

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 13 February 2019

Subject: Determination of School Admissions Arrangements for 2020/21



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report seeks approval for the local authority (Leeds City Council) admission policy for September 2020. The policy applies to all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in the city. All Academy and Foundation Trust Schools are their own admitting authority and as such, determine their own admission arrangements.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 84 and The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 require the local authority to consult on their proposed admissions arrangements, every seven years or whenever any changes are proposed. The admissions arrangements for September 2020 must be determined by 28 February 2019.

A consultation was held between 23 October 2018 and 7 December 2018. The proposals were to:

- a) Remove the existing priority for 'nearest' and introduce a priority for 'catchment area', establishing priority catchment areas for the 108 community and voluntary controlled primary schools;
- b) Remove the requirement for the sibling to be older than the applicant to qualify for sibling priority in the normal round;

- c) Reduce the length of time between the published deadline and the final cut-off for on-time applications to 4 weeks (currently 6 weeks). Applications received after the statutory deadline for school applications will be considered as 'late applications' if received 4 weeks after the national deadline (rather than 6 weeks as in the existing policy) in line with neighbouring authorities;
- d) Change the application process for school transfers (in year applications) so that all applications are submitted by parents to the Local Authority rather than to each individual school;
- e) A number of wording changes to ensure statutory compliance and accuracy.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

1. Determine the school admissions arrangements for 2020 by approving the admissions policies for Primary and Secondary schools (Appendices A and B) noting the following;
 - a) Nearest priority is no longer included in the policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools and applications will be prioritised based on catchment area priority
 - b) Any child with a sibling on roll at the school at the time of admission will receive sibling priority for admission
 - c) Applications received more than 4 weeks after the national deadline for applications will be considered as 'late' and therefore considered after all 'on time' preferences (currently 6 weeks)
 - d) the wording in relation to Children Looked After has been amended to reflect current legislation and practice
 - e) Parents will apply directly to the Local Authority for a school place outside the normal admissions round (rather than directly to their preferred school)
 - f) The policy includes greater clarity regarding waiting lists, home addresses, shared care arrangements where parents have separated and how multiple birth siblings do not have the random allocation tie break applied where they are tied for the final place available.
2. Noting the Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2020 (Appendices C and D) and that there are no changes to the 2019 arrangements other than updates to timelines and that in-year applications should be sent to the Admissions Team rather than directly to schools.
3. Noting that the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service, and the date for implementation (i.e. determination of any revised policy) is no later than 28 February 2019, with the policy published by 15 March 2019.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the local authority admissions policy and admissions arrangements for entry to school in 2020, describing the changes to the policy. The report also asks Executive Board to note the co-ordination arrangements, which have been updated.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 84 and The School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 require the local authority to determine their admissions arrangements annually. The same regulations outline that admission authorities must consult on their proposed admissions arrangements at least every seven years or whenever any changes are proposed. The last full consultation in Leeds was carried out in 2016 when a catchment priority was introduced for community secondary schools.
- 2.2 Each type of school has a different admission authority, responsible for determining and applying their admissions arrangements. For September 2020 the admissions arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2019 and published by 15 March 2019 to comply with statutory regulations.

	Community	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation Trust	Academy	Free School	Voluntary Aided
Admitting Authority	Local Authority	Local Authority	Governing Body	Academy trust	Academy trust	Governing Body
Primary	n=89	n=16	n=31	n=47	n=4	n=39
Secondary	n=6	n=0	n=5	n=24	n=4	n=3

- 2.3 The table above outlines responsibility for the admissions arrangements for each type of school. This paper relates to the admission arrangements for the 111 Community and Voluntary Controlled primary and secondary schools (blue columns).
- 2.4 The 121 Primary and 36 Secondary Foundation Trust, Academy, Free and Voluntary Aided schools in the city must determine their own arrangements within the same timeframe and must comply with the School Admissions Code (2014). The Local Authority offers a support and challenge role and where there are any concerns about a determined policy, can refer to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator who

has jurisdiction to insist that the school policy is amended where necessary to ensure compliance.

- 2.5 There is no requirement for all policies to be consistent across the city, and schools are actively encouraged by the DfE to consider their arrangements in the context of their locality. As more schools have become their own admitting authority, many have made amendments to their admission policy and no longer offer the priorities in line within the Leeds City Council admissions policy. It is therefore important that the Leeds City Council policy reflects the needs of the community and voluntary controlled schools it applies to, and does not seek to provide a city wide policy for admissions.
- 2.6 The statutory timeline for determination means it is not possible to reflect all other policies in the Local Authority consultation; likewise, many own-admitting authority schools are unable, within the timeframe, to consult and determine a policy which reflects the Local Authority policy, contributing to the different admissions arrangements seen across the city.
- 2.7 Admissions arrangements are subject to annual consultation and determination, to regularly review them for any necessary legislative changes, to make any updates to respond to local need, and to ensure that the arrangements remain clear, procedurally fair and non-discriminatory.
- 2.8 The Leeds City Council policy review took into account the outcomes from the previous admissions rounds including a view of impact of the policy on the sufficiency of school places, and feedback from parents, carers, schools and elected members throughout the year. Following this review, a number of amendments to the admissions arrangements were proposed for 2020/21.
- 2.9 Consultation on the proposals was conducted between 23 October 2018 and 7 December 2018. The consultation was promoted to parents and carers by sharing the information with all local schools and early years providers, local press and social media. Responses were also invited from all schools, neighbouring authorities, diocesan bodies, elected members, trades unions and early years' providers in line with the prescribed regulations.
- 2.10 Respondents had access to; the consultation document, draft admissions policies and associated annexes, an interactive on-line map which allowed individuals to search for individual addresses, identify the current 'nearest' polygons and the proposed catchment shapes, and an on-line survey.
- 2.11 There were 572 responses to the consultation. Respondents were encouraged to submit responses via the online survey where a number of questions relating to the proposals in the consultation document were asked.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The determined policy must take into account the rationale for any changes and the views expressed during the consultation period. Determined admissions arrangements must be clear, procedurally fair and must not discriminate against any particular group.

3.2 **Proposal 1. Remove the existing priority for ‘nearest’ and introduce a priority for ‘catchment area’, establishing priority catchment areas for the 106 community and voluntary controlled primary schools.**

3.2.1 The current policy for admission to community and voluntary controlled primary schools offers a priority (after Children Looked After, SEN and siblings) for children who live ‘nearest’ to the school. Some parents and elected members have raised concerns that this could work better in some areas of the city.

Review of the existing arrangements highlighted that a few nearest priority areas were impacted by boundaries such as major roads, rivers or bridges, which restricted families from being able to easily travel to their ‘nearest priority’ school.

Other nearest areas have significantly more children living in the area than the number of places available. As such, families are offered a nearest priority for admission at the school but in some areas this is unlikely to result in a school place being offered at the nearest priority school, so the priority is not always meaningful.

In addition, the language of ‘nearest’ is often taken literally by families, and some parents have been confused by the arrangements as a nearest priority is often not offered at the physically closest school due to the variety of different admissions policies in existence in the city.

3.2.2 The proposal to define catchment priority areas for the Community and Voluntary Controlled **Primary** schools in the city would remove the existing ‘nearest’ priority, and would define a priority catchment area for each school covered by the policy.

3.2.3 Defining geographical areas as ‘catchments’ instead of ‘nearest polygons’ aims to be clearer for parents and uses language which can be more easily understood. By balancing the number of children living within a catchment area and the number of places available at the school, parents have an indication of their priority school where they are more likely to be offered a place – although there continues to be no guarantee of a place for all children within the catchment priority area.

3.2.4 When defining catchment areas, in some areas there was no obvious reason to make any change to the area where priority for admission should be given. It was proposed that for these 61 schools, catchment areas would be defined based on the same geographical area as the existing nearest priority polygon.

3.2.5 For 45 of the 105 community and voluntary controlled schools, setting catchments offers an opportunity to ensure that the catchment priority area considers physical barriers, such as rivers, major roads or railway lines, as well as balancing the number of children within the priority area, as these are issues which couldn’t be considered when places were prioritised on the basis of ‘nearest’. This would help to ensure the priority offered is meaningful.

3.2.6 572 respondents responded to the question relating to the principle of introducing priority catchment areas for primary schools with 40.6% supporting and 46.7% opposing the proposal. 405 respondents, also provided further comments relating to their support / opposition.

Although a small majority opposed the proposal to introduce catchments the additional comments received regarding this element of the proposal outline that many respondents refer directly to their own situation and whether the proposed defined catchment priority area would advantage or disadvantage them personally. These views are of course valid, but the determined policy must take an objective approach, as it is well understood that arrangements could never satisfy the needs of every applicant and their preferences.

There were supportive comments in relation to the rationale for making the change, stating that catchment area priority was a clearer priority for families to understand, that it was a fairer approach, and that respondents feel it would encourage more families to take up a local school place.

The identified themes in the responses indicate that some respondents were confused about the current nearest priority and also the catchment priority definition, raising their concern that catchments would reduce parental choice and would result in a higher number of placement offers. With a policy in place which offers a catchment area priority, the admissions team will need to promote the admissions arrangements and publicise the oversubscription criteria and how this impacts on applicants, with a particular focus on helping parents to understand that a priority at any school does not restrict their right to express a preference for other schools, nor does it guarantee a place at their priority school.

General concern was raised that some areas and specific houses were not included in a catchment area for any community or voluntary controlled school, and that this was unfair. The Local Authority is only able to determine admissions arrangements for the community and voluntary controlled schools. There is no obligation or intention for all children to be offered a priority for admission in a community or voluntary controlled school, as this would be a meaningless priority given that not all children could be accommodated in these two types of school which make up less than half of the primary schools in the city. The admissions arrangements for the community and voluntary controlled schools must ensure that parents understand how their application for a place at the school will be considered and which oversubscription criteria the application would receive.

The consultation also highlighted that some respondents felt that more could be done to consider the local communities, historical allocation patterns and geography. In particular, some respondents referred to the fact that proposed catchments still cut through houses / split communities. The online map did indicate that some catchment area boundary lines, particularly those set to reflect the current nearest polygons, visually appear to cut through streets and houses. The recommended catchment areas do not cut through properties in this way – all properties have a defined coordinate and this falls either inside or outside the catchment priority area. Published maps with the admissions arrangements will be clearer in this regard.

- 3.2.7 Taking into account the intention of the proposal to provide a greater balance to the number of children receiving a priority for admission, providing a clearer policy for applicants and to consider local geographical information when determining boundaries, the consultation responses do not indicate a fundamental opposition to this proposal.

- 3.2.8 For the majority of areas, the recommended catchment areas are those proposed and consulted upon.
- 3.2.9 For Thorpe Primary, Newlathes Primary, Westgate and Ashfield Primaries and Shakespeare Primary, (see Appendix E) the recommended catchment area is different to those included in the initial proposal, based on the feedback received during the consultation. In addition, some areas received more comments and responses than others. Areas of note are as follows.
- 3.2.10 **Ardsley/Tingley areas** Thorpe Primary School - recommended catchment area takes into account the particular suggestions and comments made during the consultation which highlighted local knowledge of the community, therefore Whinthorpe estate has been retained within the priority area for Thorpe Primary. As a result, the catchment priority area more closely aligns to the nearest priority area.
- 3.2.11 **Horsforth area** – Newlathes Primary - recommended catchment area takes into account the suggestions and comments made during the consultation period, namely to include the ‘Riverside’ development in the catchment area.
- 3.2.12 **Otley area** – Westgate, Ashfield, All Saints C of E and The Whartons Primaries – The proposed recommended catchment areas to remain as consulted on with regard to the North/South divide, namely to use the river as a natural boundary, apart from the area to the north east of Westgate primary which is proposed to move into Ashfield’s new catchment priority area. This is because children in this area could access Ashfield via the footbridge whereas those living in the west of Westgate’s existing polygon may not be able to access a reasonable place if places at Westgate were not available to them. The recommended catchment priority area to the east/west has been amended from the consultation following feedback, namely that the catchment priority area between Westgate and All Saints be adjusted to make the boundary more clearly defined.
- 3.2.13 **Roundhay/Wigton/Moortown areas** – Gledhow, Moor Allerton Hall, Moortown, Highfield, Wigton Moor and Talbot primaries – 32 respondents were in support of proposals in this area, 68 in opposition and 5 neither supporting nor opposing. Of these 105 responses, all respondents offered comments and a number of alternative and at times conflicting suggestions for the best approach.

The relatively large number of responses received in comparison to other areas of the city reflects parental anxiety about admissions and school places in the area. Setting catchment areas which more appropriately align the number of places available to the number of children eligible for catchment priority, offers a clearer and more meaningful priority. It will not mean that all parents will be allocated a place at their first preference school, but is expected to ensure that families are allocated a local school place. It is acknowledged that preference patterns may not immediately change in light of an amended admissions policy, and in addition, the number of children meeting sibling priority will mean it is likely that the impact of the proposed changes may take effect over a few years.

Feedback during the consultation included concern that some areas would no longer receive a priority for a Community or Voluntary Controlled (VC) school under the proposed catchment priority areas. As previously outlined, it is not

reasonable or appropriate for the Local Authority, when determining admissions arrangements for the Community and VC schools, to offer a priority for all children.

The recommended priority catchment area for Moortown and Moor Allerton Hall Primary schools has been amended from the consultation proposal, to take into account feedback received which had highlighted concern that families living to the north of Moortown Primary would be required to pass Moortown Primary to access their catchment priority school of Moor Allerton Hall. The recommended catchment priority area maintains a balance of places and the number of resident children.

3.2.14 For all other schools, the recommended catchment areas are the same as those proposed in the consultation.

3.2.15 The Appendix E summarises where the catchment priority areas proposed are different to the existing nearest priority areas, and the rationale for this, subject to Executive Board approval. Maps showing the primary priority catchment areas are attached at policy appendix A. Full detailed maps will be available online for parents to access with detail at property level, so that parents can understand clearly whether they will receive catchment priority at a community or voluntary controlled school or not.

3.3 Proposal 2. Remove the requirement for the sibling to be older than the applicant to qualify for sibling priority in the normal round. This relates in particular to the two all-through community schools (Roundhay and Carr Manor). The distinction between older and all siblings was made when the all-through schools were established to ease the concern that while the primary phases were growing, their intake may be from a wider area than the pre-existing secondary campus intake. As the primary phases are now full and serve the same community as the secondary phases, the proposal seeks to ensure that the sibling priority is offered consistently to any applicant with a sibling on roll.

3.3.1 484 respondents supported this proposal, with many commenting that they felt that this was fair and appropriate. Of those that disagreed with the proposal (n=7), all stated that they felt that siblings should only receive priority if they still lived in the local area / catchment priority area. In 2015, the admissions consultation proposed a change to the sibling priority which would have prioritised siblings living outside the local area only after all local children (without siblings) had been offered a place. This was met with overwhelming objection, therefore there is no intention to amend the sibling priority to differentiate between catchment and non-catchment siblings at this time, although the Admissions Team will continue to review this annually.

3.3.2 The proposed change would only affect those families who have one child on roll at the primary phase, and another child attending another primary, who are seeking admission to year 7 at Roundhay or Carr Manor All Through schools. Under existing arrangements, these siblings would not receive priority for admission as their on-roll sibling is younger. This arrangement was more relevant while the primary phases were growing and did not have all year groups available for admission. Now that they are both open to all year groups, there will be only a few families in the circumstances above (if any) who would receive an advantage from the proposed change.

3.3.3 **Recommendation:** Given the majority support for this proposal, and the limited impact of this proposed change, the recommended policy states that all siblings will receive priority if they have a sibling on roll at the school (removing the reference to 'older sibling' from the current arrangements).

3.4 **Proposal 3. Reduce the length of time between the published deadline and the final cut-off for on-time applications to 4 weeks (currently 6 weeks) in line with neighbouring authorities;** Admissions legislation requires that the Local Authority works closely with neighbouring local authorities to co-ordinate admissions in the normal round. The local arrangement for applications to be considered as on-time up to 6 weeks after the national deadline is not in line with the neighbouring authorities who offer a 4 week cut-off. This causes some confusion where parents are applying for places across border, and the applications are dealt with differently by the different authorities.

3.4.1 76 respondents in the consultation felt that the national deadline should be used and there should be no grace period other than for truly exceptional circumstances. These comments included that parents had enough time to make decisions and submit the application by the statutory deadline.

The local authority include a 'grace period' or late deadline in the admissions policy, as this supports those families who may struggle to complete the process in the usual way. Only after the process is closed is it possible to identify those who have not applied and offer them targeted support to do so. As a compassionate and child friendly city, providing a period of time after the national deadline where families can be targeted directly to ensure that they have completed an application, ensures that as many children as possible are included in the first round of allocations. In support of the proposal and grace period, some consultees also highlighted that those less likely to complete the process on time are likely to be the most disadvantaged. Offering any grace period supports the LA to minimise the impact of any disadvantage on the admissions process.

3.4.2 Of the 565 relevant responses, 464 supported the proposal to reduce the grace period from 6 to 4 weeks. Comments included that this still provides the opportunity for anyone who has not met the deadline to ensure they have completed an application, whilst ensuring that this offer of support is not disproportionate or unfair to the vast majority who do submit their application by the deadline. Reducing the grace period will also improve the process for the schools as they will have longer to consider and rank their applications and others supported the view that it is right to bring the Leeds approach in line with our neighbouring authorities.

3.4.3 **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the determined policy states that applications will be considered as on time if received within 4 weeks of the national closing date for applications.

3.5 **Proposal 4. Change the application process for school transfers (in year applications) so that all applications are submitted by parents to the Local Authority rather than to each individual school.** In 2015, responsibility for in-year admissions was delegated to all schools. Since then, parents have been advised to apply for a school place directly with the school of preference.

All admitting authorities are required to include in their policy how in-year applications should be made. Stating in the Leeds City Council admission policy that the process for in-year applications is to apply directly to the Local Authority affects only the Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in the first instance. By also including reference to this in the co-ordination scheme, it confirms that the advice given to parents will be to apply directly to the Local Authority. Own admitting schools - Academies, Free Schools, Foundation trust and Voluntary Aided schools – may determine policies indicating that applications should be submitted directly to the school. The risk associated with this disparity is low as applications will still be reviewed and responses given – all applications received by the Local Authority will be sent directly to all schools who will assess the application in the same way in line with their policy. Any applications received directly by the own admitting authority school would be assessed and shared with the Local Authority when a decision has been made. During next years consultation round, we would work closely with all own admitting authority schools to come in line with the change.

All schools, regardless of their status as a Community, VC, Academy, Foundation or VA school are expected to review any application received, consider whether they can offer a place, notify the family of their offer/refusal and right of appeal, and then notify the Local Authority of this decision, all within a reasonable timeframe.

Parents, elected members and colleagues supporting families in the community have reported that the current advice of applying directly to schools often means a family approaching multiple schools and waiting some time for a decision.

Often when the Local Authority are alerted to an application, it is after a number of weeks have passed, meaning the Local Authority's duty to ensure a school place is offered within a reasonable time cannot always be met. This also means that the Local Authority is not always aware that children have moved into the city resulting in safeguarding concerns, and families have reported feeling disheartened and frustrated by the system.

- 3.5.1 The consultation resulted in a variety of comments and a polarisation of opinions. Some respondents raised concern that this may increase bureaucracy and red tape, while others reported that they felt this would reduce bureaucracy for parents, as they would only need to complete one form and return it to one single point of contact.
- 3.5.2 279 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, whilst 90 disagreed or strongly disagreed. Some concern was raised that this may create unnecessary delays in the process, due to the limited resources of the Local Authority to support the process.
- 3.5.3 Some respondents, particularly those responding on behalf of a school, stated that families may continue to approach their local school directly, and that they were concerned that having to return the form to the Local Authority before a place could be offered would prevent the child from being admitted quickly. The advice to all schools will be that schools should continue to admit children if they have a place available, as the power and responsibility to make (or refuse) an offer still lies with all schools. The change is in the advice to parents, to give them a single

point of contact when making their applications, which will then be sent out to all schools as requested by parents.

- 3.5.4 The Local Authority Admissions team currently processes approximately 8,000 in-year transfer requests each year. Many forms are duplicated, as the same form is sent to the team by multiple schools, and many families already contact the team to ask for support with finding a school place. It is anticipated that the change would not introduce additional work for the team, but would allow a more efficient approach to monitoring and tracking young people's applications to ensure that school places are offered more quickly. By having a full oversight of the in-year process, the Local Authority will be able to monitor sufficiency and safeguarding more efficiently and the number of cases needing to be considered through the fair access protocols and Children Missing Education teams (due to being outstanding for more than 20 days) is expected to reduce.
- 3.5.5 **Recommendation:** The recommended policy includes that parents would be advised to apply directly to the Local Authority for a place outside the normal admission round. This means that the Local Authority will be able to monitor and track children from their first application, ensuring that they are offered a school place in a timely way. Schools will still retain the authority to make / refuse applications and will still be required to communicate this decision directly to the family.
- 3.6 **Proposal 5. Minor wording changes to ensure statutory compliance, accuracy and clarity for parents.** The proposed changes are to ensure that the determined policy is compliant with the Admissions Code 2014, School Adjudicator findings, official guidance from the DfE and to provide further clarity for parents.
- 3.6.1 Comments were not sought on the proposals to make changes to the policy to ensure statutory compliance, as these are obligatory. Further detail about the background to these recommendations is below.
- 3.6.2 The DfE have recently issued guidance asking that the definition of eligibility for priority 1a (children looked after and previously looked after) should be expanded to include children previously looked after outside England.
- 3.6.3 Recent Office of the School Adjudicator findings have asked admitting authorities to ensure that they provide clarity in their policy about how waiting lists will be held and ranked – it was proposed that our wording be strengthened in this respect.
- 3.6.4 Office of the School Adjudicator findings have also asked admitting authorities to ensure that they provide clarity that parents can apply for admission out of chronological age in all year groups, not just when a child is Summer born. The policy wording has been amended to make this clearer.
- 3.6.5 The number of applications from children with separated families, and incidents of conflicting applications has increased in recent years and the proposal makes clear how the Local Authority will deal with these situations, and what address should be used on the application.

- 3.6.6 In addition to the above changes noted in the consultation documents, a recent Office of the Schools adjudicator finding has highlighted the need for explicit transparency in the policy relating to applications from multiple birth groups where they are tied for a final place. Historically, in line with the School Admissions Code, where the last place offer is tied between siblings of multiple birth (twins, triplets etc) the usual tie break of random allocation is not applied and both / all are admitted. This was not clear in the policy and has been added for 2020 to describe this practice.
- 3.6.7 **Recommendation:** The proposed policy includes the amendments outlined in the consultation documents which have been made to ensure that the policy is compliant with the School Admissions Code (2014). These include expanding the definition of children eligible to receive Priority 1a (Children Looked After and Previously Looked After) to include children previously looked after outside England, to be in line with 2018 DfE guidance; clarification of information about waiting lists and home addresses; including a description of home addresses and incidents of shared care between parents and clear detail about how tied applications from a multiple birth are dealt with.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation was carried out in accordance with the admissions regulations and local custom and good practice.
- 4.1.2 The consultation information was promoted to parents via schools and early years providers, as well as through various social media streams including Twitter, Facebook, the Millenium Square 'Big Screen', bus stops and press articles in the Yorkshire Evening Post.
- 4.1.3 All schools (Governors and Headteachers), Early Years childcare providers, Local Diocesan bodies, Neighbouring Local Authorities (Bradford, North Yorkshire, Kirklees, Wakefield), and Elected members were also notified of the consultation in line with the statutory guidance.
- 4.1.4 Engagement with the admissions policy consultation is often disproportionate to the population impacted by the policy, with a relatively low response rate. However, best efforts are made to publicise the consultation as widely as possible, using local partners who are in contact with families regularly as well as the other methods listed above.

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 Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The admissions policy and arrangements continue to ensure children receive fair and consistent treatment, and have reasonable access to local schools. In doing this it supports the council's obsession to improve attendance and contributes 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 is to build a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the Admissions Arrangements is one of the fundamental entitlements in 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 attendance, attainment and achievement'.

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 required under The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012 and the Admissions Code 2014 to determine the admissions arrangements by 28 February 2019.

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 2020. However it should be noted that the proposed policy aims to offer a fair approach to all applicants as far as possible, but does not intend to guarantee a place for every applicant at their most preferred school, as it is not feasible to do so.

5 Conclusion

5.1 There was engagement with the consultation process from a variety of parties and all comments and responses have been considered in making these recommendations.

6 Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

1. Determine the school admissions arrangements for 2020 by approving the admissions policies for Primary and Secondary schools (Appendices A and B) noting the following;

- a) Nearest priority is no longer included in the policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools and applications will be prioritised based on catchment area priority
- b) Any child with a sibling on roll at the school at the time of admission will receive sibling priority for admission
- c) Applications received more than 4 weeks after the national deadline for applications will be considered as 'late' and therefore considered after all 'on time' preferences (currently 6 weeks)
- d) the wording in relation to Children Looked After has been amended to reflect current legislation and practice

- e) Parents will apply directly to the Local Authority for a school place outside the normal admissions round (rather than directly to their preferred school)
 - f) The policy includes greater clarity regarding waiting lists, home addresses, shared care arrangements where parents have separated and how multiple birth siblings do not have the random allocation tie break applied where they are tied for the final place available.
2. Note the Coordinated scheme for admission arrangements for entry in September 2020 (Appendices C & D) and that there are no changes to the 2019 arrangements other than updates to timelines and that in-year applications should be sent to the Admissions Team rather than directly to schools.
 3. Note that the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service, and the date for implementation (ie determination of any revised policy) is no later than 28 February 2019, with the policy published by 15 March 2019.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ 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.