

**EDUCATION AND RECREATION COMMITTEE 24 March 2005**

**ADMISSION LIMITS AND RESERVED PLACES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The report proposes that Admission Limits, which are based on their assessed capacities, be set for all secondary schools in Aberdeenshire.
- 1.2 It will consolidate previous committee decisions in relation to individual schools and clarify points of ambiguity.
- 1.3 The Committee will also be asked to agree any variations from the Admission Limit based on a school's permanent accommodation which will be operationally necessary for school session 2005/06.
- 1.4 The Committee will also be asked to agree levels of Reserved Places which are considered necessary for session 2005/06.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 When Aberdeenshire came into existence in 1996, only Mintlaw Academy was subject to a roll cap which had been agreed by Grampian Regional Council in April 1992. This continued to be the position until December 2001 when roll caps were agreed for Ellon, Inverurie and Meldrum to enable intakes to the 3 schools from the opening of Meldrum Academy. A roll cap has recently been agreed for Westhill Academy.
- 2.2 As roll capping is no longer an exceptional arrangement, there would be advantage and simplicity in adopting a general policy which covers all secondary schools instead of seeking Committee decisions on an ad hoc basis
- 2.3 This report has confined itself to secondary schools. The greater variability of the intakes to individual primary schools and the formation of composite classes raise more complex issues for consideration.

**3 Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed that an admission limit be set for each secondary school in Aberdeenshire. This will be based on the assessed permanent capacity with the assumption that current staying on rates into S5 and S6 will continue.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the term "roll capping" be replaced by "admission limit" as this more accurately describes the approach to managing school rolls.

- 3.3 Where admission limits require to be varied to cope with demand for places from within the school's zone, the Committee will be asked to approve the variation. It is envisaged that a single annual report to Committee will cover all such variations.
- 3.4 Any variation to the normal admission limit will apply to a particular cohort of pupils and will follow that cohort as it moves through the school.
- 3.5 Whilst admission limits will not formally apply to S5 and S6, there will be a presumption against agreeing out of zone admissions in S5 and S6 where the cohort size was greater than the normal admission limit when it was at the S4 stage. However, the effect on a school of additional pupils in S5 and S6 generally depends to a greater extent on their course choices than the increase in the overall school roll. Where such admissions do not have an adverse impact on any Health and Safety standards or breach any standards specified in the School Premises Regulations, Head Teachers should have discretion to agree admissions after considering the individual circumstances.
- 3.6 The Committee receives periodic reports to ask it to approve revised capacities to schools in consequence of the provision of additional accommodation. The approval of a revised capacity will automatically revise the admission limit in accordance with the method set out in this report. Where any cohort already in the school exceeds the revised admission limit, the existing admission limit will continue to apply to that cohort.
- 3.7 Admission Limits which are introduced for the first time by this report will apply to the 2005 S1 intake only and will not apply retrospectively to year groups already in the schools.

#### **4 Discussion**

- 4.1 The adoption of a general policy will avoid the necessity of a Committee decision whenever a particular school may experience excess demand for places. The admission limit will not affect the admission of pupils as long as the supply of places exceeds the demand but will already be in place if it should be needed.
- 4.2 Admission limits are one of the inputs to the annual School Roll Forecasts. Under the present arrangement, it is necessary to check a number of Committee reports and minutes to establish the overall position. These proposals would make it simpler to provide a consolidated list to the Information and Research Section of Planning and Environmental Services which produces the School Roll Forecasts.
- 4.3 Table 1 shows how an admission limit might be set for each Aberdeenshire Secondary School. As pupils are only of compulsory school age in S1 to S4, the capacity is not divided by 6 but by a factor which allows for the staying on rates into S5 and S6. Whilst a different factor could be calculated for each school on the basis of its own staying on rates, and Table 1 shows these, it is recommended that in the interest of consistency, the same factor be used for each school. Whilst the median value of the calculated values for each of the 17 schools would be the obvious choice, secondary headteachers would

prefer the use of the lower quartile value of 5.16, which is more consistent with the Admission Limits which have been set in the past.

Table A1 in the Appendix calculates the Admission Limits which would be produced if the lower quartile value were replaced by the upper quartile or median values. This shows that these changes in the value used would only change the Admission Limit of a minority of schools

Table 1

School	Capacity	Staying on Rate		Calculation		Admission Limit
		S5/S4	S6/S5	S6/S4	Divisor	
Mearns Ac.	445	0.80	0.65	0.52	5.32	84
Alford Ac.	520	0.80	0.55	0.44	5.24	99
Kemnay Ac.	600	0.80	0.55	0.44	5.24	115
Aboyne Ac	610	0.70	0.60	0.42	5.12	119
Turriff Ac.	760	0.75	0.55	0.41	5.16	147
Banchory Ac.	780	0.85	0.80	0.68	5.53	141
Gordon Schools	800	0.85	0.55	0.47	5.32	150
Meldrum Ac.	940	0.80	0.65	0.52	5.32	177
Portlethen Ac.	940	0.75	0.55	0.41	5.16	182
Westhill Ac.	970	0.90	0.80	0.72	5.62	173
Mintlaw Ac.	1000	0.75	0.40	0.30	5.05	198
Inverurie Ac.	1110	0.75	0.55	0.41	5.16	215
Mackie Ac.	1145	0.80	0.65	0.52	5.32	215
Banff Ac.	1150	0.80	0.55	0.44	5.24	219
Ellon Ac.	1200	0.80	0.65	0.52	5.32	226
Fraserburgh Ac.	1440	0.65	0.45	0.29	4.94	291
Peterhead Ac.	1705	0.60	0.35	0.21	4.81	354
	Average	0.77	0.58	0.45	5.23	

NB For Meldrum Academy the staying on rates shown are those assumed for planning purposes and for Portlethen Academy, the capacity shown is that of the school currently under construction.

4.4 Table 2 sets out the set of values which may be used as admission limits. These reflect an assumption that teaching groups are organised on the basis of maxima of 30 and 20 according to subject. Whilst this does not reflect the timetabling practice of every school, it represents a consistent basis for setting admission limits and was the basis for those Admission Limits which were set in the past. It is recommended that Admission Limits continue to be set on this basis.

The raw values calculated from the overall capacity will be rounded down to the nearest value in this table

Table 2

90	100	120	140	150	160	180	200	210	220	240	260
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Table A2 in the Appendix shows the effect of requiring Admission Limits to be either multiples of 30 or of 25. As in the case of the choice of divisor, this shows that these changes in the value used would only change the Admission Limit of a minority of schools

## 5 Variations from the General Policy

- 5.1 The left hand side of Table 3 sets out Admission Limits agreed previously by the Committee.
- 5.2 The right hand side of the table sets out the variations which the Committee is asked to agree for school session 2005/06. They are required to accommodate the forecast intakes in August 2005.

Table 3

School	Capacity	Admission Limits Previously Agreed	Variations previously agreed for 2004-05				Proposed Admission Limits	New Variations proposed
			S1	S2	S3	S4		
Aboyne Ac	610						100	140
Alford Ac.	520						100	120
Banchory Ac.	780						150	180
Banff Ac.	1150						220	
Ellon Ac.	1200	220		240	240			
Fraserburgh Ac.	1440						270	
Gordon Schools	800						150	180
Inverurie Ac.	1110	210				220		
Kemnay Ac.	600						100	140
Mackie Ac.	1145						220	260
Mearns Ac.	445						80	120
Meldrum Ac.	940	180			210			
Mintlaw Ac.	1000	200						
Peterhead Ac.	1705						330	
Portlethen Ac.	940						180	200
Turriff Ac.	760						140	180
Westhill Ac.	970	180						

### 5.3 Mearns Academy

It should be noted that the Capacity has not been formally reassessed since the primary school vacated its former accommodation.

## 6 Reserved Places

- 6.1 Places may be reserved for pupils who move into the zone at any secondary school which is at least 3 miles from the nearest alternative school. In Aberdeenshire, this makes it permissible to reserve places at each of our secondary schools.

6.2 The need for reserved places arises for two reasons:

6.2.1 As families move into and out of existing housing in a school's zone, the number and ages of the new pupils who enrol will not exactly match the pupils who move away; and

6.2.2 Where new housing is occupied for the first time, there will be additional demand for places at the secondary school which serves the area.

6.3 It is proposed that for 2005/06, the number of reserved places in each of the S1 to S4 year groups be based on the practice adopted at schools at which the Committee has previously agreed to reserve places, and that:

6.3.1 5 places should be reserved where there are expected to be fewer than 100 new houses completed in 2005 and 2006; and

6.3.2 10 places should be reserved where there are expected to be 100 or more new house completions during this period.

Table 4 shows the effect of this proposal.

**Table 4**

School	Housing			Reserved Places
	2005	2006	Total	
Aboyne Ac	7	5	12	5
Alford Ac.	47	39	86	5
Banchory Ac.	94	93	187	10
Banff Ac.	34	37	71	5
Ellon Ac.	123	57	180	10
Fraserburgh Ac.	45	45	90	5
Gordon Schools	56	48	104	10
Inverurie Ac.	163	168	331	10
Kemnay Ac.	206	175	381	10
Mackie Ac.	43	18	61	5
Mearns Ac.	58	47	105	10
Meldrum Ac.	115	112	227	10
Mintlaw Ac.	48	39	87	5
Peterhead Ac.	70	64	134	10
Portlethen Ac.	10	31	41	5
Turriff Ac.	5	24	29	5
Westhill Ac.	78	48	126	10

6.4 It is further proposed that officers should investigate the effect of housing turnover and the occupation of new housing in more detail with a view to refining these figures for session 2006/07

## 7 Consultation

7.1 The Senior Education and Recreation Officers for each of the 6 Areas and Secondary Head Teachers have been consulted.

## **8 Policy Implications**

- 8.1 A general policy on Admission Limits will provide officers with an additional tool to assist in matching demand for places to capacity of schools. A degree of increased control over admissions will enable the Council to manage its Asset Management Plan more effectively.
- 8.2 A general policy on Reserved Places will also help the Council to manage its Asset Management Plan more effectively, and the interim policy proposed in this report is a step towards it.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 A degree of increased control over admissions may be expected to reduce the number of occasions on which the Council requires to provide temporary accommodation or build extensions.

## **10 Other Implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific implications for any of the 6 Council Areas, nor any staffing implications which arise from this report.

## **11 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to agree that:**

### **General Policy**

- 11.1 Admission Limits be set for each Aberdeenshire secondary school and that these be based on the assessed permanent capacities of the schools.**
- 11.2 The Admission Limit for each school be determined by dividing the assessed capacity by 5.16, the lower quartile value, and that the raw value so determined be adjusted in accordance with Table 2.**
- 11.3 If the capacity of a school is reassessed, the corresponding change to its Admission Limit will be made automatically.**
- 11.4 Where the demand for S1 places from within a school's zone exceeds the Admission Limit, the Committee will be asked to agree to a variation applicable to that year's intake only.**
- 11.5 Admission Limits which are introduced for the first time by this report will apply to the 2005 S1 intake only and will not apply retrospectively to year groups already in the schools.**

### **Variations**

- 11.6 Variations agreed previously be noted.**
- 11.7 The Variations for school session 2005/06 as described in section 5.2 and Table 3 above be agreed.**

11.8 Variations apply to a particular cohort of pupils and remain with that year group as it progresses through the school.

**Reserved Places for 2005/06**

11.9 5 places should be reserved where there are expected to be fewer than 100 new houses completed in 2005 and 2006, and that 10 places should be reserved where there are expected to be 100 or more new house completions during this period.

11.10 Officers should investigate the effect of housing turnover and the occupation of new housing in more detail with a view to refining these figures for session 2006/07

**NB** The effect of these proposals is summarised in Table 5

Table 5

School	Capacity	Admission Limit	Variations applicable during 2004-05				Reserved Places
			S1	S2	S3	S4	
Aboyne Ac	610	100	140				5
Alford Ac.	520	90	120				5
Banchory Ac.	780	140	180				10
Banff Ac.	1150	210					5
Ellon Ac.	1200	220		240	240		10
Fraserburgh Ac.	1440	270					5
Gordon Schools	800	150	180				10
Inverurie Ac.	1110	210				220	10
Kemnay Ac.	600	100	140				10
Mackie Ac.	1145	210	260	260	280	280	5
Mearns Ac.	445	80	120				10
Meldrum Ac.	940	180			210		10
Mintlaw Ac.	1000	200					5
Peterhead Ac.	1705	320					10
Portlethen Ac.	940	160	200				5
Turriff Ac.	760	140	180				5
Westhill Ac.	970	180					10

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**14 March 2005**

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Appendix

Effect of Change of Divisor

Table A1

School	Capacity		Med	Divisor		UQ	Adjusted		
		Divisor		LQ			Med	LQ	UQ
Mearns Ac.	445	5.32	85	86	84	80	80	80	
Alford Ac.	520	5.24	99	101	98	90	100	90	
Kemnay Ac.	600	5.24	115	116	113	100	100	100	
Aboyne Ac	610	5.12	116	118	115	100	100	100	
Turriff Ac.	760	5.16	145	147	143	140	140	140	
Banchory Ac.	780	5.53	149	151	147	140	150	140	
Gordon Schools	800	5.32	153	155	150	150	150	150	
Meldrum Ac.	940	5.32	179	182	177	160	180	160	
Portlethen Ac.	940	5.16	179	182	177	160	180	160	
Westhill Ac.	970	5.62	185	188	182	180	180	180	
Mintlaw Ac.	1000	5.05	191	194	188	180	180	180	
Inverurie Ac.	1110	5.16	212	215	209	210	210	200	
Mackie Ac.	1145	5.32	219	222	215	210	220	210	
Banff Ac.	1150	5.24	219	223	216	210	220	210	
Fraserburgh Ac.	1440	4.94	275	279	271	270	270	270	
Ellon Ac.	1200	5.32	229	232	226	220	220	220	
Peterhead Ac.	1705	4.81	325	330	320	320	330	320	

**Key**  
789 Reduced Admission Limit

Med	5.24
LQ	5.16
UQ	5.32

If the Median Divisor were used instead of the Lower Quartile, the Admission Limits of 7 schools would be reduced. In 6 cases, the raw value is only 1 pupil below the next higher value in table 2.

eg The raw value of 179 for Meldrum Academy would be rounded down to 160, rather than being adjusted to 180

The use of the Upper Quartile value would reduce the Admission Limit of an 8th school, Inverurie Academy whose raw value of 209 would be rounded down to 200 rather than being adjusted to 210.



Table A2

Effect of Change of Set of Permitted Limits

Case A Multiples of 20 and 30  
 Case B Multiples of 30  
 Case C Multiples of 25

School	Capacity	Calculated Admission Limit	Adjusted Admission Limit		
			A	B	C
Mearns Ac.	445	86	80	60	75
Alford Ac.	520	101	100	90	100
Kemnay Ac.	600	116	100	90	100
Aboyne Ac	610	118	100	90	100
Turriff Ac.	760	147	140	120	125
Banchory Ac.	780	151	150	150	150
Gordon Schools	800	155	150	150	150
Meldrum Ac.	940	182	180	180	175
Portlethen Ac.	940	182	180	180	175
Westhill Ac.	970	188	180	180	175
Mintlaw Ac.	1000	194	180	180	175
Inverurie Ac.	1110	215	210	210	200
Mackie Ac.	1145	222	220	210	200
Banff Ac.	1150	223	220	210	200
Fraserburgh Ac.	1440	279	270	270	275
Ellon Ac.	1200	233	220	210	225
Peterhead Ac.	1705	330	330	330	325

Lower Quartile Divisor 5.16

Key

789 Reduced Admission Limit

789 Increased Admission Limit

The table shows how Admission Limits would be altered if they were restricted to either multiples of 30 or multiples of 25. The former would reduce Admission Limits at 8 schools, whilst the latter would reduce the limits at 8 schools but raise them at 2 others.

## Minute Details

### 2. ADMISSION LIMITS AND RESERVED PLACES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There had been circulated a report dated 14 March, 2005, by the Director of Education and Recreation requesting the Committee to (a) set admission limits, based on assessed capacities, for all secondary schools in Aberdeenshire, (b) agree any variations from the admission limits based on a school's permanent accommodation which will be operationally necessary for session 2005/06, and (c) agree levels of reserved places for session 2005/06.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to set admission limits for each Aberdeenshire secondary school, based on the assessed permanent capacities of the schools, as set out in Appendix A to this Minute,
- (2) that the admission limit for each school be determined by dividing the assessed capacity by 5.16, the lower quartile value, and that the raw value so determined be adjusted in accordance with table 2 in the report,
- (3) that, if the capacity of a school is reassessed, the corresponding change to its admission limit will be made automatically,
- (4) that, where the demand for places in any year group from within a school's zone exceeds the admission limit, the Committee will be asked to consider a variation applicable to that year's intake only,
- (5) that admission limits which are introduced now for the first time will apply to the S1 intake for 2005 only and will not apply retrospectively to year groups already in the schools,
- (6) to note the variations agreed previously,
- (7) to approve the variations for school session 2005/06 as set out in Appendix A to this Minute,
- (8) that variations apply to a particular cohort of pupils and remain with that year group as it progresses through the school,
- (9) that five places should be reserved where there are expected to be fewer than 100 new houses completed in 2005 and 2006 and that ten places should be reserved where there are expected to be 100 or more new house completions during this period, and
- (10) that officers should investigate the effect of housing turnover and the occupation of new housing in more detail with a view to refining these figures for session 2006/07.