

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	7 March 2025
Title:	Lowering Age Range for Lanterns Nursery School
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Lead Member with feedback on the statutory public notice in relation to the proposal for Lanterns Nursery School to lower their age range to take children from the age of six weeks.
2. This report seeks Executive Lead Member approval for the age range of Lanterns Nursery School to be lowered to take children from 6 weeks and deliver an early years pre-school provision.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the proposal for Lanterns Nursery School to lower its age range to take babies from six weeks old.

Executive Summary

4. Lanterns Nursery School proposes to lower its age range to six weeks old and extend the current childcare nursery on the Lanterns Nursery School site under its current governorship. The school leadership team has reviewed its management, financial, and operational arrangements with the governing body who have given their full agreement to the proposal.
5. The lowered age range will be accommodated within the existing school building which will have full facilities to accommodate younger children and access to appropriate outdoor space.

6. The school will monitor their finances and childcare offer to maximise income and meet the needs of the community. The school will fund any future reconfiguration of rooms if demand for early years places increases.
7. There is no cost to Hampshire County Council associated with this proposal.
8. A public consultation was held from 29th November 2024 to 10th January 2025. There were no objections raised.

Contextual information

9. Lanterns Nursery School is a maintained nursery school in the Winchester district and is currently approved to take children of school age from 2 years to 5 years. They are also a resourced provision and hold 36 childcare places for children with SEND. The nursery school currently accommodates 103 children.
10. The governing body of the school is seeking to directly manage an early year's facility for children 0 to 5 years as part of the school.
11. This proposal supports the continuing need for early years provision in the St Barnabas areas of the Winchester district and supports families from this ward and wider due to its inclusive provision. The data from the Small Area Population Forecast (SAPF) indicates a decrease in children in the ward, however the new Department of Education entitlements for families show an increase of places required in the ward for 0–2-year-olds. The data from an internal supply and needs assessment highlights that 98% of families access their early years education entitlement within the same ward.
12. 36 places at Lanterns are resourced places for referred children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Resourced places are offered to children with a wide range of needs including physical difficulties, autism, speech and language difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and developmental delay. Community places are available to children, who live in the Winchester area, from the term after their third birthday. Resourced places are offered to children with SEND, from 2 years 9 months, according to availability.
13. As a Maintained Nursery School, Lanterns supports a significant number of disadvantaged families and children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium. In the summer term of 2024 this equated to 39% of the school cohort.

Finance

14. The governing body at Lanterns Nursery School have agreed to lower the age range and understand that this will be budgeted separately to the school. The school has provided an outline business plan and financial projections to the Childcare Development Service. The school's financial projections suggest that a small surplus will be made. There is no cost to the County Council associated with this proposal. An application for DFE Early Years Expansion Capital Grant was successful.

Consultation and Equalities

On 21st November 2024 the Children's Services Department Management Team (CDSMT) approved a statutory four-week public consultation in respect of this proposal. The Public Notice was published on 29th November and closed on 10th January 2025. Lanterns Nursery School sent a questionnaire to all families in September 2024 and there were 35 responses. The responses were positive for families to have access to a space for the younger age groups. The feedback included that Parents choose Lanterns due to location, recommendations, Ofsted information, cost, reputation, garden space and specialism in in working with children SEND.

15. There were no objections raised with the strategic development team or directly with Lanterns Nursery School via the public consultation.
16. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached (appendix A). The proposal will provide inclusive access to Early Years Education.
17. A travel plan was not considered for this expansion. However, Lanterns Nursery School offer a range of different start and finish times to all age groups.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

18. The County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies, and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into

everything the County Council does. [Climate Change Decision Tools \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

19. A Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached (see appendix B).

Human Resources Implications

20. As Lanterns Nursery School is extending their age group, there are no Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) implications.

Conclusion

21. Lanterns Nursery School's proposal to open a new early years provision supports the growth of childcare places in this ward for the younger age group.

22. The proposed childcare will also support the government's objective that eligible working parents of children from nine months old to school age will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare a week from September 2025.

23. The Hampshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2023/24 highlighted that in the Winchester district more children are accessing their early years entitlement with a standard term time offer. Therefore, the proposed places will help to meet the pattern of take up that families access in the ward.

24. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the proposal for Lanterns Nursery School to lower its age range to six weeks old.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> None	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

Appendices

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B - CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The decision for this report is essentially to note that the Governance at Lanterns Nursery School is proposing to extend its age range, which will result in the school going age down to include babies from six weeks from 1st September 2025. The school age range will become 0 to 5 years.

The change will include an area within the school that will be used to provide early years education offering additional early years funded places.

There are no external adaptations planned for the building at this time. Should there be in the future, regard would be given to climate change and Hampshire's target to become carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2025.

The space is part of the school building which will be monitored for future changes in view of the anticipated increase in temperatures and to keep users safe from overheating.

The staff team will increase; however all staff and parents are encouraged to walk to the school with their children and to avoid using cars so reducing carbon emissions.

No other change is planned currently, and as such does not have any climate change considerations.