

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

**Date of meeting:** 17 October 2022

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

**Title:** Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in East Sussex 2024-25- permission to consult

**Purpose:** To seek agreement for consultation on proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools in East Sussex for the 2024-25 academic year) and on proposed co-ordinated schemes of admission for the same year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **The Lead Member is recommended to:**

- 1) agree to consult on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools in East Sussex for the 2024-25 academic year as set out in appendix 1 of the report;**
- 2) note that there are two proposed changes to the admission arrangements which are explained in appendix 2 and appendix 3 (A supporting map is attached as appendix 4);**
- 3) agree to consult on the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2024-25, as set out in appendix 5 of the report; and**
- 4) agree to consult on the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in appendices 6-8 of the report.**

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## **1 Background**

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 states that admissions authorities must determine (set) their admissions arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admission authority is not proposing any changes to their admissions arrangements, there is no requirement to consult annually; where there is 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 2024/25.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 The Lead Member is advised that it is proposed to make two changes to the admission arrangements this year:

- To add a new category of priority for children of staff at the school in question, so that places at a school are allocated to the children of staff at the school after in area siblings but before other children living in the area;
- To move the community area boundary between the Polegate/Willingdon area and the Eastbourne primaries area, and to make a similar change in respect of the community area for Willingdon Community School at secondary level.

2.2 There are two proposed PAN changes for 2024-25: the headteacher and governing body of Robertsbridge Community College have requested that their PAN increase from 145 to 160 places, and the headteacher and governing body of Iford and Kingston CE Primary School have requested a decrease in PAN from 30 to 20 places.

2.3 The proposed changes to the co-ordinated schemes are to the dates only.

***Proposal to prioritise children of staff:***

2.4 In response to the consultation for 2023-24 admissions arrangements, headteachers of all the community secondary schools and some community primary schools in East Sussex requested priority for children of staff employed at the school in question. The School Admissions Code 2021 allows admission authorities to prioritise children of staff in certain circumstances, and some own admission authority schools in the county do this already.

2.5 A survey was conducted of all headteachers of community and VC schools in the county to establish levels of support for this priority, asking which staff should be included, and what level of priority, if any, should be offered to such children.

2.6 Based on the survey responses, it is proposed to prioritise children of staff at the school in question as priority 3 in the admission priorities. The rationale for this is set out in appendix 2.

***Proposal to alter the community area boundary between Eastbourne and Willingdon/Polegate***

2.7 A new estate is being built on the former sites of Brodricklands and Hamlands Farm, which falls outside the Eastbourne borough boundary but is only accessible from within Eastbourne borough. Accordingly it is proposed that the boundary between the community areas for Willingdon and Polegate Primary Schools, and the Eastbourne borough primary schools, be moved so that children living on this estate fall within the Eastbourne primary schools area.

2.8 It is proposed to move the boundary for Willingdon Community School to the same location.

2.9 It is also proposed that siblings of any children who are already living on the estate and have secured places at Polegate or either of the Willingdon schools prior to the introduction of this arrangement in September 2024 be treated as in-area siblings for the school their sibling attends.

2.10 The rationale for this change is set out in appendix 3 and a map is attached as appendix 4.

***Proposed PAN changes:***

2.11 The headteacher and governing body of Robertsbridge Community College have requested a PAN increase from the current figure of 145 to 160, to make the organisational structure more efficient.

2.12 There is no in area demand for this and the leadership at the College have been advised that there will be no resources available to support this increase. They understand that they will have to accommodate the larger numbers within the existing buildings and that there will be no capital funding to provide additional space as pupil numbers grow. However the proposed PAN reflects the outcome of the net capacity calculation conducted by the DfE as a pilot for its new methodology, and the leadership have indicated that they wish to adopt it.

- 2.13 The headteacher and governing body of Iford and Kingston CE Primary School have requested a reduction in PAN from the current figure of 30 to 20 to reflect the falling numbers of primary school aged children in the local area.
- 2.14 Forecasts show that a PAN of 20 will be sufficient to meet in area demand for the foreseeable future. However the accommodation at the school will remain sufficient to accommodate a PAN of 30, so school can return to admitting this number of children without additional accommodation should the demand arise.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons 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 2024/25 with the 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 2023 with recommendations for amendments as necessary resulting from comments received. Final admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February 2023 and published by 15 March 2023 in line with statutory deadlines.

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### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 1- proposed admission arrangements for Community and VC schools for 2024-25
- Appendix 2- rationale for the proposal to include priority for children of staff
- Appendix 3- rationale for the proposed community area change
- Appendix 4- map showing the proposed area change
- Appendix 5- proposed published admission numbers for East Sussex schools for 2024-25
- Appendix 6- proposed co-ordinated scheme of admissions for East Sussex infant, junior and primary schools 2024-25
- Appendix 7- proposed co-ordinated scheme of admissions for East Sussex secondary schools 2024-25
- Appendix 8- proposed co-ordinated scheme for in year admissions for East Sussex schools for the academic year 2023-24