

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Executive Director, Children & Public Health

to
Cabinet

on
16 January 2020

Report prepared by: Catherine Braun – Head of Service
Access and Inclusion

Agenda
Item No

School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools and the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Academic year 2021/22

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

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To determine the oversubscription criteria (including explanatory notes) and PAN within Admission Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2021/22.
- 1.2 To note that the Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme for the academic year 2021/22 was published on 31st December 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **To determine the oversubscription criteria (including explanatory notes) and Published Admission Number (PAN) within Admission Arrangements for Community Schools as set out in Appendix 1**
- 2.2 **To note that the Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme for the academic year 2021/22 was published on 31st December 2019 (Appendix 2).**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has the responsibilities to determine in relation to school admissions:
 - a) the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools (admission numbers, admission criteria and catchment areas);
 - b) set up a coordinated admission scheme for delivering admissions to the main rounds.
- 3.2 For community schools, the local authority (as the admission authority) **must** consult on the admission arrangements every 7 years if there are no changes. There are no changes proposed for 2021/22 and therefore the next time we have a duty to consult will be for the arrangements of 2025.

- 3.3 For community schools, the local authority (as the admission authority) **must** consult the governing body of each school where it proposes either to increase or keep the same Published Admission Number (PAN).
- 3.4 The governing body of each of the nine community schools was consulted and all confirmed they wish to keep the same PAN.
- 3.4 Cabinet approved the admission arrangements in September 2019 and no changes have been made since consulting schools.
- 3.6 Admission arrangements for community school must be determined by 28th February 2020 and included in a composite prospectus by 15th March 2020.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 The Council could have decided to publically consult on 2021/22 Admission Arrangements for Community Schools and Coordinated Admissions Scheme. Due to proposing no changes to arrangements and only minimal changes within the scheme to tighten clarifications, public consultation was 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. This consultation took place and schools confirmed no change to their PAN or the scheme.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council approved the admission arrangements and the Coordinated Admission Scheme 2021 in their meeting in September and this report is confirming final arrangements.
- 5.2 The Council did not propose any changes for admission criteria or catchment areas for community schools. Due to no change, there is no requirement for a public consultation and the arrangements can be determined.
- 5.3 The Council consulted individually the Governing Bodies of community schools as required for increased or unchanged PAN's. Schools confirmed that there are no changes to their PAN.
- 5.4 The Council is required to publish the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2021/22, by 1 January 2020. Cabinet is asked to note that the previously agreed scheme has now been determined and published.

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 agree 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

a. 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

a. Appendix 1 — Determined Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for September 2021 including Published Admission Numbers on Page 2.

b. Appendix 2 – Determined Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2021.