

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of the Director of Education and Early Years

to
Cabinet

on
12 January 2023

Report prepared by:

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Agenda
Item No.

School Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools 2024/25

Pupil scrutiny committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Anne Jones
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.2 To determine the oversubscription criteria (including explanatory notes) and Admission Limit within Admission Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2024/25

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the final Admissions Arrangements for Community Schools for the academic year 2024/25 are determined (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 To note that the Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme for the academic year 2024/25 was published by 31st December 2022 (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) Consult with community schools on their published admission limit;
 - c) Publish the Coordinated Admission Scheme by 1 January of each year after consultation with the schools in the borough.
- 3.2 For community schools, the local authority (as the admission authority) **must** consult where it proposes changes, or has not consulted for 7 years on the admission arrangements. There are no changes proposed for 2024/25 however, we will need to lower the PAN for Chalkwell Hall Junior School for 2025/26 and therefore will need to run a public consultation for all community schools in the next round.

- 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 PAN.
- 3.4 Cabinet previously approved the admission arrangements that are being rolled over for 2024/25;
- 3.6 Admission arrangements for community schools must be determined and included in a composite prospectus by 15th March 2023.

4. Admission Arrangements for 2024/25

4.1 Admission Criteria

- 4.1.1 There are no proposed changes from 2023/24. The final admission criteria for community primary schools for September 2024/25 are shown in *Appendix 1*.

4.2 Published Admission Numbers

- 4.2.1 There are currently no proposed changes to the Admission Limits from 2023/24. The proposed admission limits for all community primary schools for September 2024/25 are shown on **Page 2** of the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2.2 The consultation with community schools did not raise any objections to the proposal that the PANs remain unchanged.

4.3 Catchment Areas

- 4.3.1 The proposed catchment areas for primary schools remain unchanged and are within the Admission Arrangements in Appendix 1.

5. Co-ordinated Admission Scheme 2024/25

- 5.1 Consultation with the Schools in the City was held on the proposed Scheme and as anticipated there were no significant comments or objections for changes to the co-ordinated admission scheme from schools. As granted by Cabinet the final version was ratified by the Executive Director for Children and Public Health in December for publication, which is required by law before 1 January 2023.
- 5.2 A copy of the Determined Co-ordinated Admission Scheme is provided for reference.

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1. 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.

5.2. 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.

5.3. Legal Implications

The determination of admission arrangements for community schools and the provision of a coordinated admissions scheme is a statutory requirement.

5.4. People Implications

None

5.5. Property Implications

None

5.6. Consultation

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 Council is not proposing any changes from the 2022/23 arrangements which were consulted on the previous year. The legal framework does not require consultation for seven years where changes are not proposed.

5.7. 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 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.

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.

5.8. Risk Assessment

If the Council does not determine the admission arrangements for the community schools before 28 February 2023 it will be in breach of the requirements set out by the School Admissions Code 2021.

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

5.9. Value for Money
No direct implications.

5.10. Community Safety Implications
None envisaged.

5.11. Environmental Impact
None envisaged

6. **Background Papers**

6.1. [School Admissions Code 2021](#)

6.2. [School Admissions Appeals Code 2022](#)

7. **Appendices**

7.1. Appendix 1 - Admission Arrangements 2024/25; including admission limits, catchment areas, and admission oversubscription criteria

7.2. Appendix 2 - Determined Coordinated Admission Scheme 2024/25