

Report of the Sufficiency and Participation Manager

Report to the Director of Children & Families

Date: 31 July 2020

Subject: Request to apply to Office of Schools Adjudicator to vary the 2021 admission arrangements for Allerton High School



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Alwoodley, Adel & Wharfedale, Moor Allerton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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

1. Main issues

This report contains details of a proposal brought forward to help meet the local authority's statutory duty to ensure a sufficient supply of school places. On 2 March 2020 - National Offer Day - offers for secondary school places for September 2020 were made. Although there are sufficient places in the area as a whole, Allerton High School was unable to meet the demand from children living in the catchment area and several children were offered places outside of the local area. For September 2021 onwards, the number of children living within the catchment for Allerton High increases significantly and if no changes are made to the admissions arrangements for September 2021 it is likely that greater numbers of children will be placed at schools over 3 miles away.

Executive Board determined the admissions arrangements for September 2021 in February 2020 for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission round for applications to secondary school in September 2021 opened on 1 August, and the deadline for applications is 31st October. A key decision to be taken by the Director is needed to give permission for the local authority (LA) to seek to vary the admissions arrangements via the Office of Schools Adjudicator (OSA). The OSA would consider if the variation was a necessary and appropriate response to the change in circumstances and has the ability to change the admission policy for September 2021. To enable parents to express their preferences for secondary school places this

decision is required as soon as possible. Details about the proposal is included in the main issues section of this report.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

This proposal is being brought forward to help meet the LA's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all the children and young people in Leeds. Ensuring the flow of places close to where families live allows improved and more sustainable accessibility to local and desirable school places, is an efficient use of resources, and reduces the risk of non-attendance.

By helping to improve the availability of places within well-established, Ofsted rated 'outstanding' and 'good' schools, this proposal supports the LA's strategy to improve attendance, achievement, and attainment – the 3As; and the achievement of the Best City Priorities to help 'young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work' and 'we want everyone in Leeds to do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life'.

3. Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Director of Children & Families:

- Approves an application to the Office of Schools Adjudicator to vary the admissions arrangements for September 2021 by creating priority zones within Allerton High's existing catchment area;
- Gives permission for the decision to be exempt from call-in;
- Note that the governing body of Carr Manor Community School as a foundation school would need to apply directly to the OSA to make any changes; and
- Note that the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report contains details of a proposal brought forward to help meet the local authority's statutory duty to ensure a sufficient supply of school places. The report requests the Director of Children and Families authorises an application to the Office of Schools Adjudicator to vary the admissions arrangements for September 2021 by creating priority zones within Allerton High's existing catchment area and to exempt the decision from call-in.

2. Background information

- 2.1 On 2 March 2020 - National Offer Day - offers for secondary school places for September 2020 were made. Although there were sufficient places in the area as a whole, Allerton High School was unable to meet the demand from children living in the catchment area. There were 8 children, who had applied on time, and lived to the north of the school who could not be offered Allerton High, or any of their preferences, and were placed out of the local area at Leeds City Academy and Bishop Young Academy, some of which were between 4-5 miles away.
- 2.2 For September 2021 onwards, the number of children living within the catchment for Allerton High increases significantly and if no changes are made to the admissions arrangements for September 2021 it is likely that greater numbers of children will be placed at schools over 3 miles away.
- 2.3 Although a number of additional permanent places have already been planned for the wider area, we believe that changes to the catchment areas are also needed for September 2021 in order to manage the flow of places.
- 2.4 An informal consultation on a proposal to create two priority zones within Allerton High's existing catchment and to propose an extension to Carr Manor Community School's (CMCS) catchment to give additional (dual) priority to some of those in zone 2 ends on 9 August.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 As noted above for September 2020 several children were allocated places outside of the local area. At the time of application and allocation, more children applied for places than was expected and there was a high number of siblings living outside of Allerton High's catchment priority area who had greater priority for places than some children living within the catchment area. For 2021 current data shows a significant increase in children living within Allerton High's catchment area and if we do not make any changes to the admissions policy it is likely that greater numbers of children will be offered places at schools they have not applied for, which are outside of the local area, and which are likely to be over 3 miles from where they live.
- 3.2 Consideration has been given to the overall number of places available across the wider area and to historical demand for and allocations of places. For 2021 we believe there are sufficient places overall however it is the flow and availability of the places that needs to be addressed.
- 3.3 Children living furthest from Allerton High, to the north, are disproportionately affected because they are also furthest from any other local schools, which fill with

nearer preferences. Children within the catchment to the south of the school, even those furthest from the school, are nearer to both Allerton High, and to other local schools, than the families affected to the north.

3.4 We are seeking to introduce a change to the catchment area of Allerton High and working in partnership with the governing body of Carr Manor Community School, an extension to their catchment area. This would be done by creating priority zones 1 and 2 within Allerton High's existing catchment and an extension to CMCS's catchment to give additional (dual) priority to some of those in zone 2:

- Priority zone 1 to include families to the north of the school who have limited school options for geographic reasons
- Priority zone 2 to include families to the south of the school (includes Adel)
- Some families in zone 2 to be given a dual priority for CMCS. Those in Adel will not be included in the CMCS catchment as they could reasonably access places at both Ralph Thoresby and Lawnswood.

3.5 Making these changes would give families living in zone 1 of the Allerton High catchment a more meaningful priority for the school, which is necessary as some of these families are unlikely to be able to secure places at any other local school due to their geographic location and the distances involved. The changes at CMCS will support some families in zone 2 by providing them with an additional priority while retaining priority for Allerton High.

3.6 The admission round for applications to secondary school in September 2021 opened on 1 August, and the deadline for applications is 31st October. A key decision to be taken by the Director is needed to give permission for us to seek to vary these arrangements via the Office of Schools Adjudicator (OSA) for Allerton High only. As CMCS is now a foundation school, its governing body as decision maker would apply directly to the OSA. The OSA would consider if the variation was a necessary and appropriate response to the change in circumstances and has the ability to change the admission policy for September 2021. To enable parents to express their preferences for secondary school places this decision is required as soon as possible.

3.7 There is no legal requirement to consult when seeking to vary the admissions arrangements however public views have been sought via an online survey. For proposals such as these it is likely that there will be a wide range of views for and against. Although catchment priority can never guarantee a place we must consider the overriding need to ensure where we can that families have a meaningful priority for places. Consultation responses have informed the proposal, and will be provided as part of the application to the OSA.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1. Consultation and engagement.

4.1.1 Although there is no legal requirement to consult when seeking to vary the admissions arrangements, public views have been sought via an online survey and generated over 500 responses. These responses have informed the proposal and

will be provided as part of the application to the OSA. The survey has been shared with local schools, the dioceses, ward members and various on-line methods of sharing the information have been used such as Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the details of the survey have been included to anyone who will be applying for high school for September 2021 with Allerton High and Carr Manor Community as one of their closest five schools in their 'Invitation To Apply' letters.

- 4.1.2 Admissions arrangements for 2022 will be consulted on in accordance with the School Admissions Code in autumn 2020.

4.2. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The EDCI screening form for the proposal is attached as an appendix to this report.

4.3. Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This proposal is being brought forward to help meet the LA's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all the children and young people in Leeds. Ensuring the flow of places close to where families live allows improved and more sustainable accessibility to local and desirable school places, is an efficient use of resources, and reduces the risk of non-attendance.
- 4.3.2 By helping to improve the availability of places within well-established, Ofsted rated 'outstanding' and 'good' schools, this proposal supports the LA's strategy to improve attendance, achievement, and attainment – the 3As; and the achievement of the Best City Priorities to help 'young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work' and 'we want everyone in Leeds to do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life'.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 This proposal would help to ensure that local families are able to access local places, instead of being offered places outside of the area and journeys of up to 5 miles which may increase car usage.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications for the Council with this proposal.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 It is recommended that this decision is not subject to call-in. Although there is no requirement to consult when seeking to vary the admissions arrangements, we felt it was important to give parents and other stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the proposals via an on-line survey. The survey ended on 9 August and responses used to inform any amendments considered necessary to the proposal. The admission round for applications to secondary school in September 2021 opened on 1 August, and the deadline for applications is 31st October. To enable parents to express their preferences for secondary school places this decision is required as soon as possible. A key decision to be taken by the Director is needed

to give permission for us to seek to vary these arrangements via the Office of Schools Adjudicator (OSA) at the earliest opportunity.

- 4.5.2 There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The proposal is being brought forward to help meet the LA's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all the children and young people in Leeds. It specifically seeks to help ensure that families living in zone 1 of the Allerton High catchment have a more meaningful priority for the school, which is necessary as some of these families are unlikely to be able to secure places at any other local school due to their geographic location and the distances involved.
- 4.6.2 If no changes are made to the admissions arrangements for September 2021 it is likely that greater numbers of children will be placed at schools over 3 miles away.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 By amending the catchment priority areas for 2021 children who cannot secure a place at Allerton High have a greater likelihood of securing an alternative local place. If we do nothing to address the flow of places it is very likely that more children than in 2020 will be offered places outside of the local area, some up to 5 miles from where they live.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Director of Children & Families:
- Approves an application to the Office of Schools Adjudicator to vary the admissions arrangements for September 2021 by creating priority zones within Allerton High's existing catchment area;
 - Gives permission for the decision to be exempt from call-in;
 - Note that the governing body of Carr Manor Community School as a foundation school would need to apply directly to the OSA to make any changes; and
 - Note that the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

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.