

DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

REVIEW OF ADMISSIONS TO SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL HAVING REGARD TO THE NUMBER OF PUPILS LIVING IN THE CATCHMENT AREA AND ATTENDING FEEDER SCHOOLS WHO FAILED TO GAIN A PLACE AT THE SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

1. Background

At the meeting on 22 March the City Council considered, the following Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Simon Boshier and seconded by Councillor Steve Wemyss:

““This year to date, 31 children living in the catchment area for Springfield School have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place at the school, despite 14 of them attending one of the feeder schools. The parents of the majority of them will be appealing, although their prospects for success are not good. Children of families in the extreme east of Farlington have suffered under the admissions policy relating to distance travelled to school. The roads they live in, although in the catchment area, are the furthest from Springfield resulting in them being refused admission because the school is oversubscribed (and has been for the last 5 years and is expected to be for the foreseeable future). However, the other schools within the city are much further away than Springfield and these children face the prospect of travelling past their preferred school, Springfield, to those other schools to continue their education. This can only contribute to traffic congestion and diminish the educational experience of the child, perhaps leading to lower attainment.

Boundaries with Havant, Purbrook and Farlington Marshes mean that families living in the east of Farlington will be further penalised by the construction of any new properties located closer to Springfield than them. Yet the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies the potential for at least 500 new properties within the Springfield catchment area. Two sites, the former Dairy site in Station Road and the Scottish and Southern Electricity site in Lower Drayton Lane, are expected to be developed with over 200 new properties and both are within 600 yards of Springfield. This will only make the situation much worse for many families.....”

The City Council requested the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel to review the admissions to Springfield School and to identify ways in which this ongoing situation might be resolved and report back to Full Council on 19 July as set out in Standing Order No Number 32 (d) which requires the matter to be reported back to Council within three scheduled council meetings unless Full Council expresses an earlier date at the time of the referral.

2. Objectives of the Inquiry

- To understand the admission arrangements for September 2011 secondary school transfers.
- To enquire into the allocation of secondary transfer places for Springfield for the September 2011 cohort.

- To look at the catchment area having regard to the location of residential areas and planned housing developments for the area.
- To look at the catchment area having regard to the location of feeder schools and numbers on roll in year 6.
- To obtain information about pupil and capital planning.
- To consult Headteacher and Governing Body to seek their views.
- To research whether other LAs have experienced similar situations and actions they have taken to deal with the issue.
- To identify ways in which the ongoing situation might be resolved.
- To make recommendations on future action.

3. Suggested Programme of Meetings

1st Meeting

Head of Transforming Education to report on admission arrangements generally and particularly with regard to Springfield for the September 2011 cohort.

2nd Meeting

To hear from the following witnesses:

- Headteacher and Governing Body to be asked to comment
- Heads & Chairs Governors of Feeder Schools: Solent Junior, Court Lane Junior and Highbury Primary
- Head of Transforming Education to report on capital and pupil planning.
- Assistant Head of Planning Services to report on housing relating to existing and proposed developments.

3rd Meeting

To sign off the report for submission to full Council for consideration at its meeting on 19 July.