

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

Date of meeting: 22 July 2021

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: In-year admission arrangements 2021-22- permission to consult

Purpose: To seek permission to consult with schools on an in-year variation to admission arrangements to vary in-year arrangements and introduce admissions co-ordination for 2021-22 as required by the School Admissions Code 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) To approve consultation with schools on amendments to in-year admission arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 (this will require an In-Year Variation to be consulted on at the same time).

2) To approve consultation on the introduction of a co-ordinated scheme of admissions for in-year applications as set out in Appendix 2.

1 Background

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 ('the Code') comes into force on 1 September 2021, replacing the 2014 Code which is currently in force. The draft Code was published in May 2021 and is expected to be ratified by Parliament on or around 1 July 2021, after both the 2021-22 and 2022-23 admission arrangements had been determined. Consultation approval is being sought now, so that East Sussex County Council can meet its consultation requirements for the changes expected by 31 October 2021 as set out below.

1.2 The Code requires that all local authorities publish their in-year admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools by 31 October 2021 and in subsequent years by 1 June for that September. East Sussex County Council does not currently publish such arrangements and an in-year variation will be required to do this.

1.3 Own admission authority schools may opt into this scheme. East Sussex County Council will continue to offer this as a traded service.

1.4 The Code also requires that admission authorities request an in-year variation to their admission arrangements for 2022-23 to include in priority 1 those children who were previously looked after overseas but ceased to be so because they were adopted. East Sussex County Council already includes these children in its definition of previously looked after children, so this is not necessary. However own admission authority schools within East Sussex have been notified and advised to apply for an in-year variation where needed.

1.5 The Code requires substantial changes to the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol and the Lead Member is advised that a new draft protocol has been circulated to schools for consultation in compliance with these requirements. The Lead Member is not required to make a decision on the protocol.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Lead Member is advised that the new arrangements do not require changes to the admission priorities.

2.2 As the arrangements will be different for 2021-22 and 2022-23, they do require an in-year variation to be sought from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. Permission is requested to apply for this simultaneously with the consultation in view of the requirement to have published 2021-22 in year arrangements by 31 October 2021.

2.3 For the future it is proposed to add the arrangements, and schemes, to the annual admissions consultation process between October and January every year.

2.4 The proposed new arrangements are attached as Appendix 1. These are modelled on current practice and the traded service currently offered to Academies.

2.5 The proposed new co-ordinated scheme is attached as Appendix 2. This is modelled on the current schemes for annual intake, adapted to take account of the arrangements in Appendix 1.

2.6 Should these consultations be agreed, the Lead Member will need to make a decision on the proposed arrangements and scheme at the meeting to be held in October 2021.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Lead Member is asked to approve the application for an in-year variation and the consultation with schools around this as set out in 2.2 above, since it is required by the Code.

3.2 The Lead Member is asked to approve consultation on the proposed co-ordinated in year scheme set out in Appendix 2, since this is also required by the Code.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed in year admission arrangements 2021-22

Appendix 2: Proposed in year co-ordination scheme 2021-22