

Report of Director of Children and Families

Report to Executive Board

Date: 10 February 2021

Subject: Determination of School Admissions Arrangements for 2022/23.



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 seeks approval for the local authority (Leeds City Council) admission policy for September 2022. The policy applies to all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in the city (102 schools).
- All Academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation Trust and Free Schools are an admitting authority and so 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 (LA) to consult on their proposed admissions arrangements, every seven years or whenever any changes are proposed
- The admissions arrangements for September 2022 must be determined by 28 February 2021
- Where changes are proposed to an admission policy, the admitting authority must run a statutory consultation under provisions in the School Admission Code. The LA carried out this consultation between 2 November 2020 and 13 December 2020.
- The proposed changes related to an extension to Lawnswood School's catchment area, a reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN) at St Bartholemew's

CofE Primary School and wording changes following an accessibility review. There were no changes proposed to any admission oversubscription criteria.

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

- The admissions policy and arrangements continue to ensure children receive fair and consistent treatment and have reasonable access to local schools. This supports the council's obsession to improve attendance and contributes to good educational outcomes for children.
- A key objective within the Best Council Plan is to build a child friendly city and for Leeds to be the best city in which to grow up. 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 supports the priority aim of closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes, contributing to the achievement of targets within the Childrens and Young People's Plan to 'improve attendance, attainment and achievement'.

3. Resource Implications

- There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- a) Determine the school admissions arrangements for the academic year 2022/23 by approving the admissions policies for the Leeds Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools (Appendices A, B, & C)
- b) Approve that the determination of admissions arrangements is a decision which is exempt from call in for the reasons detailed in paragraph 4.5.2.
- c) Note the following:
 - i. The Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2022 (Appendix D) and that there are no significant changes to the content, but the scheme has been re-worded to be simpler, clearer and make the policy more accessible to all local authority colleagues and families.
 - ii. That the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service
 - iii. That the statutory date for implementation (i.e. determination of the policies) is no later than 28 February 2021, with the policy published by 15 March 2021.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the local authority admissions policy and admissions arrangements for entry to voluntary controlled and community schools in September 2022.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Admission Authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. The admission arrangements include the admission policy, any supplemental information forms and catchments maps each year. Executive Board as the decision maker is asked to determine the admission arrangements as a whole for community and voluntary controlled schools.
- 2.2 There are currently 96 Primary, 1 Junior, 4 Secondary schools and 1 All Through school that the attached admission policies apply to. All other Leeds schools are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements.
- 2.3 The changes to the admission arrangements for 2022 are:-
 - 2.3.1 A reduction in the published admission number (PAN) for St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School from 75 to 60. The reduction is because we expect less demand for places across the area in future years.
 - 2.3.2 A larger priority catchment area for Lawnswood School. There are no changes to the catchment area of any other community or voluntary controlled schools.
 - 2.3.3 Change the wording of all documents to be simpler, clearer and make the policy more accessible to all families. This includes removing the need for families to complete Supplementary Information Forms, so that information can be provided in a variety of formats.
- 2.4 There are also two changes that did not require consultation. These are:
 - 2.4.1 Increasing the year 7 PAN at Roundhay All Through school back to 240. It was previously agreed that the PAN was reduced for 2021 for one year only.
 - 2.4.2 Increasing the year 7 PAN at Allerton Grange School to 300 following the process to permanently expand the school
- 2.5 The arrangements for September 2022 must be determined no later than 28th February 2021.
- 2.6 Where changes are proposed, or a Published Admission Number (PAN) is to be reduced, the arrangements must undergo public statutory consultation. The LA conducted such a consultation, in respect of St Bartholemews and Lawnswood, between 2 November 2020 and 13 December 2020
- 2.7 In line with the regulations, information about the consultation was sent to all local schools, neighbouring authorities, diocesan bodies, elected members, trade unions and early years' providers. The consultation was hosted on the Leeds.gov.uk web site for parents to comment via a survey and was included on LCC social media posts on twitter, facebook and instagram.

3. Main issues

Admission policy

- 3.1 The admission arrangements are included in full at Appendices A, B, and C and include the admission policy and priority catchment area maps.

Changes to St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

- 3.2 Under the School Admissions Code, the arrangements must include a PAN which is the minimum number of external applications the school must admit into reception/year

7 in September 2022 if they receive applications. St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School PAN for reception is being reduced from 75 to 60.

- 3.3 The level of demand across the Armley and Wortley Primary Planning Area does not support a PAN of 75 at the school in future years. Analysis of cohort data predicts that the LA will not require more than 60 places for future years at this school to meet local need.
- 3.4 Whilst having a PAN of 75, the school has previously arranged the teaching into 3 classes per year group rather than having mixed infant classes. This has meant that many year groups had more than 75 pupils in total, because each individual class has less than 30 pupils per teacher so other children were admitted during the school year. This has had a detrimental impact on pupil numbers at other local schools in the same area.
- 3.5 Whilst St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School has the classroom space available to teach 90 children per year group, other shared areas of the school such as corridors, dining facilities and toilets are not currently suitable to support 90 children per year group across the school. It is not appropriate or a wise use of LA resources to alter the shared areas to address these issues longer term when the projected pupil numbers don't support the need for more than 60 places at this school, due to the fact there are sufficient spaces across the other schools in the local area.

Proposed extension of Lawnswood School's Catchment area

- 3.6 Following a public consultation with significant public engagement, the LA applied to the School's Adjudicator to vary the September 2021 admission arrangements for Allerton High School. The School's Adjudicator gave permission for Allerton High School's catchment area to be divided into two zones for admission in September 2021. This two zone catchment area remains the same for 2022/23 onwards.
- 3.7 The request for variation was submitted because on year 7 national offer day (March 2020), some children who applied for a Year 7 place at Allerton High School for September 2020 and lived in the north of the catchment area were not offered a place at any of their preferenced schools. For many this was because they were not successful in being offered a place at Allerton High, and then lived too far from all other local schools to be allocated a place there. In 2021, more children living in Allerton High School's catchment area are due to start Year 7 compared to 2020. The LA concluded that if no changes were made to the admission arrangements, fewer children would secure a place at any of the schools they preferenced. The variation will help ensure that families living furthest north and located in zone 1 will have a higher priority for being allocated a place at Allerton High School. Children in zone 2 who are unable to secure a place at Allerton High could reasonably be expected to qualify for a place at a number of other schools.
- 3.8 The proposed extension of Lawnswood School's catchment area means some families would have catchment priority for both Lawnswood School and Allerton High School from September 2022. This dual priority is intended to support families in zone 2 to secure a place at a local school. In addition, the LA is aware that Ralph Thoresby, as an own admitting school, in the same area has consulted on expanding their catchment area in a similar manner.

Consultation

- 3.9 There were 17 consultation responses received. 13 respondents described themselves as parent/carers or local residents.

- 3.10 When asked whether they supported or opposed the proposal to reduce the PAN at St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, 14 (82%) were either supporting or neutral. The school support the reduction in PAN.
- 3.11 The respondents who opposed the proposal raised concerns that they felt that the school was popular, so should have more places. The higher PAN would mean children who attended would be more local. The respondents felt the building could accommodate the higher pupil numbers. The school having a C of E ethos was cited as a reason for both supporting and opposing the new PAN.
- 3.12 The School currently admits pupils from the local community and from further away. Provided local families preference the school, there is a reasonable chance of being offered a place as the school has a priority catchment area and those living in it are prioritised above those living outside the area. Living in a catchment area never guarantees a place, however, a reduced PAN will not reduce the chances of the local community being allocated a place at this school or a local school.
- 3.13 When asked whether they supported or opposed the proposal to extend the catchment area for Lawnswood, 2 respondents opposed and 15 (88%) were either neutral or in support. The school are supportive of the extended catchment area.
- 3.14 The respondents who opposed the proposal raised concerns about the reduced chances of being allocated a place at Allerton High School, rather than actually opposing the extension of Lawnswood school's catchment area. The extension does not have any impact on the chances of being offered a place at Allerton High School. It simply provides a higher priority for Lawnswood School for those addresses that fall into both school's catchment areas, provided Lawnswood School is included as one of the families 5 school preferences.
- 3.15 It is not widely understood by the public that living in a priority catchment area does not guarantee admission to a school, but simply places the applicant higher up the priority list. We are aware that many families may believe their house is within a catchment area without really understanding what this means or understanding that admissions policies are set annually, around 18 months before the child would start, so they can and do change.
- 3.16 The Admissions team are aware of the public misunderstanding about school admission process and how admission rules operate. This year, as in previous years, we see this misunderstanding in some of the responses to the consultation. To try and support families even better, we launched a new school admissions website in Autumn 2020 which was redesigned to take the parent through the admission journey, increase understanding of key rules and using simpler language to help parents make fully informed school place applications. We also ran an admissions myth buster campaign to help inform and clarify the admissions process for families on social media and held live Q&A sessions on Facebook.
- 3.17 When asked about any comments on the proposed wording of the admissions policies and/or coordination scheme, there was support for the new simpler wording.

Other changes included in the policy

- 3.18 The other changes are increases in PAN which do not require any statutory consultation process. The permanent increases to PAN included in the proposed arrangements are:
- 3.19 Increase the year 7 PAN at Roundhay All Through school to 240 from 210. It was reduced for 2021 for one year only to accommodate the bulge cohort in the Primary

provision who were automatically transferring through to Y7. This increase in PAN ensures that the school will continue to have 300 pupils in Year 7.

3.20 Increase the year 7 PAN at Allerton Grange School to 300 following the completed process to permanently expand the school as agreed by Executive Board in June 2020.

3.21 Co-ordinated Scheme

3.22 The Leeds Co-ordinated Scheme sets out the key dates and how the coordination between neighbouring local authorities and own admitting Leeds schools operates for entry in the normal admissions round in September 2022 (Appendix D). There are no significant changes to the content, but the scheme has been re-worded to be simpler, clearer and make the policy more accessible to all local authority colleagues and families.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Consultation was carried out in accordance with the regulations (School Admission Code, 2014) and local custom and good practice, and included consultation with ward members.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The EDCI screening form is attached as appendix E to this report. No adverse implications are anticipated

4.3 Council policies and the 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. This supports the council's obsession to improve attendance and contributes to good educational outcomes for children.

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'.

Climate Emergency

4.3.3 For many years, the Leeds admission policy has been focused on local children attending local schools and so being able to walk to school. All Leeds community and voluntary controlled schools prioritise admission based on having a sibling at the school or living in the school's catchment area and this support more children to attend a local school, reducing the need for transport and reducing the carbon footprint.

4.4 Resources, procurement 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, Leeds City Council Executive Board 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 2021.
- 4.5.2 A recommendation is made that this report be exempt from call in. This is because the School Admissions Code (2014) requires that all admission arrangements are determined by 28 February annually. The Local Authority is also obliged to hold a statutory 6 week consultation on any changes to arrangements which cannot commence until 1 October, and commenced in Leeds on 2 November and ended on 13 December. February Executive Board meeting was the first available meeting whilst meeting these requirements. If the determination of the council's admission arrangements were delayed due to call-in, and could not be implemented by the statutory deadline of 28 February, the Local Authority would not have met the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code (2014) and may be referred for adjudication by the Office of the School Adjudicator.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There are no significant risks associated with the required approval of the policy for 2022. The risk relating to the management of sufficiency of school places is managed through the city's corporate risk register.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The admission arrangement for September 2022 must be determined by the Executive Board no later than 28th February 2021

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is asked to:

- 6.1.1 Determine the school admissions arrangements for the academic year 2022/23 by approving the admissions policies for the Leeds Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools (Appendices A, B, & C)
- 6.1.2 Approve that the determination of admissions arrangements is a decision which is exempt from call in for the reasons detailed in paragraph 4.5.2.

6.2 Note the following:

- 6.2.1 The Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2022 (Appendix D) and that there are no significant changes to the content, but the scheme has been re-worded to be simpler, clearer and make the policy more accessible to all local authority colleagues and families.
- 6.2.2 That the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service
- 6.2.3 That the statutory date for implementation (i.e. determination of the policies) is no later than 28 February 2021, with the policy published by 15 March 2021.

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.