITIES	1.4.2 School admissions	2.1.4 Home to school transport: SEN transport expenditure(0 - 25)	2.1.5 Home to school transport: other home to school transport expenditure
Buckinghamshire	21	18	188
Cambridgeshire	5	81	124
Cumbria	12	67	173
Derbyshire	4	66	48
Devon	5	71	156
Dorset	9	89	127
East Sussex	8	165	0
Essex	8	52	76
Gloucestershire	9	78	101
Hampshire	6	95	60
Hertfordshire	11	87	40
Kent	10	78	56
Lancashire	5	87	78
Leicestershire	3	81	90
Lincolnshire	5	69	193
Norfolk	4	65	168
North Yorkshire	10	69	236
Northamptonshire	8	58	69
Nottinghamshire	8	36	61
Oxfordshire	6	61	97
Somerset	5	59	180
Staffordshire	6	59	59

Suffolk		1	58	125
Surrey		13	129	69
Warwickshire		13	63	118
West Sussex		8	86	50
Worcestershire		11	69	81

ENGLAND - Average (mean)		9	71	55
ENGLAND - Average (median)		9	69	18
ENGLAND - Minimum		0	0	0
ENGLAND - Maximum		41	165	236
Average (median)		8	69	90
Minimum		1	18	0
Maximum		21	165	236