

TITLE OF REPORT: Revised Catchment Areas in East Gateshead

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. This report asks Cabinet for approval to consult on the proposal to amend the school catchment areas in the East of Gateshead in light of the closure of Thomas Hepburn Community Academy (THCA) at the end of August 2019.
2. Cabinet is also asked to approve the proposed revised school catchment areas for purposes of the 2018/19 Year 6 pupils, application to secondary school.

Background

3. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Local Authorities to adopt a strategic role, with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision. This is only possible when there are sufficient numbers of school places situated with the right location.
4. Thomas Hepburn Community Secondary School which has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 750 became a sponsored academy Thomas Hepburn Community Academy (THCA) in October 2013, following poor Ofsted Reports (March 2011- Satisfactory, November 2012- Inadequate). The academy sponsor was Northern Education Trust (NET). A further Ofsted in November 2016 also judged THCA as Inadequate.
5. In May 2018, following a consultation period (February/March 2018) the Minister for Education made the decision to close THCA. Working with the Academy the decision was made that Phase 1 would be to not admit Year 6 pupils who would be moving into Year 7 at THCA and current Year 9 Pupils who were moving into Year 10. During May, June and July 2018 work was undertaken with parents of Year 6 and Year 9 pupils, schools/academies and pupils to allocate schools places in time for September 2018, the start of the 2018/19 academic year.
6. This will mean that during the 2018/19 academic year there will be 3-year groups attending THCA Year 8, Year 9 and Year 11. Phase 2 of the move will be during the 2018/19 academic year and will focus on the Year 8 and Year 9 pupils who are still attending THCA.
7. Historically Gateshead has 'catchment' areas which have linked primary schools to secondary schools/academies. There are 7 catchment areas; with the 2 Voluntary Aided (Catholic) Schools in Gateshead operating parish boundaries with the two faith schools. Emmanuel College operate a post code based admissions policy and draw about two thirds of their pupils from Gateshead.

8. With the closure of THCA, catchment areas in the East of Gateshead will need to be realigned.

Proposal

9. This paper sets out the proposed catchment areas for the 2019/20 academic year in order that parents can choose secondary school places for their child(ren).
10. This paper also sets out the proposal to consult on the permanent change to catchment areas from September 2020.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) approves the use of the proposed catchment areas for the academic year 2019/20; and
 - (ii) agrees to the consultation on the proposals to change the catchment area from October 2018-January 2019 from Sept. 2020.

For the following reason:

In order for the Council to provide sufficient secondary school places in the East of Gateshead

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. This proposal supports the Council's new strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, as well as the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead, Vision 2030.
2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Local Authorities to adopt a strategic role, with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision. This is only possible when there are sufficient numbers of school places situated with the right location.
3. The School Admissions Code 2014 states that '*All schools must have admission arrangements, that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities*'.
4. Admission authorities must set admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements.
5. For admissions arrangements for entry in September, consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1st October and the 31st January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. This allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements.
6. If schools are unsubscribed, any parent that applies must be offered a place.
7. If schools are oversubscribed, a school's admissions authority must rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send the list back to the local authority.
8. As part of determining admission arrangements all admission authorities must set an admissions number for each relevant age group; this is known as the Published Admissions Number (PAN).
9. Over subscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and comply with relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.
10. Gateshead Council's Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools Admission Policy 2017/18 sets out the oversubscription criteria used in its Information to Parents document which is updated on an annual basis. The document sets out that applications from parents will be considered who have named the school as any ranked preference on their application forms; known as equal preference system. If there are more applications than the number of places available places are allocated by using the following order of priority:
 - Children in public care (as defined under Section 22 of the Children's Act 1989)
 - Children who live in the school catchment area

- Children who will have a brother or sister at the secondary school during the coming academic year
- Other children who have exception medical or social grounds
- All other children

11. The school catchment area is the geographical location where the schools' core intake of pupils live e.g. the area from which pupils are eligible to attend a local school. This applies to all schools except Voluntary Aided (Catholic) Schools in Gateshead who operate parish boundaries. The Admissions Code 2014 article 1.14 states that catchment areas must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined. Catchment areas do not prevent parents who live outside the catchment of a particular school from expressing a preference for the school.

Background

12. Thomas Hepburn Community Secondary School which has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 750 became a sponsored academy in October 2013, following a number of poor Ofsted Reports (March 2011- Satisfactory, November 2012- Inadequate). The academy sponsor was Nother Education Trust (NET). A further Ofsted in November 2016 also judged THCA as Inadequate.

13. Over the past few years admissions numbers into Year 7 in THCA have been well below their 150 PAN for Year 7 and since 2016/17 have fallen year on year and have consistently failed to meet their published admissions numbers.

2014/15	78 pupils
2015/16	83 pupils
2016/17	90 pupils
2017/18	56 pupils
2018/19	44 pupils (projected)

14. Pupils who live in the THCA catchment area have historically found places in Heworth Grange, Joseph Swan, Cardinal Hume and Emmanuel College

15. NET decided to consult on the closure of THCA and following a period of consultation (February-March 2018) the Minister for Education decided in May 2018 to close the Academy.

16. There is no published guidance from the DfE on the closure of an Academy. The decision was therefore taken to close the school over an 18-month time period. Phase 1 would focus on those pupils in Year 6 who had been allocated THCA for Year 7 and the Year 9 pupils at THCA who would move into Year 10 in September 2018. This would leave Year 8, Year 9 and Year 11 in THCA for the 2018/19 academic year.

17. Phase 2 includes those pupils who in September 2018 will be in Year 8 and Year 9.

18. Phase 1 pupils have now all been allocated places in other Gateshead schools. Due to the tight timeframe (3 months) the decision was made to allocate school places to Phase 1 pupils in accordance to:

- Preference

- Distance

- Phase 2 pupils would be allocated a new school place using normal admissions criteria. Parents will be contacted in September 2018 setting out the arrangements for their child to transfer to a new school for the start of the 2019/2020 academic year.
- Current Year 5 pupils who will be applying for secondary school places for September 2019, need to know which secondary school catchment area they are linked to, so they can apply for a secondary school place in September 2018 in line with published admission policies.
- This paper sets out the **proposed** (for the academic year 2019/20 only pending consultation) admission arrangements for the current Year 5 pupils in the Thomas Hepburn cluster of primary schools (who will be moving into Year 7 in September 2019) who would have previously had THCA as their catchment secondary school.
- It also sets out the proposal to consult for the permanent changes in admission arrangements for the THCA cluster of primary schools.

Proposal

- The THCA encompasses 9 primary schools in its catchment area.

School	PAN	Actual (Current Y5-Y7-Sept 2019)
Bede	30	19
Bill Quay	30	31
Brandling	30	19
Carr Hill	45	45
Colegate	45	24
Fell Dyke	45	42
Falla Park	30	28
South Street	44	41
Windy Nook	45	44
Total	344	293

- Across the cluster of primary schools, the number of pupils is such that had they all gone to THCA, the school would have been oversubscribed. However, as THCA has been undersubscribed in the past years, a large percentage of pupils have found places in other secondary schools.
- Therefore, initially we need to find approximately 60 places per year group to meet the current demand brought about by the closure of THCA in the East of the Borough.
- What is uncertain at this point is the impact that parental preference and in-year transfers (both within and from outside of the Borough) will have on the demand for school places in the East of the Borough.

27. However, with the closure of THCA and the loss of 150 school places, work is currently ongoing with the DfE on how to create additional capacity within the secondary school sector.
28. With the closure of THCA, these primary schools will need to be realigned with existing secondary schools; see table below. The proposal is to use the proposed changes to the catchment areas for admission into the Year 6 in September 2019 (current Year 5).
29. This proposal was put into place following discussions with the primary schools on which secondary school the majority of their pupils go to at the present time. Cardinal Hume is not included in this proposal; as a faith school their catchment is on parish boundaries. Emmanuel was also not included in the proposal as their catchment is by post code and across Gateshead and Newcastle.
30. The new catchment areas see the primary schools in the THCA catchment realigned with Heworth Grange and Joseph Swan Academies as follows:

Proposed Heworth Grange Catchment			Proposed Joseph Swan Catchment		
School	PAN	Actual (Current Y5-Y7-Sept 19)	School	PAN	Actual (Current Y5-Y7-Sept 19)
Bede*	30	19	Carr Hill	45	45
Bill Quay	30	31	Fell Dyke	45	42
Brandling	30	19	Glynwood	60	56
Colegate	45	24	Harlow Green	60	52
Falla Park	30	28	Kells Lane	60	58
Lingley House	60	49	Kelvin Grove	60	35
Roman Road	30	14	Larkspur	29	22
The Drive	29	26	Oakfield Jr	60	58
Wardley	45	41	South Street	44	41
White Mere	30	20			
Windy Nook	45	44			
Total	404	315	Total	478	409

*highlighted schools were previously THCA catchment primary schools

31. This change is initially proposed for 1 year only; with a formal consultation taking place from October 2018-January 2019 for a permanent change to catchment areas.

Consultation

32. Formal consultation for the proposed changes in catchment areas will need to take place in line with the Schools Admissions Code 2014; *for admissions arrangements for entry in September, consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1st October and the 31st January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. This allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements.*
33. As part of this consultation parents, schools, religious authorities, ward councillors and members of the community will have an opportunity to express their views on the proposed changes.

34. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

Alternative Options

35. In light of the closure of THCA by the Minister for Education, there is a need to consult on the realignment of catchment areas. If we do not realign THCA primary schools to new catchment secondary schools, parents will be disadvantaged when applying for their child's secondary school place, in relation to published admissions policies for September 2019.

Implications of Recommended Option

36. Resources:

a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms discussions are currently ongoing with the DfE in relation to the need for basic needs funding to offset cost implications in meeting the proposed increase in pupil numbers that realigning catchment areas may bring to these schools.

b) **Human Resources Implications** – Staff will be consulted as part of the formal consultation and their views and comments will be taken into consideration

c) **Property Implications** - There will be potential need for increased space in existing secondary schools to accommodate the realignment of catchment areas

37. **Risk Management Implication** - Without realigning the THCA catchment areas; parents who apply for a secondary school place for their child will be at a disadvantage if they don't have a catchment secondary school.

38. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - An EIA will be undertaken as part of the consultation which will be available to Cabinet for consideration prior to a decision being made.

39. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.

40. **Health Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report

41. **Sustainability Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.

42. **Human Rights Implications** - The implications of the Human Rights Act must be considered in any decision that involves a change in policy, function or service change. If implemented the proposal will positively enhance a child's right not to be denied an education.

43. **Area and Ward Implications** - This report will have implications for the following wards initially: Bridges, Chowdene, Deckham, Felling, High Fell, Lobley Hill, Bensham, Low Fell, Pelaw and Heworth, Saltwell, Wardley and Leam Lane, windy Nook and Whitehills

Background Information

Gateshead Local Authority Admissions to Secondary School
School Admissions Code 2014