

CABINET

25th March 2024

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Primary School Admissions Review (Rising 4s)

Recommendations / key decisions required:

It is recommended that Cabinet considers the contents of the report and its recommendation.

Reasons:

To provide information on the results of a consultation on the removal of the Rising 4s Policy during the annual admissions consultation exercise in January 2024, for potential implementation in September 2025.

Preliminary Cabinet Consulted: YES

Relevant Scrutiny Committee Consulted: NO

Cabinet Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required NO

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education and Welsh Language)

Directorate:
Education & Children

Name of Head of Service:
Simon Davies

Report Author:
Allan Carter

Designations:

Head of Access to Education

Schools Transformation and
Change Manager

Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:

01267 246518
SiDavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

01267 246518
acarter@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CABINET

25th March 2024

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Primary School Admissions Review (Rising 4s)

Background

In 2018/19 the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee completed a Task & Finish Review of the current provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities.

One of the conclusions identified in the report was that that the Authority's 'Rising 4s' policy is markedly different to other neighbouring local authorities' and that the 'Council undertake a formal review of its current admissions policy for full time education for 4-year-olds (the rising 4s policy).'

Cabinet has already considered:

- A report into the rationale for potential removal of the policy
- An assessment of the implications of removal of the Rising 4s Policy in individual schools in the form of a gap analysis.

As a result, on the 11th December 2023 Cabinet resolved to consult on the removal of the Rising 4s Policy during the annual admissions consultation exercise in January 2024, for potential implementation in September 2025.

An extensive consultation exercise took place between 19th January and 1st March 2024.

Purpose

The attached document presents the results of the consultation exercise.

Conclusion

The review of the full-time education admissions policy forms only part of an overall review of early years education and childcare provision across the County.

The Cabinet's Vision statement outlines a desire to 'improve the availability of early years education and childcare settings across the county, particularly in rural areas; with a particular focus on providing and strengthening Welsh-medium childcare in all areas'.

Via a thorough analysis of gaps in the provision of the early years' education and childcare offer across Carmarthenshire, officers have identified communities where there is currently a limited offer i.e. a lack of early years education and/or childcare provision. As part of implementing a revised Admissions Policy officers will develop proposals to address those gaps and present these to Cabinet for their consideration.

This will include working with partners on the delivery of early years education or creating 3-11 schools to provide the education offer across the County. Officers will also work on enhancing the childcare offer in those communities, to ensure that families are able to access the Welsh Government's 30-hour free Childcare Offer locally.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Carmarthenshire as the Admissions Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled primary schools proceeds to remove the Rising 4s Policy and implement the following:

- From 1st September 2025, admit full time learners to primary schools in the school term following their fourth birthday (OPTION B).

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES: Consultation Report

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed:  **Head of Access to Education**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Any changes to primary school admission arrangements will affect Carmarthenshire's School Admissions Policy and require the appropriate consultations as laid out in the Welsh Governments School Admissions Code.

2. Legal

Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and amended by Section 40 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced the requirement for the Welsh Ministers to issue a Code in respect of the discharge of admissions functions. In particular, the Code also sought to safeguard the interests of parents, children and young people by ensuring that school admissions are administered in the fairest and most equitable way possible.

The most recent School Admissions Code was issued in 2013 and is intended to clarify the process for everyone with an interest in school admissions and school admission appeals, help admission authorities to fulfil their duties correctly and improve working practices.

3. Finance

There is an opportunity to explore altering the full-time admission of pupils, creating more 3-11 schools to offer part time nursery provision in their locality, provide more business opportunities to the non-maintained sector to provide early years provision/wrap around care and make budget efficiencies. This would require further detailed financial modelling as recommended by the task and finish report.

4. ICT

N/A

5. Risk Management Issues

N/A

6. Staffing Implications

A change to the primary school's admissions policy and a more detailed review into the impact on each school may have staffing implications which will be addressed in accordance with the County Council's Policy and Procedures.

7. Physical Assets

N/A

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed:



Head of Access to Education

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination

NO

Scrutiny Committee

Date the report was considered:-

Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-

2. Local Member(s) – Not applicable at this stage.

3. Community / Town Council – Not applicable at this stage.

4. Relevant Partners – Not applicable at this stage.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Not applicable at this stage.

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED YES	N/A
Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:	
Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
PRIMARY SCHOOLS Admissions Review (Rising 4s) – Gap Analysis	https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=131&Mid=7042&Ver=4
PRIMARY SCHOOLS Admissions Review (Rising 4s)	https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=405&Mid=7154&Ver=4
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS - Primary School Admissions Review (Rising 4s)	https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=131&Mid=5719&Ver=4
Carmarthenshire County Council School Admissions Policy 2021-22	https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1225137/school-admissions-policy-2021-22.pdf
School Admissions Code (Wales) 2013	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/school-admissions-code.pdf