

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

Date: 22 February 2021

By: Director of Children's Services

Title of report: Admission Arrangements for Community and Controlled schools in East Sussex 2022-23

Purpose of report: To determine the admission arrangements for community and controlled schools for the 2022-23 school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to agree the admission arrangements for community and controlled schools for the 2022-23 school year, as consulted, including:

- 1) The proposed admission priorities (appendix 1)**
 - 2) The proposed published admission numbers (appendix 2)**
 - 3) The proposed changes to the community area for Newhaven primary schools (appendix 3)**
 - 4) The proposed co-ordinated schemes of admission (appendix 4)**
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1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council ("the Council") is the Admission Authority responsible for the admission arrangements for Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools within the East Sussex area. The School Admissions Code 2014 states that admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements annually. Provided the relevant admission authority is not proposing any changes to their admission arrangements, there is a duty to consult only every seven years. The Published Admission Number (PAN) for a school is the number of places available in each relevant year group which a school has agreed with the admission authority it can provide. There is no duty for the admissions authority to consult regarding changes to PAN during the intervening seven years so long as there is no proposed reduction in PAN which will affect those in the area surrounding the school.

1.2 Consultation on the proposed admissions arrangements (as set out in Appendix 1) was carried out between 16 November 2020 and 15 January 2021 so as to satisfy the requirement to consult for at least six weeks and to end the consultation period by 31 January 2021, as stated in the School Admissions Code (page 7, section 15.b). Schools were alerted to the consultation and asked to publicise it to parents by circulating the link to the relevant page on the County Council's website.

1.3 Three responses to the consultation were received via the consultation hub during this period. Two respondents made no comment, and the third made a comment about the proposed PAN changes in Lewes. The outcome of the consultation is set out in Appendix 5.

1.4 The consultation was also carried out on behalf of Priory School, Lewes, and Hailsham Community College, whose arrangements mirror those of East Sussex County Council.

2. Proposed Changes to Admissions Arrangements for the Year 2022/2023

Proposed change to the pre-defined community area for primary schools in Newhaven

2.1 The Schools Admissions Code states that any changes to catchment area must be reasonable and clearly defined. A map is attached at Appendix 3 which shows the proposed change.

2.2 Following discussion with the headteachers of the two community schools in Newhaven it is proposed to change the pre-defined community area for primary schools in Newhaven. This would result in Denton Community Primary School having its own community area to include the part of the area to the east of the River Ouse (as shown in Appendix 3). Other schools in Newhaven would continue to serve the rest of the town.

2.3 The reason for the proposed change is that some children living in the Eastern side of Denton have, in recent years, been unable to secure 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.

2.4 Should the Lead Member agree this change, children living in the previous pre-defined community area whose older siblings were admitted as in-area before 1 September 2022 will still need to be treated as priority 2. This will apply whichever side of the boundary they live. Siblings of children who had to be directed to an alternative school because the school in their area is full will also be treated as priority 2. A description of priority 2 is included in the proposed admission criteria set out at appendix 1.

2.5 The Lead Member is advised that the community area does not feature in the admission arrangements for the two Academies in Newhaven. Both establishments use home to school distance as the only geographical element in their priorities and so this change would not affect them.

3. Changes to Published Admission Number (PAN)

Proposed change to the PANs at Wallands Community Primary School and Southover CE Primary School

3.1 The headteachers of the above schools in Lewes responded to the consultation for 2021-22 requesting that the PANs for their schools be reduced. Reducing the PAN requires consultation and officers of the County Council have met with the Lewes Headteachers group to consider how the forecast reduction in numbers of children in the Lewes area should be addressed. Both the above schools have experienced falling rolls over the past few years to the point where the 2FE (2 Form Entry) structure has become unsustainable.

3.2 Wallands requested a reduction from 60 to 30 and Southover requested a reduction from 60 to 45.

3.3 Reducing the PANs as set out above would address the number of surplus places in the Lewes area while retaining the flexibility to restore the PAN at either or both schools should the need arise, given that the accommodation at the schools will still be on site. One response to the consultation was received expressing concern about sufficiency of school places, but the PAN can be increased without

consultation, so the recommendation is that this change should go ahead as it can be easily reversed.

Proposed change to the PAN at Motcombe Community Infant School

3.4 Falling rolls at Motcombe Community Infant School and a decrease in the forecast numbers in the Old Town area of Eastbourne have led the school to request a reduction in PAN from 120 to 90 to ensure the future sustainability of this school and others in the surrounding area. Given the forecast decrease in numbers of primary age children in Eastbourne the Lead Member is recommended to agree the reduction in PAN from 120 to 90.

Proposed change to the PAN at Chailey School

3.5 The leadership team at Chailey School has requested that their PAN be increased from 162 to 174 to reflect the increased demand for places at the school, particularly from residents of the new estates to the south of Haywards Heath and to the east of Burgess Hill, parts of which fall within East Sussex. This can be achieved within the school's existing accommodation and organisational structure and without detriment to other East Sussex schools. The Lead Member is therefore recommended to agree this increase.

4. Request for children of staff to be included as a priority - Possible future change

4.1 In responding to a consultation about an own admission authority school's admission arrangement, a number of headteachers of community schools requested that their schools be able to offer priority to children of staff. The response sent by Jo Miles, Admissions and Transport Manager at East Sussex County Council, is attached as appendix 6. No headteachers did, in fact, respond to this consultation to this effect this year but it is likely that this issue may be raised in future years.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The Council is required by law to consult on admission arrangements every seven years, or sooner if there are any changes to those arrangements for the schools where the local authority is the admission authority. The Lead Member is recommended to:

- determine the attached admission arrangements for 2022/23, including the change to the community area for Newhaven as shown in Appendix 3.
- agree the PANs for community and controlled schools as set out in Appendix 2.
- agree the adoption of the co-ordinated schemes of admission as set out in Appendix 4.

5.2 The determined admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools will be published on the East Sussex County Council website by 15 March 2021 as required under current legislation. Any objection to these arrangements can then be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator until 15 May 2021. The final arrangements will be published in the composite prospectus online (and available in hard copy on demand) by 12 September 2021 as required by the School Admissions Code 2014.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1- Proposed Admission Priorities 2022-23
- Appendix 2- Proposed Admission Numbers 2022-23
- Appendix 3- Map showing proposed changes to Newhaven community area
- Appendix 4- Proposed Co-ordinated Schemes of Admission 2022-23
- Appendix 5- Consultation Survey results
- Appendix 6- Email response to secondary headteacher in respect of possibility of including children of staff as a priority.