

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 January 2025
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: **School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools 2026/27; the Coordinated Admission Scheme for Academic year 2026/27; and Review of the relevant area**

Executive Director: Michael Marks
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Executive Councillor: Chrissy Papas, Place Planning and Admission Manager
Councillor Laurie Burton, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and SEND

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The admission arrangements for (LA maintained) community schools must be agreed and determined annually. The admission arrangements requesting agreement by council are for the academic year 2026/27. This includes the published admission number (PAN) for each of the schools and the catchment areas.
- 1.2. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2024, the LA undertook a statutory consultation for all community schools with school Governors on the proposed admission arrangements and PAN. All schools agreed and as such no further changes are proposed.
- 1.3. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2024, the LA consulted schools on the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2026/27 schools agreed proposed amendments and no further changes were identified.
- 1.4. As agreed by Cabinet on the 18 September 2024, the Scheme was ratified by the Executive Director for Children and Public Health in December 2024 and was published on the 31 December 2024.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. **Determine the Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1**

2.2. **Determine the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 2**

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 school admissions for all schools will operate (including academies and other own admission authority schools).
- 3.2 The local authority (as the admission authority for all community schools) **must** consult on the admission arrangements for community schools, if it proposes to make any changes to the existing arrangements or, at least every seven years, even if there are no changes.
- 3.3 Own Admission Authorities, (academy, foundation, and voluntary aided schools) have the responsibility to consult on and determine their own admission arrangements including catchment areas.
- 3.4 The Admissions Code 2021 determines that the official window for formal consultation which must be between 1 October and 31 January and the consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks.
- 3.5 Admission arrangements for Community Schools in Southend must be determined by 28th February 2025 and included in a composite prospectus for all schools by 15th March 2025. These are statutory deadlines and must be adhered to by all admission authorities.
- 3.6 The current admission arrangements for Community Schools (including catchment areas) were last consulted on and approved by the Council in January 2021 for the admissions relating to academic year 2022/23.
- 3.7 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).
- 3.8 The proposed admission arrangements published admission numbers and catchment areas includes all seven local authority (maintained) community schools.
- 3.9 The Council must balance the duty to ensure sufficient school places alongside its duty to make efficient use of resources. The DfE recommends Councils have a surplus of around 5% within each planning cluster. Where surplus becomes too low or too high consideration is needed to either increase or reduce the number of available places in the town. This results in changes to some school PANs.

- 3.10 There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2026/27 the community schools. The governing body of each of the community schools was consulted on their proposed PAN and proposed arrangements and all agreed.
- 3.11 The proposed admission limits for all community primary schools for September 2026/27 are shown on **Page 3** of the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.12 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 2026, submission to the DfE must be submitted by 1 January 2025. Consultation on the scheme is mandatory every seven years or where substantial changes are being made.
- 3.13 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 2026/27

Admission/oversubscription Criteria

- 3.14 There are no proposed changes from the previously consulted 2022/23 oversubscription criteria and definitions. The admission criteria for community primary schools are shown in **Appendix 1**

Published Admission Number (PAN)

- 3.15 There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2025/26 for community schools.

Catchment Areas

- 3.16 The proposed catchment areas for primary schools for September 2025 are identified within the Admission Arrangements in **Appendix 1**. No changes were proposed, and no objections have been received.

PAN Consultation

- 3.17 The consultation with Chair of Governors for the community school admission limits (PAN) was held 1 October to 15 November 2024 and no objections were received.
- 3.18 The consultation on the Coordinated Admissions Scheme was held 21 October–19 November 2024 was held, and no objections were received.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Community School Funding is administered through the Dedicated Schools Grant, there are therefore no financial implications for the Council in relation to these admission arrangements.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. The determination of admission arrangements for Community Schools and the provision of a coordinated admissions scheme is a statutory requirement.

6. Policy Context

- 6.1. The School Admissions Code 2021 prescribes the details of the statutory process in following the process for making changes to admission arrangements.
- 6.2. The School Admissions Code 2021 prescribes the details for determining the Coordinated Admission Scheme. Not having one in place would result in the Secretary of State imposing a scheme for Southend.

7. Carbon Impact

- 7.1. Ensuring due process is followed and that the Council has a set of admission arrangements and an effective Coordinated Admissions Scheme, facilitates children obtaining local school places.
- 7.2. There are no carbon impact matters that are associated with this report.

8. Equalities

- 8.1. 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 2021. 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.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. 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 based on religion or belief. Single-sex schools are lawfully permitted to discriminate on the grounds of sex in their admission arrangements.

9. Appendices

- 9.1. **Appendix 1:** Admission Arrangements for community schools 2026/27 (including admission oversubscription criteria, pupil admission numbers and catchment areas)
- 9.2. **Appendix 2:** Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme 2026/27

10. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	25/11/24
Executive Director(s)	Michael Marks	18/11/24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Burton	19/11/24