

**Report of: Director of Children's Services**

**Report to: Executive Board**

**Date: 18 March 2015**

**Subject: Determination of school admissions arrangements 2016**



Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

## Summary of main issues

This report seeks approval for the local authority admission policy and coordinated admissions arrangements for September 2016

The School Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 84 and The School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulation 2012 require the local authority to consult on their proposed admissions arrangements, including the admissions policy and the coordinated scheme, as well as in year admissions arrangements, every seven years or whenever any changes are proposed. The admissions arrangements must be determined by 15 April 2015.

A number of proposals were consulted on. These included a change of wording of the policy to reflect the change from Statements of Special Education Needs to Education, Health and Care Plans, a change to sibling priority, changes to the wording in relation to waiting lists.

The paper also outlines changes to the Published Admissions Number for reception of three primary schools and a Published Admissions Number for community 6<sup>th</sup> forms who recruit externally.

## Recommendations

Executive Board is asked determine the school admissions arrangement for 2016 by:

- a) approving the admissions policy noting the following:
  - the wording in relation to statements will be amended to reflect the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans
  - there will be no change to the sibling criteria
  - the waiting list wording has been amended to reflect the instruction of the Office of the School Adjudicator
- b) noting the changes to the admission number for 3 primary schools and the publication of 6th form admission number for 4 community schools.
- c) Noting the Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2016.

The officer responsible for this work is the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Lead, and the date for implementation (ie determination of any revised policy) is no later than 15 April 2015.

The officer responsible for publication of the determined arrangements is the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Lead, and the date for implementation (ie publication) is no later than 1 May 2015.

## 1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of local authority admissions policy and admissions arrangements for entry to school in 2016. The paper describes changes to the Leeds Admissions policy and seeks Executive Board approval for the policy. This also describes changes to the published admission number for three community primary schools and sets out the 6<sup>th</sup> form admission number for four community high schools and asks Executive Board to note the co-ordination arrangements published on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

## 2 Background information

- 2.1 The School Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 84 and The School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulation 2012 require the local authority to consult on their proposed admissions arrangements, including the admissions policy and the coordinated scheme, as well as in year admissions arrangements, every seven years or whenever any changes are proposed. Following consultation the admission arrangements must be determined by 15 April 2015.
- 2.2 Consultation was conducted between Friday 6 December 2014 and Friday 30 January 2015. In line with the regulations, information was sent to all local schools, neighbouring authorities, diocesan bodies, elected members, trade unions and early years' providers. It was also hosted on the Leeds.gov.uk web site for parents to comment.

## 3 Main issues

### Changes to the admissions policy

#### Education Health and Care Plans

- 3.1 The first is a change of wording to reflect the change from Statements of Special Educational Need to Education, Health and Care Plans. Statements of Special Educational Needs which name a specific school that a child must attend have now been replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans. These are wider ranging multi agency statements that still name a school, and carry the same requirement for that school to admit the child, but also incorporate wider health and other agency support plans.
- 3.2 No comments were received. **It is recommended the wording of the admissions policy is amended to reflect the change from Statements of Special Educational Need to Education, Health and Care Plans.**

#### Sibling Priority

- 3.3 The second change related to the sibling priority. In 2014 a number of primary schools in Leeds admitted additional reception classes, 'bulge cohorts', in order to accommodate fluctuating numbers of children seeking school places. As these were largely temporary changes to the numbers admitted, and will not be repeated again on a permanent basis, this could lead to some short term changes

in the patterns of where children were admitted from, with an impact in later years on the number of siblings admitted. Whilst these 'bulge' cohorts were created for local children, it is possible that in a small number of cases, siblings from further away may gain places ahead of those living nearer to the school.

- 3.4 Each year we receive a small number of complaints from parents that they have been unable to access their local school but siblings are travelling in from further away. It was therefore appropriate to consider whether a change to the policy was required to give a higher priority to children living nearest the school than children with older siblings for whom the school was not their nearest.
- 3.5 There was overwhelming opposition to the proposal to change the sibling criteria. 1913 of the responses received opposed the change to the sibling priority and 4 were in support. Those who objected were felt that it was more important that siblings could attend the same school, and were concerned that families may have increased school uniform, transport and childcare costs. **It is therefore recommended that no change is made to the sibling priority. Children with siblings at the school will continue to receive priority over children living nearest to the school.**

#### Waiting List wording

- 3.6 The third change related to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator report following an investigation relating to the admissions policy of St Urban's Catholic Primary School. The findings highlighted non-compliance with paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code which states that when an additional child is added to the waiting list, the list must be ranked again in accordance with the admissions policy.
- 3.7 **It is recommended that the waiting list wording is amended as follows:** After offers have been made on 1 March for secondary and 16 April for Primary and Junior, parents can ask to go on the waiting list for any school. Waiting lists will also be held for each year group for applications outside of the admissions round. All waiting lists will be held in criteria order of the admission policy and will close on 27 July 2015 i.e. at the end of the academic year. All waiting lists will be ranked when new applicants have been added ahead of any allocations being made.

#### Deferment out of Chronological Age Group

- 3.8 The code also introduced changes to the process for considering requests to defer entry to reception for summer born children. Where parents wish to defer entry to school, they will be asked to provide evidence to support their request and will be invited to a panel including early years' education professionals and a headteacher where their individual case will be considered. This will ensure the opportunity to reflect on the long term impact of that decision, and balance this against the child's current needs.
- 3.9 This process had already been put in place prior to the introduction of the new School Admissions Code.

### Prioritisation of Children eligible for pupil premium

- 3.10 The new School Admissions Code introduced in December 2014 allows admitting authorities the option to prioritise applications from children eligible for the pupil premium or early years' pupil premium.
- 3.11 The local authority does not propose to include these changes in its policy, not least due to administrative difficulties in assessing this information at the point of application.

### Published Admission Number for Reception and Sixth Form

- 3.12 Following the agreement of statutory proposals during the year to change the size and/or nature of some schools. The Published Admissions Numbers for reception will change for entry to school in 2016 for :
- Hollybush Primary School from 60 to 90
  - Castleton Primary School from 30 to 60
  - Gledhow Primary School from 60 to 90
- 3.13 The Admissions Code December 2014 requires schools to publish a 6th form admission number where they actively recruit external applicants to their 6th form. The community schools which are accordingly seeking to establish a PAN for their 6<sup>th</sup> form:
- Allerton Grange School – 26 (10% of their Year 7 PAN)
  - Allerton High Business and Enterprise Specialist School - 20 places
  - Benton Park School – 25
  - Roundhay School -130

### Co-ordinated Scheme

- 3.14 The Co-ordinated Scheme sets out the key dates and admission arrangement for entry in the normal admissions round in September 2016. The new Code makes changes to the timetable for consultation, these have been reflected in the coordination arrangements.
- 3.15 The only key changes to this scheme from last year relate to the revised timetable required in the Code. The scheme was published on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

### Other responses received during consultation

- 3.16 One respondent commented that the advertising of a late application date for community schools caused confusion for parents and carers and was not consistent with own other admitting authorities who did not have a late closing date.

- 3.17 No change will be made to the late application date for 2016 however consideration will be given as to whether it is appropriate to include this as part of a future consultation.
- 3.18 The respondent also commented that some own admissions authority schools that do not have a faith based admissions policy may require a Supplementary Information Form to collect information and that this was not explicit in the explanatory information.
- 3.19 The information included in the admissions booklets regarding the need to complete a Supplementary Information Form will be reviewed to ensure that it is clear.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation was carried out in accordance with the regulations and local custom and good practice, and included consultation with ward members.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 An EDCI has been completed for the changes to the policy and arrangements, and is attached to this report. No adverse implications are anticipated.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The admissions policy and arrangements continues to ensure children receive fair and consistent treatment, and have reasonable access to local schools. In doing so it supports the council's obsession with improving attendance, contributing to good educational outcomes for children. These are important factors in the drive to become a child friendly city.
- 4.3.2 A key objective within the Best Council Plan 2013-2017 is to build a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the Admissions Arrangements is one of the most baseline entitlements of a Child Friendly City. A good quality school place contributes to the achievement of targets within the Childrens and young People's Plan such as our obsession to 'improve behaviour, attendance and achievement. In addition "Closing the Gap" and "Going up a League" agenda is fundamental to Learning for Leeds.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 As the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, the authority is requires under The School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and coordination of Admissions Arrangements) Regulations 2012 and the Admissions Code 2014 to determine the admissions arrangements by 15 April 2015.

4.5.2 The report is subject to call in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are no significant risks associated with the required approval of the policy for 2016.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 During the consultation period, there was significant opposition to the proposed change to the sibling criteria. 4 in support and 1913 against. There were no comments in relation to the other changes proposed.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Executive Board is asked determine the school admissions arrangement for 2016 by:

- a) approving the admissions policy noting the following:
  - the wording in relation to statements will be amended to reflect the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans
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## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.