



School Admission Arrangements

September 2015

Consultation Document

Proposed Changes to the Priority Areas of Primary Schools in Warwick

Proposed Introduction of Super Priority Areas in Urban Areas,
Commencing with Primary Schools in Warwick

Background Information

As the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the county, Warwickshire County Council is required to consult on the admission arrangements to be used in September 2015. This consultation begins on 6th January 2014 and will last for 8 weeks; full details of the proposed arrangements are available on the County Council website.

The County Council is proposing one specific change for September 2015: to merge the current priority areas of the 6 primary schools in Warwick into a Super Priority Area. This document sets out the reasons for proposing such a change, explains who will be affected and offers an opportunity for people to make their views known.

What is proposed?

It is proposed to combine the priority areas of the schools in Warwick to create a single large Super Priority Area for the town. This would result in the following six schools sharing a priority area:

- Coten End Primary School
- Emscote Infant and All Saints Junior Schools
- Newburgh Primary School
- Westgate Primary School
- Woodloes Primary School

A map of the proposed area is on the Council's website and available on request.

The proposal to create a Super Priority Area for Warwick has the benefit of being applicable to urban areas, whilst leaving rural areas unaffected. In the first instance, the proposal would be put in place in Warwick with similar proposals for other areas in subsequent years.

Why is this being proposed for urban areas of Warwickshire?

The County Council seeks to ensure that the admissions system across Warwickshire is open, fair and transparent. We also seek to ensure local schools are available for local families, reducing the journeys to school where possible. The current system can present a number of issues that disadvantage certain families, in particular where schools are oversubscribed, and we are therefore exploring how these issues can be addressed. The two main issues with the current system are:

- The current priority areas have developed over time, their borders are arbitrary. In some instances families can live on the opposite side of a road to a school but not be in its priority area.

- Currently children within the priority area take priority for admission over children from elsewhere with siblings; it is possible for siblings to be split, presenting the family with the difficult task of taking children to more than one primary school each day. During the September 2013 Reception admissions round, approximately 30 families living in urban areas were put in this position.
- children living in the current priority areas may find another school equally close and convenient in urban areas, but may not have this offer available

The County Council is not proposing changes to the priorities by which places are offered in rural areas. Over 40% of Warwickshire primary schools are classed as 'rural' and it is important that the priority for children living in those areas remains. The difference for schools in urban areas is that there are generally many alternative schools within a reasonable distance.

Why will this only be applied to Warwick for September 2015?

The move to merging primary school priority areas in the County's towns is a significant step and we need to be clear about the impact on the local communities and on schools, transport and families' choice. Over 100 primary schools (offering approximately 27,500 places between them or 62% of the overall total) are in areas that might be suitable for Super Priority Areas to be introduced: it is our view that due to such large numbers being potentially involved, it would be better to phase the roll out of these changes.

Warwick has been selected first because it offers a clearly defined area with a manageable number of schools. Other urban areas may require two or more separate Super Priority Areas and we therefore need more time to consider the implications in these areas before proposing a model for consultation.

Who will be affected?

This proposal will not change the number of places nor will it alter the number of applicants. It is proposed that siblings living in the Super Priority Area (SPA) for Warwick will get priority for the school their brother or sister attends. It is proposed that this will only apply if the school is within the SPA.

The proposed changes will apply to Warwick schools which are oversubscribed. It is therefore possible that siblings living further from an oversubscribed school would be offered places ahead of families geographically closer. These children would be found alternative places at other local schools, within a reasonable distance, although there is no guarantee that the place offered would be at a school selected as a preference by the family.

When will this happen?

The admission arrangements for September 2014 have already been set and cannot be changed. The earliest date for changes to be made is therefore September 2015. We are consulting on putting into place a Super Priority Area for Warwick in time for September 2015 and to look at other areas in subsequent years.

When will the final decision be taken?

All admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools must be determined by the County Council's Cabinet committee before 15 April 2014. We are proposing to take a report for Cabinet to make a decision on 10 April 2014.

How do people make their views known?

This can be done by completing the attached response form and returning it to:

Peter Speers
Service Manager for Access and Organisation
Building 3
Saltisford Business Park
Ansell Way
Warwick
CV34 4UL

Or by e-mail to peterspeers@warwickshire.gov.uk

We will not be able to provide detailed individual responses but will make all comments and suggestions available to Cabinet when they come to make their final decision. Cabinet will review all responses made and make a decision based on the outcome of this consultation; they will consider all of the issues raised. Updates will be provided on the admissions pages of the Warwickshire County Council website.

Proposed Changes to School Admission Arrangements
Proposal to Merge Warwick Primary School Priority Areas
Response Form

Please explain your interest in this proposal (e.g. parent, school governor, Warwick resident)

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Do you agree that a fair and transparent admissions policy should seek to ensure that siblings can attend the same primary school?

YES / NO

Do you agree that the Warwick schools' admission criteria should be adjusted to enable siblings to attend the same school?

YES / NO

Do you think that the proposed change would be effective in achieving its aims?

YES / NO

Please provide any other comments or suggestions:

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Please return this form by **midnight on 01 March 2014** to ensure your views are included in the consultation.