

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People)

to
Cabinet

on

17 September 2019

Report prepared by:

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**School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools 2021/22,
the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Academic year 2021/22 and
review of the relevant area**

**People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Anne Jones
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To confirm the admission arrangements for community schools for the academic year 2021/22.
- 1.2. To confirm the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2021/22.
- 1.3. To review and agree to the relevant area

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Cabinet approves the proposed Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 and agree no requirement for public consultation as no further changes are proposed.
- 2.2. That consultation with governing bodies of community schools takes place on the published admission number (PAN) for community infant, junior and primary schools for September 2020 as set out in the Admission Arrangements in Appendix 1
- 2.3. That Cabinet approves the proposed Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2021/22 onwards, as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.4. That the relevant area for schools is reviewed and agreed as follows: Southend, Castle Point and Rochford for the years 2021 and 2022 (item 6 below).

3. Background

Statutory Framework

- 3.1. The Council has the responsibility to determine the following in relation to school admissions:

- a) the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools (admission numbers, admission criteria and catchment areas); and
 - b) the Coordinated Admissions Scheme, which sets out the way in which admissions for all schools (including academies and other own admission authority schools) will operate.
- 3.2. A reminder of the School Admissions Code 2014, item 15 states:
*“Admission authorities **must** set (‘determine’) admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority **must** first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every 7 years..., consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply”.*
- 3.3. For community schools, if there are no changes, the local authority (as the admission authority) must consult on the admission arrangements every 7 years. The Council last consulted on the 2019 arrangements. **There are no changes proposed for 2021.** The next time we have a duty to consult will be for the 2026 arrangements (unless changes are proposed before this time).
- 3.4. The local authority (as the admission authority for community schools) must consult the governing body of each community school where it proposes either to increase or keep the same published admission number (PAN). **The proposal is to keep the same PAN for all schools.**
- 3.5. Schemes for coordinating all admission applications to schools must be formulated and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by 1 January in the determination year. For the school year commencing September 2021, submission to the DfE must be submitted by 1 January 2020. Consultation on the scheme is mandatory every seven years or where substantial changes are being made. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council consulted admission authorities for the 2019 scheme. Due to no substantial changes being made for the 2021 scheme (only minor clarifications), consultation for 2021 is not required.
- 3.6. The School Admissions guidance requires Local Authorities to determine every two years a “relevant area” for the purposes of admissions. This defines the area in which admission authorities consult on admission arrangements. The area of Southend, Castle Point and Rochford has been in place for many years and is most appropriate for consultation given that a significant number of pupils access provision in schools in those areas.

Admission Arrangements for 2021/22

Admission/oversubscription Criteria

- 3.7. There are no proposed changes from the previously consulted 2019/20 admission arrangements. There is therefore no requirement to consult for 2021/22. The admission criteria for community primary schools for September 2021/22 are shown in **Appendix 1**.

Published Admission Numbers

- 3.8. There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2019/20. However, Governing Bodies of community schools will have the opportunity to inform the local authority if they wish to comment on the proposal of no change. The proposed admission limits for all community primary schools for September 2021/22 are shown on **Page 2** of the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools at **Appendix 1**.

Catchment Areas

- 3.9. The proposed catchment areas for primary schools for September 2020 are identified within the Admission Arrangements in **Appendix 1**. **There are no proposed changes from the last full public consultation for 2019/20.**

Primary and Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the September 2021 round of admissions

- 3.10. Consultation rules for coordinated arrangements require the local authority to consult with other admission authorities in the area and other local authorities if there are changes from the previous year's scheme. Minor changes are proposed for the coordinated scheme for 2021.
- 3.11. As the coordinated admission scheme has not changed significantly from the version adopted for 2019 and for 2020 schools in the borough will be consulted and feedback will be sought.
- 3.12. It is not anticipated that there will be significant comments for changes to the coordinated admission scheme from schools and therefore it is requested that the final version is ratified by the Deputy Director for People in December for publication as required by law, 1 January 2020.

Background information on the relevant area

- 3.13. The "relevant area" for Southend, must include all of the Borough of Southend but may include parts of Essex. An area could be included in more than one "relevant area", which would be the case if any part of Essex was included.
- 3.14. In view of the considerable cross border movement it is recommended that the "relevant area" for Southend includes the areas of Castle Point and Rochford in addition to the Borough of Southend-on-Sea.

4. Other Options

- 4.1. The Council could decide to publically consult on 2021/22 Admission Arrangements for Community Schools and Coordinated Admissions Scheme. Due to proposing no changes to arrangements and only changes to tighten clarifications within the scheme, public consultation is unnecessary.

- 4.2. Not undertaking a public consultation does not change the requirement that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council must consult Governors of community schools on their PAN and inform schools of the minor changes to the coordinated scheme.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1. The Council is not proposing any changes for admission criteria or catchment areas for community schools. Due to no change, there is no requirement for a public consultation.
- 5.2. The Council will consult individually the Governing Bodies of community schools as required for increased or unchanged PAN's. No changes have been proposed.
- 5.3. The Council is required to publish the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2021/22, by 1 January 2020. Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed scheme.
- 5.4. The relevant area will be adopted as proposed, no consultation required.
- 5.5. A report will be presented to the January Cabinet to formally approve the PAN's and to formally determine the admission arrangements.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map
These arrangements will assist pupils within the Borough to access quality learning opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children. It fits well into the ambition of opportunity and prosperity, in that it supports sharing our prosperity amongst all of our people. It further supports the ambition in that our children are school and life ready and our workforce is skilled and job ready.
- 6.2 Financial Implications
There are no direct financial implications for the Council. The administration of school admission, and core revenue funding for the running of a School is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 6.3 Legal Implications
The determination of admission arrangements for community schools and the provision of a coordinated admissions scheme is a statutory requirement.
- 6.4 People Implications
None
- 6.5 Property Implications
None
- 6.6 Consultation
A full public consultation for community schools which reviewed the catchment areas and admission limits was undertaken for the admission arrangements

2019/20. As there are no changes for community school admission arrangements proposed for 2021 there is no requirement to consult.

A consultation on the coordinated scheme was undertaken, with all schools in the area, for the 2019/20 round and as there are minor changes to the 2021 scheme no consultation is proposed. The law on admissions requires consultation once every seven years even if there is no change to either policies therefore the next statutory consultation is due in 2025 for the 2026 admission round.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

A coordinated admissions scheme and clear oversubscription criteria are necessary to ensure fair access to school places. Admission Arrangements for Community Schools and the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Southend Schools have been written in line with mandatory requirements set by the Admissions Code 2014. The code determines that authorities must ensure that the practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective and that parents should be able to easily understand how places are allocated.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the arrangements and scheme are reviewed annually against an expanded list of protected characteristics as identified within the Admission Code: disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

The proposed Scheme, arrangements and decisions made through their administration are clear that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a parent who is applying for a school place or offered admission as a pupil.

There are limited exceptions to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and sex. Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character are exempt from some aspects of the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and this means they can make a decision about whether or not to admit a child as a pupil on the basis of religion or belief. Single-sex schools are lawfully permitted to discriminate on the grounds of sex in their admission arrangements.

6.8 Risk Assessment

If the Council does not agreed a scheme, one will be imposed by the DfE, and the Council's reputation will suffer.

6.9 Value for Money

No direct implications.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

None envisaged.

6.11 Environmental Impact

None envisaged

7. Background Papers

- 7.1. School Admissions Code 2014 —
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>
and School Admission Appeals Code 2012 -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1 — Proposed Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for September 2020 including Published Admission Numbers on Page 2.
- 8.2. Appendix 2 - Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2020 onwards.