Final determination report for the Director of Children’s Services

The Proposal: To make a prescribed alteration to Drake Community Infant School from 1 September 2016. The proposal is to create a two form entry all-through primary school by extending the age range to cater for children aged up to 11.

Following a six week period of consultation with parents, governors and the local community in Thetford, a Public Notice was published by Norfolk County Council which set out a proposal to extend the school’s age range from 3–7 to 3-11 to create a two form entry primary school offering a total of 420 places.

The four week period for representations ended on 28th November 2014. No representations were received, however, one request was received for a copy of the full proposal from a resident of Fairfields, who was concerned about highways issues, both for the contractors appointed for the building expansion, and for parents.

In coming to a decision on proposals to make prescribed alterations to schools, the decision maker is asked to address the following factors:

- Consideration of consultations and representation period
- Education standards and the diversity of provision
- Demand
- School size
- Proposed admission arrangements
- National Curriculum
- Equal opportunity issues
- Community cohesion
- Travel and accessibility
- Capital
- School premises and playing fields

This report, to be read in conjunction with the prescribed information already published, and the report prepared for the Director of Children’s Services requesting permission to proceed to Public Notice, will address each factor in turn.

1. Consideration of consultation and representation period

Although there is no longer a prescribed pre-publication consultation period for a change of age range, the Local Authority carried out a wide-ranging six week consultation and invited all interested stakeholders to respond. A meeting for parents at the school was well attended and the majority expressed their enthusiasm for the planned change. There was no negative response.

Following publication of the Public Notice, the full proposal was published on the Norfolk County Council website. No representations were received during the four-week period, other than the comments made by the resident of Fairfields mentioned above.
2. **Education standards and diversity of provision**

Norfolk County Council has set out in the prescribed information why all-through primary schools are its preferred model of organisation. The school already provides a high quality of education and we are confident that extending the age range of the school will serve to further improve the outcomes for the children in this part of Thetford. Drake Infant School has been judged as Outstanding by Ofsted in its two most recent inspections (March 2010 and October 2013). It is regularly oversubscribed.

3. **Demand**

Demographic growth is already putting pressure on the number of places available in Thetford’s primary phase schools. This proposal will create space for Admiral Academy to take into Year 3 an additional form of entry from Raleigh Infant School, which was set up in September 2014 to accommodate the pupils generated by significant demographic growth in Thetford.

4. **School Size**

The proposal is to extend the school’s age range from 3–7 to 3-11 to create a two form entry primary school offering a total of 420 places. The admission number will remain at 60.

5. **Proposed admission arrangements**

Implementation will begin in September 2016 and the school will grow year on year to become an all-through primary.

6. **National Curriculum**

All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum.

7. **Equal Opportunity Issues**

There are no equal opportunity issues.

8. **Community Cohesion**

Schools have a part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other. The proposed changes will not have an impact on the good work already carried out by the school.
9. **Travel and Accessibility**

The proposal is likely to contribute to the Local Authority’s duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school. Under the current organisational pattern, parents with several children in the primary system have to travel to more than one school. By removing the need to transfer at Year 3, parents will need to make fewer journeys and are more likely to walk or cycle.

10. **Capital**

Norfolk County Council’s Cabinet agreed on 14th April 2014 to include the sum of £4.4 million for the expansion of Drake Infant School in the Capital Programme 2014-17.

11. **School Premises and Playing Fields**

Suitable outdoor space is available at the school.

**The Decision**

In coming to a decision, the Decision Maker is obliged to consider the following factors. A commentary has been provided against each one.

In considering proposals for a new school, the Decision Maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposals
- Approve the proposal
- Approve the proposal with a modification
- Approve the proposal subject to it meeting a specific condition

**Conclusion and recommendation**

- That the decision maker approve the proposal to create a two form entry all-through primary school by extending the age range of Drake Community Infant School to cater for children aged up to 11 from 1 September 2016.
The Proposal: To make a prescribed alteration to Drake Community Infant School from 1 September 2016. The proposal is to create a two form entry all-through primary school by extending the age range to cater for children aged up to 11.

The Determination

I hereby approve this proposal to make prescribed to Drake Community Infant School from 1 September 2016.

The reasons for this decision are that:

- The statutory procedural requirements under section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 have been met
- The proposal meets the criteria laid down in statutory guidance in relation to the likely impact of the proposal on standards and school improvement, local choice and diversity, surplus places, community cohesion and race equality
- The views of all interested parties, including those most likely to be affected, have been considered

Signed [Signature]

Date 9/12/2014

Sheila Lock, Director of Children’s Services, Norfolk County Council