

# Individual Executive Member Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Determination of Admission Arrangements for John O'Gaunt School</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decision
<b>Date on which Decision is to be taken:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID2914a

**Purpose of Report:** To review and approve the change to the Council's Admission Arrangements for John O'Gaunt school.

**Recommended Action:** To determine the West Berkshire Council Admission Arrangements for John O'Gaunt school.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** Statutory requirement

**Other options considered:** None

**Key background documentation:** West Berkshire Admission Arrangements 2015-16 School Admissions Code

Portfolio Member Details	
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Contact Officer Details	
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## Implications

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<b>Policy:</b>	It is a legal requirement to determine admission arrangements by 15 April each year.
<b>Financial:</b>	The financial implications of extending the transport provision are £30k p.a.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	None
<b>Environmental:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	Yes

## Consultation Responses

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### Members:

<b>Leader of Council:</b>	Councillor Gordon Lundie
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:</b>	Councillor Brian Bedwell
<b>Ward Members:</b>	Councillor Paul Hewer and Councillor James Podger
<b>Opposition Spokesperson:</b>	Councillor David Allen
<b>Local Stakeholders:</b>	All community and voluntary controlled schools, voluntary aided schools, academies, neighbouring Local Authorities, public consultation, Hungerford Town Council.
<b>Officers Consulted:</b>	CDLT
<b>Trade Union:</b>	n/a

<b>Is this item subject to call-in?</b>	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

## Supporting Information

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to determine Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in their area by 15 April each year. In doing this, Local Authorities must comply with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and all relevant legislation.
- 1.2 The Governing Body of John O'Gaunt school in Hungerford temporarily removed the 6th form intake for Year 12 pupils in September 2014 and September 2015. For a change of 3 years or more, there is a requirement for the Local Authority to undertake a statutory consultation.
- 1.3 West Berkshire Council published a proposal, under section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act), to remove the 6th form from John O'Gaunt school, Hungerford (the school) with effect from 31 August 2016. The Statutory Notice is included at Appendix B and explains the background to this proposal. As John O'Gaunt school is a maintained school, the LA is the formal decision maker for this proposal. The Headteacher and the school's governing body support the proposal.

### 2. Statutory Representation Period

- 2.1 The statutory representation period began on 12 December 2014 and ended on 13 February 2015. The LA is determining its response to this proposal under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 (the Regulations).
- 2.2 The representation period on the closure of the John O'Gaunt 6th form ran concurrently with the admissions arrangements consultation. The 6th form admission number was amended to zero in the PAN of the proposed admission arrangements for 2016/17. The admission arrangements are in a separate, complementary report.

### 3. Response - Data

3.1 There were 56 responses to the consultation, including a written submission from Hungerford Town Council.

3.2 Responses via the online consultation form:

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>No.</b>
Current student at John O'Gaunt (for students aged 14-19)	3
Current parent at John O'Gaunt (for students up to 13 years old)	12
Current parent at John O'Gaunt (for students aged 14-19)	27
Current parent at a feeder school	0
West Berkshire resident (from Hungerford and surrounding villages which feed John O'Gaunt school)	7
Member of Staff	4
Other (former student)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

3.3 24 respondents agreed with the proposal, and 30 respondents disagreed with the proposal.

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Current student at John O'Gaunt (for students aged 14-19)	0	3
Current parent at John O'Gaunt (for students up to 13 years old)	3	9
Current parent at John O'Gaunt (for students aged 14-19)	12	15
Current parent at a feeder school	0	0
West Berkshire resident (from Hungerford and surrounding villages which feed John O'Gaunt school)	4	3
Member of Staff	4	0
Other (former student)	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>

3.4 A formal response was received from Hungerford Town Council. The Town Council considered the Statutory Notice at its meeting on 2 February 2015. A proposal from the Mayor to support the school, Headteacher and governors with the plans to suspend the 6th form was unanimously approved by the Town Council.

3.5 An email response was also received.

### 4. Response - Comments

4.1 The Survey asked 3 questions:

1. Please explain why you disagree with the proposal – 18 responses. (This question was only asked to the respondents who disagreed with the proposal).
2. Please comment if you feel that this proposal will affect particular individuals more than others – and if so – how do you think we might address this? – 24 responses.
3. Is there anything else you would like to comment on that you have not had the opportunity to do so? – 17 responses

4.2 A fuller summary of the responses is at Appendix C.

- 4.3 The concerns and comments are summarised below. The numbers following the statement indicate the number of times this point is mentioned in the responses to any of the questions:
- The cost, time and logistical implications of transport to other post-16 or 6<sup>th</sup> form provision (x23)
  - Parent would prefer for the child to go to John O’Gaunt 6<sup>th</sup> form (x8)
  - Closing the 6<sup>th</sup> form may put off students from joining the school at the start of their secondary education (x8)
  - Secondary students who would prefer to stay will have no choice but to move school for 6<sup>th</sup> form education, and this is unsettling (x7)
  - School deserves more investment (x6)
  - Changing schools for 6<sup>th</sup> form could affect educational attainment (x6)
  - It may affect teacher recruitment and retention (x5)
  - Bad for the local community (x4)
  - West Berkshire Council is Newbury-centric (x3)
  - Impact on children with special educational needs who need consistency (x2).
  - Educational standards at John O’Gaunt need to improve (x1)
  - Some children thrive in a small school, where they would struggle in a larger school (x1)
  - Those in small villages may struggle to find alternative 6<sup>th</sup> forms (x1)
  - How will John O’Gaunt improve provision for the younger pupils? (x1)
  - West Berkshire Council should improve its method of consultation (x1)
  - Some children thrive in a small school, where they would struggle in a larger school (x1)
  - Reduced number at secondary intake could negatively affect the finances of the school (x1)
- 4.4 By far, the biggest concern that was raised was the cost, time and logistical issues associating with students travelling to another form of post-16 provision. One respondent suggested that West Berkshire Council should provide free transport for all John O’Gaunt pupils to their choice of post-16 provision.
- 4.5 Some parents were concerned about the unsettling nature of having to change school for 6<sup>th</sup> form education, and were naturally concerned about whether this will have an impact on their child and their child’s attainment.
- 5. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes**
- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment stage 1 has been completed (Appendix A).
- 6. Conclusion**
- 6.1 From the 56 responses, 8 comments were made where parents would prefer their child to stay at John O’Gaunt schools and 7 comments said that their child would prefer to stay there.

- 6.2 There were a range of matters mentioned in the responses, which have all been considered by the Council.
- 6.3 The majority of responses seem to believe that the Council will determine that the 6th form will close and were concerned about making alternative arrangements for their child. The biggest concern was the cost of transport to alternative settings.
- 6.4 As a direct result of the concerns expressed by residents, the Council has extended its post-16 transport provision to include significantly subsidised train travel. This means that the cost of train travel is capped for all post-16 students resident in West Berkshire. The cap applies where a West Berkshire resident post-16 student uses a closed door school bus or has a train pass, and the cost will be the same. For 2015/16, the price would be £230 p.a. and this can be paid in instalments, on request.
- 6.5 For families that currently attend John O’Gaunt secondary provision, this means that instead of travelling to the school in Hungerford, the student can travel to the train station in Hungerford and take an onward journey at a heavily subsidised price. For example, the Council already offers discounted train travel, which would cover the Hungerford to Newbury journey. The rail passes for Hungerford-Newbury are c.£570 paid in 3 instalments, representing a 34% discount (as at October 2014). Under the new scheme, the cost would reduce to a flat fee of £230 p.a., representing substantial savings. The journey time from Hungerford train station to Newbury train station is c. 12 minutes.
- 6.6 Families on a low income can apply for a bursary from their chosen post-16 provider to support transport costs.
- 6.7 Some post-16 providers provide free transport. For example, Newbury College provide a free bus from Newbury Train station to their campus, and Park House school also offer a free bus service from some locations to its site. The Council’s Post-16 Transport Statement, Post-16 Transport Guide and fare Payer Scheme provide more information about transport to post-16 providers:  
<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27824>

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 It is recommended that the proposed change to the age range of John O’Gaunt school and the removal of the 6<sup>th</sup> form admission arrangements are determined in line with the statutory deadline of 15 April.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Statutory Notice

Appendix C – Survey Responses

# APPENDIX A

## Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

<b>Name of item being assessed:</b>	<b>Determination of Admissions Arrangements for John O’Gaunt school</b>
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>	Caroline Corcoran
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Caroline Corcoran
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	19/02/2015

<b>1. What are the main aims of the item?</b>
To determine the admissions arrangements for John O’Gaunt school

<b>2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</b> (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)		
<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this.</b>
Age	Post-16 students cannot attend a 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision in Hungerford. Students would have to travel to other 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision, such as in Newbury or Marlborough.	A large number of students resident in this area already seek 6 <sup>th</sup> form education in alternative provision and arrange their own transport. West Berkshire Council and post-16 providers already provide subsidised transport in many cases and this has recently been extended from September 2015.
Low Income	Students would have to travel to other 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision, such as in Newbury or Marlborough. Low income families may find the cost prohibitive	West Berkshire Council and post-16 providers already provide subsidised transport in many cases and this has recently been extended from September 2015. Low income families can also apply for bursary funding for transport.

Disability	Children with special educational needs who need consistency may find it more unsettling to move to a 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision in a different setting than other students. This could be addressed by a robust transition arrangement between John O'Gaunt school, SEN professionals and the new post-16 provision.	This would be the same approach which would be used for a younger child with special educational needs who changes school, and therefore this would be standard practice.
Gender	Positive impact	Gender is not a distinguishing factor. All are treated equally in both legislation and determined arrangements and all applications assessed in the same way.
Race	Positive impact	School places are provided for all pupils of primary school age and secondary school age irrespective of race.
Belief	Positive impact	Parents may choose any school they like when applying and may choose on the basis of belief or not.
<b>Further comments relating to the item:</b>		
Assessments, processes and policies are based on statutory requirements set out in the relevant regulations.		

<b>3. Result</b> (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on 'checked')	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>High Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Medium Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Low Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No Relevance</b> - This <b>does not</b> need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

**For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.**

<b>4. Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

**Name:** Caroline Corcoran

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015



### Statutory Notice

#### Closure of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form at John O'Gaunt School

##### School Details

John O'Gaunt School  
Priory Road  
Hungerford  
Berkshire  
RG17 0AN  
Ref no: 869-4034

##### LA Details

West Berkshire Council  
Education Service  
West St House  
West St  
Newbury  
RG14 1BZ

West Berkshire Council is publishing its proposal on 12 December 2014, under section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act), to remove the sixth form from John O'Gaunt school, Hungerford (the school) with effect from 31 August 2016. The LA is the decision maker for this proposal and the proposal is supported by the school's governing body.

The Governing Body temporarily removed the 6<sup>th</sup> form intake for Year 12 pupils in September 2014 and September 2015. For a change of 3 years or more, there is a requirement for the Local Authority to undertake a statutory consultation.

The statutory representation period ends on 13 February 2015. Once the consultation ends, the LA has until 13 April 2015 to determine this proposal under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 (the Regulations).

##### Introduction

In 2013, 12 West Berkshire pupils wished to progress to the sixth form out of a possible 58 on roll in Year 11. The governing body had reviewed the finances of the sixth form and because of declining numbers, and thus smaller group sizes, it had insufficient income from the sixth form to staff it properly and has had to use resources from the 11-16 part of the school to fund the sixth form provision. The governing body came to the conclusion that it could use the available resources more effectively if it targeted those resources at improving education at the school at 11-16 instead of maintaining a very high cost post-16 provision for a small number of pupils.

Therefore, for September 2014, the Year 12 intake was suspended, and the school recently advised parents that this temporary suspension will continue for the September 2015 intake.

Although Hungerford is located within the West of West Berkshire away from other secondary schools, pupils choose to continue their post-16 education with a range of providers and the school has not enjoyed a 6<sup>th</sup> form cohort of a viable size for some years.

As a community school, the governing body is conscious of the unique geographical position as the only local West Berkshire secondary school, and wishes to consult with the local residents with regard to the future of the 6<sup>th</sup> form. Therefore, it has been concluded that a proposal for the sixth form to close should be the subject of a formal statutory consultation. The statutory process commenced on 12 December 2014 and ends on 13 February 2015. This is in line with the regulations.

## Educational standards and diversity of provision

There are two issues to consider:

- standards in the school for pupils aged 11 – 16
- standards and diversity of provision for pupils of sixth form age.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in September 2013, who categorised the school as Requiring Improvement. At the time of the visit there were 17 pupils in the Year 13 6<sup>th</sup> form, whilst Year 12 6<sup>th</sup> form was suspended and therefore had no students.

Ofsted said “The sixth form requires improvement”, and noted that the school needs to “ensure students in the sixth form reach higher standards in their examinations.” The Ofsted Inspection also highlighted a range of improvements needed in the 11-16 part of the school.

The sixth form is very small and with small group sizes it is difficult for the school to provide the range of subjects and staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

The governing body wishes to concentrate on improving the 11 – 16 part of the school and is concerned that it has to use resources from this age group to subsidise a small and financially unviable sixth form. The closure of the sixth form would allow the governing body to focus on the lower part of the school and make improvements.

Whilst the sixth form does contribute to the diversity of provision in the area, the choices made by pupils show that almost all choose to go to other provision where their preferences can be met and there is sufficient capacity to meet the demand. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils who already choose to attend the school and who then move to alternative sixth form provision are likely to change this pattern.

## Demand for the provision

The evidence is that demand for places at the sixth form is limited and that a significant proportion of pupils in Year 11 at the school choose to go elsewhere for sixth form provision.

The admission number for the school for Year 7 is 120.

The school census figures:

		<b>Y7</b>	<b>Y8</b>	<b>Y9</b>	<b>Y10</b>	<b>Y11</b>	<b>Y12</b>	<b>Y13</b>
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2010</b>	56	93	60	87	83	41	35
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2011</b>	84	58	84	64	83	37	28
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2012</b>	79	79	61	86	62	37	30
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2013</b>	76	73	80	59	84	26	34
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2014</b>	88	70	72	85	58	28	26

Following the suspension of the sixth form intake for September 2014, there has been sufficient capacity in other provision.

The LA is satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to meet the demand for places for sixth form studies without the need for the provision at this school. This could be at secondary schools elsewhere in West Berkshire, Newbury College, secondary schools in bordering LAs or other education providers. The Council produces a leaflet for post-16 students which outlines the breadth of provision that is available.

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27824>

If there was an increasing demand for local provision in the future, a further statutory consultation would be required to consult on a proposal to add a sixth form to the school.

### School size

The size of the sixth form is small and this is the reason that the governing body needs to subsidise it with resources diverted from the lower part of the school. Group sizes are very small and the range of subjects that can be offered is limited by the availability of suitable staff and the cost of deploying them to teach small groups. The school and LA estimate that there is a current funding gap of approximately £250,000 per year to sustain the sixth form at this size. This is in addition to a significant deficit budget position for the Year 7-11 portion of the school. The school has had to make and continues to make difficult budgetary decisions in order to manage expenditure and work towards bringing the school into a financially viable position. The school is receiving substantial support from West Berkshire Council with regards to this matter.

### Proposed admission arrangements

When the sixth form is removed the school will no longer admit pupils at Year 12 and admission arrangements for this age range will not be required.

### National curriculum

This is not a relevant issue to this proposal.

### Equal opportunity issues

The small number of pupils who have chosen to attend the sixth form will be able to complete their studies at the school by August 2016.

The option to stay on at the school for 6<sup>th</sup> form provision will not be available to pupils attending the school in the future but the evidence is that almost all choose to attend elsewhere for sixth form. Without the sixth form, the school will have more resources to spend on the lower part of the school which will be to the benefit of all pupils in those age groups.

### Travel and accessibility

Parents may be concerned about the difficulty that young people might face travelling to alternative provision. Other pupils currently travel to other provision by choice, which demonstrates that transport arrangements are suitable.

The Council offers discounted train travel, which would cover the Hungerford to Newbury journey, for example. The rail passes for Hungerford-Newbury are £190.00/term (Autumn, Spring or Summer), representing a 34% discount (as at October 2014).

For public bus passes, the student could use the public bus service number 3 but they would need to purchase tickets direct from Newbury & District tel 01635 33855. In addition to the daily single and return fares, the Connect Rural passes for 7 or 30 days travel are available, offering unlimited use on valid routes at bulk discount and students aged up to 19 in full-time education (with appropriate ID) can pay the child fares. The child rate for a Connect Rural 7-day pass is £12 and for a 30-day pass is £48 (as at October 2014).

### Capital

There are no capital requirements to achieve this proposal.

## Appendix C

### Survey question: Please explain why you disagree with the proposal

There were 18 written responses to this question. Concerns are summarised as follows and the numbers following the statement indicate the number of responses which mentioned this point:

- Parent would prefer for the child to go to John O'Gaunt 6<sup>th</sup> form (x6)
- The cost, time and logistical implications of transport to other post-16 or 6<sup>th</sup> form provision (x6)
- Secondary students who would prefer to stay will have no choice but to move school for 6<sup>th</sup> form education, and this is unsettling (x5)
- Closing the 6<sup>th</sup> form may put off students from joining the school at the start of their secondary education (x4)
- School deserves more investment (x4)
- Bad for the local community (x3)
- It may affect teacher recruitment and retention (x3)
- Changing schools for 6<sup>th</sup> form could affect educational attainment (x2)
- Some children thrive in a small school, where they would struggle in a larger school (x1)
- Reduced number at secondary intake could negatively affect the finances of the school (x1)
- West Berkshire Council is Newbury-centric (x1)

### Survey question: Please comment if you feel that this proposal will affect particular individuals more than others – and if so – how do you think we might address this?

There were 24 written responses to this question. Concerns are summarised as follows and the numbers following the statement indicate the number of responses which mentioned this point. For two questions, the respondents suggested how this could be addressed (comments in italics):

- The cost, time and logistical implications of transport to other post-16 or 6<sup>th</sup> form provision (x10) *This could be addressed by free transport for all.*
- Changing schools for 6<sup>th</sup> form could affect educational attainment (x4)
- Closing the 6<sup>th</sup> form may put off students from joining the school at the start of their secondary education (x4)
- Impact on children with special educational needs who need consistency (x2). *This could be addressed by a robust transition arrangement between John O'Gaunt school, SEN professionals and the new post-16 provision.*
- Secondary students who would prefer to stay will have no choice but to move school for 6<sup>th</sup> form education, and this is unsettling (x2)
- Parent would prefer for the child to go to John O'Gaunt 6<sup>th</sup> form (x2)
- Educational standards at John O'Gaunt need to improve (x1)
- Some children thrive in a small school, where they would struggle in a larger school (x1)
- School deserves more investment (x1)
- It may affect teacher recruitment and retention (x1)
- Those in small villages may struggle to find alternative 6<sup>th</sup> forms (x1)
- Bad for the local community (x1)

### Survey question: Is there anything else you would like to comment on that you have not had the opportunity to do so?

There were 17 written responses to this question. Concerns are summarised as follows and the numbers following the statement indicate the number of responses which mentioned this point:

- The cost, time and logistical implications of transport to other post-16 or 6<sup>th</sup> form provision (x7)
- School deserves more investment (x4)
- West Berkshire Council is Newbury-centric (x2)
- It may affect teacher recruitment and retention (x1)
- How will John O'Gaunt improve provision for the younger pupils? (x1)
- West Berkshire Council should improve its method of consultation (x1)