



Purpose: For Decision

Cabinet report

Date **9 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Title **LOWERING THE AGE RANGE OF HUNNYHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Report of **DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As required by the Department For Education's [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98421/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools.pdf). This report seeks approval to publish a Public Notice to lower the age range of Hunnyhill Primary school which is a Local Authority maintained school.
2. The Public Notice would be displayed at the School, sent out to all current parents of the school and preschool, Governors, stakeholders, placed on iwight.com and in the Isle of Wight County Press and Observer newspapers from 6th September 2021. The consultation will run until 17th October 2021. The outcome of this statutory process including any objections received will be reported to Cabinet on 11th November 2021 for a decision on outcome of the consultation and on proposal.
3. The recommendation is that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in consultation with the Director of Children's services, authorises the publication of a Public Notice to undertake the statutory process to enable Hunnyhill Primary School to deliver education to younger age children at the earliest opportunity in January 2022.

BACKGROUND

4. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish a Public Notice to lower the age range of Hunnyhill Primary School from Year R to age 3 years and the school taking on the direct management of the on-site Preschool; Jigsaw Pre-school. As required by the DfE [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98421/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools.pdf) the local authority is required to enter into a Statutory Process which requires the issue of the Public Notice. Usual statutory notice is for a four week period. The Isle of Wight has a requirement that all public consultations are for six weeks. The Public Notice will therefore be issued to provide a period of six weeks public consultation. The Public Notice would be published on 6th September 2021 and therefore approval to proceed would be needed in advance of this date. The outcome of the consultation will be used as a basis for a further

Cabinet report to confirm the final decision regarding the school's request to lower its age range.

5. The on-site Pre-school currently take children from 2 years of age. It is the intention of Hunnyhill Primary School to cater for those 2-year-old children who are currently registered at the setting. This will be outlined in their admission statement as a continuity of their early years education. Hunnyhill Primary will then not admit any 2-year-old children from January 2022.
6. Hunnyhill Primary School is a community maintained Local Authority school currently approved to take children of school age from Year R to 11 years.
7. The PAN for the school is currently 60 and the governing body of the school is seeking to take on the management of the on-site community preschool to deliver 32 preschool places for children aged from 3 years.
8. As the school is a community-maintained school the Local Authority must run a public consultation. Approval is therefore being sought to move to a public notice for 6 weeks to enable the school to take on the assets and staff of the preschool and for the management be directly through the school as early in January 2022 as possible.
9. The Public Notice would be displayed at the School and at Jigsaw Preschool. It will be circulated to all current parents of the preschool and school, Governors, stakeholders and placed on iwight.com and in the Isle of Wight County Press and Observer newspapers from 6th September 2021. The consultation will conclude on 17th October 2021 to ensure 6 weeks of consultation. The outcome of this statutory process including any objections received will be reported to Cabinet on 11th November. Subject to a favourable position the school is seeking the earliest opportunity to conclude the management arrangements.
10. Jigsaw Pre-school is a private limited company providing 32 childcare places. There are five staff employed. The preschool currently receives government funding for free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The preschool is sited on Hunnyhill Primary School grounds connected to the main building of the school.
11. In June 2021, the owner of the on-site pre-school informed the Head Teacher of her retirement and closure of the pre-school. This led to the Head Teacher contacting the Early Years Advisory Team to request support to look at options for the school to take over the direct management of the pre-school. Since this time the school has reviewed its options and worked closely with Jigsaw Pre-school to allow for the takeover of the management and assets of the pre-school from January 2022.
12. The school has formally written to the local authority to request permission to lower the age range at the school. (Appendix 1)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

13. The proposal from Hunnyhill Primary school to lower its age range to three years allows for the continuity of care and, early years education of the children currently at the preschool.
14. This directly links to the current Corporate Plan priority which is to ensure that all Island children have the best possible start in education in order to fulfil their potential. This will be further supported as the proposed Early Years Provision will have a qualified teacher taking the Lead.

CONSULTATION

15. As required by the DfE [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98422/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools.pdf) the local authority is required to enter into a Statutory Process which requires the issue of the Public Notice. Usual statutory notice is for a four-week period. The Isle of Wight has a requirement that all public consultations are for six weeks. The Public Notice will therefore be issued to provide a period of 6 weeks public consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be used as a basis for Cabinet report to confirm any final decision regarding the school's desire to lower its age range.
- 14 This would include, subject to Covid restrictions, a drop-in session at the school to allow any stakeholders or other interested parties to directly raise questions with the school and local authority and receive answers to those questions.
- 15 The Public Notice would be displayed at the School, sent out to all current parents of the school and preschool, Governors, stakeholders, placed on iwight.com and in the Isle of Wight County Press and Observer newspapers from 6th September 2021. The consultation will run until 17th October 2021. The outcome of this statutory process including any objections received will be reported to cabinet on 11th November for a decision on outcome and on proposal.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

16. The school has undertaken its own due diligence and understands that the preschool children finances can only be met from early years education claims and parental fee income.
17. The school has negotiated with the exiting Provider to purchase the preschool assets. A two-year repayment plan has been agreed which is incorporated in the business plan.
18. Five members of staff will be transferred from the pre-school to the direct management of the school. The Terms and Conditions of work will change according to the Hay Grade pay scale which will be in line with the support staff at the school. This will result in an increased cost in staffing.

19. The Early Years Advisory Team will continue to support the Head Teacher on financial projections to ensure such developments do not have a financially detrimental impact on the running of the school.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The Head Teacher has been required to undertake their own due diligence in review of the preschool and has taken IOW legal, finance and HR advice.
21. The Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights for five staff transferring from the preschool to the direct management of the School. School has sought HR/legal support for this.
22. The five staff members Terms and Conditions of work will change according to the Hay Grade pay scale and will be in line with the support staff at the school.
23. The governing body at its meeting of 8th June 2021 has agreed with the decision to directly manage the preschool.
24. The pre-school will be operated and managed by the Headteacher and Governing Body at Hunnyhill Primary school, ensuring continuity in all operational and financial aspects. Hunnyhill Primary School Governing Body will remain the accountable governing body.
25. The School will be required to ensure parents of children attending the preschool will still need to apply for their place in Year R. Unlike in all through school everyone must apply for their Year R place. There is the ability for the school when they start to operate the early years provision that Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium, or the service premium who: a) are in a nursery class which is part of the school; or b) attend a nursery that is established and run by the school. The nursery must be named in the admission arrangements and its selection must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

26. Hunnyhill Primary school is an inclusive school which includes children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.
27. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached.

OPTIONS

28. The report outlines the option of seeking approval to publish a Public Notice to lower the age range of Hunnyhill Primary school. This will ensure the continuity of care and Early Years Education of those children in the current Early years pre-school 'Jigsaw'.

29. The current Provider 'Jigsaw' pre-school is closing on 31st December 2021 which will result in no Early Years pre-school on the site. This option will result in 25 pre-school children requiring a place at another Early Years Provision. As well as any additional children who will start the pre-school in September 2021.
30. The owner of the preschool 'Jigsaw' approached the Headteacher in June 2021 regarding the closure of the preschool. This has resulted in a tight timeline to ensure there remains an Early Years Provision on the site. At this stage if the Early Years Provision was offered out to tender it could result in there being no Early Years Provision at this site for a period of time and, for those children who currently attend the preschool to have no Early Years education.
31. As a result of the consultation if there are objections that cannot be resolved the Early Years Provision will either close with no Early years provision on site, or be offered out to tender with a possible gap in Early Years education for those children who already attend 'Jigsaw' preschool.

RISK MANAGEMENT

32. The Headteacher has undertaken a full business plan with financial projections for the following three years. This business plan has been shared with the Local Authority and comments have been suggested and taken on.
33. The transfer of the five members of staff will result in increase in salaries and pension contributions. This has been factored into the business plan and will need monitoring.
34. The Early Years Advisory Team will work with Hunnyhill Primary School to support in business strategies to mitigate any financial risks.
35. There will be no financial implications for the Local Authority.
36. The Primary school is in a central position on the island where there is a high demand for early years educational places. With no pre-school on the school site this could cause a strain to the market and would result in the Local Authority not meeting its statutory duty of providing sufficient childcare places.

EVALUATION

37. In conclusion it is recommended to approve a Public Notice to commence a six week consultation period to lower the age range of Hunnyhill Primary school to allow for the continuity of care and education of the current children at the preschool. In addition to the Local Authority continuing to meet its statutory childcare sufficiency duty.

RECOMMENDATION

This report seeks approval to publish a Public Notice to lower the age range of Hunnyhill Primary school.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Letter to Steve Crocker

Appendix 2 – EIA

Contact Point: Theresa Wall, Early Years Advisory Lead , ☎ 821000
theresa.wall @iow.gov.uk

STEVE CROCKER
Director of Children's Services

(CLLR) DEBBIE ANDRE
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education
and Skills*