

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **22 October 2020**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Admission arrangements for Community and Controlled schools in East Sussex 2022-23- permission to consult**

Purpose of report: **To approve the annual statutory consultation exercise for the school admission arrangements 2022/23**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Agree to consult on the unchanged admission priorities set out in Appendix 1;**
 - 2) Agree to consult on the proposed Co-ordinated Schemes of Admission set out in Appendix 2;**
 - 3) Agree to consult on the proposed Published Admission Number ("PAN")s for community and controlled schools for 2022/23 set out in Appendix 3; and**
 - 4) Agree to consult on the proposed change to the Newhaven primary schools' pre-defined community area shown in Appendix 4, with all other areas unchanged from 2021-22.**
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1 Background

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2014 states that admissions authorities must determine (set) their admissions arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admissions authority is not proposing any changes to their admissions arrangements, there is no requirement to consult annually; where there is to be no change to arrangements consultation must take place every 7 years.

1.2 As part of the consultation process, and in accordance with current statutory requirements, the consultation will include parents, schools, the relevant Dioceses and neighbouring local authorities and details of the proposed arrangements will be posted on the Council's website.

1.3 The relevant area for the purpose of consultation is the administrative County of East Sussex, and there are no proposals to change this for 2022/23.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Lead Member is advised that it is proposed to make no changes to the admission priorities this year.

2.2 The proposed changes to the Co-ordinated Scheme are to the dates only.

2.3 It is proposed to make a change to the pre-defined community area for primary schools in Newhaven as set out in paragraphs 2.6-2.8 below.

2.4 The consultation will include Priory School, Lewes, and Hailsham Community Academy, whose trusts are responsible for their own admissions. This is because their trusts have requested

that the Council consults on their behalf as they propose to use the Council's admission arrangements.

Proposed PAN Changes

2.5 It is proposed to amend the PANs of the following schools as set out in Appendix 3:

- Motcombe Community School - reduce from 120 to 90
- Wallands Community Primary School - reduce from 60 to 30
- Chailey School - increase from 162 to 174

Proposed Change to the Newhaven Primary Schools pre-defined community area

2.6 Following discussion with the headteachers of the two community schools in Newhaven it is proposed to consult on a change to the pre-defined community area for primary schools in Newhaven. If agreed, the proposed change would result in Denton Community Primary School having its own Community area to include that part of the area to the east of the River Ouse (Appendix 4). Other Newhaven schools would continue to serve the rest of the town.

2.7 The reason for this proposed change is that some children living in the Eastern side of Denton have, in recent years, been unable to access places at Denton Community Primary School due to oversubscription, and have been displaced to schools in the west of Newhaven, while children living immediately west of the river are offered places at Denton, despite the fact that there are other schools more local to their home. This then creates a barrier to attendance.

2.8 The Lead Member is advised that, should this change be agreed following consultation, children living in the previous pre-defined community area whose older siblings were admitted as in-area before 1 September 2022 would still need to be treated as priority 2. This would apply whichever side of the boundary they lived. Siblings of children who had to be directed to an alternative school because the school in their area was full would also be treated as priority 2.

Draft Revised Admissions Code proposed by Department for Education (DfE)

2.9 The DfE has recently been consulting on revisions to the School Admissions Code 2014 (consultation deadline: 16 October 2020). There has been no new primary legislation to support these revisions and it is unlikely that they will result in significant changes to the arrangements set out here. However, should any changes be required, it will be drawn to the Lead Member's attention, and publicised at the earliest available opportunity.

Changes as a result of Covid-19 pandemic

2.10 The Lead Member is advised that a number of faith designated schools have secured in-year variations to their 2021/22 admission arrangements to remove the requirement for attendance at public worship given that places of worship have been closed during the pandemic. Some admission authorities may choose to consult on retaining these changes for 2022.

2.11 Earlier in the pandemic the DfE also issued non statutory guidance in respect of requests from parents to admission authorities for children to be educated with the year below their chronological age group simply on the basis that they have missed a large portion of the 2019/20 academic year due to Covid-19 closure. The view of the DfE is that children should remain with their own age peer group for support and that requests for placement out of year group should be considered based on individual circumstances, as previously. No alteration to the County Council's admission arrangements is proposed on this basis.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The County Council is required by law to consult on its admissions arrangements every seven years or sooner if any changes to those arrangements are proposed for the schools for which it is the admission authority. The Lead Member is recommended to agree to consult on the attached admissions arrangements for 2022/23 with the minor proposed changes outlined in section 2 above.

3.2 The results of the consultation will be reported back to the Lead Member after the consultation period closes in January 2021 with recommendations for amendments as necessary

resulting from comments received. Final admission arrangements will be determined by 15 March 2021, and subsequently published in line with statutory deadlines.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Admission criteria

Appendix 2- Co-ordination Admission Schemes – normal year of entry

Appendix 3- Proposed Planned Admission Numbers

Appendix 4- Map showing current Newhaven pre-defined community area with the proposed division highlighted (the River Ouse).