

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

**DECISION OF: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
WITH ADVICE FROM: DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



DECISION NO: 2017/18, PC47

SUBJECT:

A proposal to extend the age range of Kewstoke Primary School from four – eleven years to three – eleven years formally with effect from 22nd January 2018.

KEY DECISION: YES

BACKGROUND:

1. Council officers have been working with senior staff and governors at Kewstoke Primary School to determine whether a permanent expansion of the age range should be progressed. At the time of writing this report there are 85 pupils on Kewstoke Primary's school roll.
- 1.2 The Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services gave approval on 17 November 2017 to commence the statutory consultation process to make changes at Kewstoke Primary School. These changes are to extend the age range of the school to allow an intake of a maximum of ten, three and four year olds.
- 1.3 All statutory consultees have been consulted;
 - **Parish Council** – via email and notices on 26.09.17
 - **School staff** - at staff meetings 4th July 2017.
Affected staff were spoken to during week of 10 – 14th July 2017
Plan was added to schools Improvement Plan September 2017 where staff are invited to make amendments
 - **Parents of the school** - via newsletter and school website 14th and 21st July 2017, 8th and 15th September 2017, 6th, 13th October 2017, 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th November 2017.
 - **Parents of the school at parent's evenings** – 17th and 19th October 2017 where parents were asked for their opinions.

No formal responses were received.

2. No comments about the proposal were recorded at any of the meetings held with school stakeholders and neighbours. Those present indicated general support, one concern was raised by a parent enquiring about the effect of mixed ages within reception class. The head teacher was able to explain proposed arrangements which

would be the same throughout the school as have mixed classes. The parent was happy with the explanation.

3. The Head teacher shared the consultation documentation with all staff (see above). All are in favour of the expansion. If the school is to be expanded there should be opportunities for the changes to offer greater opportunities for staff development for children of nursery age.
4. In the immediate locality there is no school led provision offered for three and four year olds. This proposal would enable this choice for parents and would be especially advantageous for parents with children currently on school roll easing transition into the school and supporting progress for children with an increased continuity of care.
5. The consultation period for this proposal took place between Thursday 23rd November and Thursday 21st December 2017.

DECISION:

That the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services approves the extension of the age range of Kewstoke Primary School from four – eleven years to three – eleven years formally with effect from 22nd January 2018.

REASONS:

Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient childcare places for three and four year olds and to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. From September 2017, there is an increased duty to secure an additional 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks for qualifying children (30 hours entitlement).

Guidance states that:

“Children are able to take up their full entitlement to a free place at times that best support their learning and development, and at times which fit with the needs of parents to enable them to work or increase their hours of work if they wish to do so.”
Early Education and Childcare, statutory guidance for local authorities (March 2017).

In the immediate locality there is no school led early years provision offered for three and four year olds and therefore a school nursery class would support the LAs duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

1. To do nothing. If, in the future, there were not sufficient early years places to meet the requirements of local parents, the local authority could be legally challenged and may would have to provide early years provision at its own cost.
2. To encourage other early years providers to open childcare in the area. The projected intake of 10 children would not be a viable concern to a stand-alone provider of early years education.
3. To extend the age range of Kewstoke Primary School as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no cost implications for North Somerset council in expanding the age range of Kewstoke Primary school.

Costs

There are no costs implications for North Somerset Council in expanding the age range.

Funding

No funding required.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

North Somerset legal team have been consulted.

CONSULTATION

See above 1.3.

RISK MANAGEMENT

If Sufficiency of childcare places in local area becomes a problem, North Somerset Council could be challenged and may have to provide early years provision at own cost.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Early education and Childcare – Statutory guidance for local authorities.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596460/early_education_and_childcare_statutory_guidance_2017.pdf

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: 

Title: Councillor Jan Barber,
Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services

Date: 9th January 2018

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed: Sheila Smith

Title: Sheila Smith
Director, People and Communities

Date: 8.1.17

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:

