

Committee: **Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness**
Date: **12 November 2015**
Title of Report: **Admission arrangements for the 2017/18 school year**
By: **Director of Children's Services**
Purpose of Report: **To approve the annual statutory consultation exercise for the school admission arrangements for 2017/18**

Recommendation:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

Agree to consult on the following proposed admission arrangements for the 2017/18 school year:

- 1. To adopt the admission priorities currently in use for Frant CE Primary school for all community and voluntary controlled schools in East Sussex as set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2. To change the measurement of home to school distance from shortest walking route to straight line;**
- 3. To allow applications received after the closing date due to verified house move or other material change of circumstances to be treated as on time if received before a second deadline;**
- 4. The proposed admissions numbers; and**
- 5. The proposed co-ordinated admissions schemes.**

1. Background Information

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2014 states that admissions authorities must determine their admissions arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admissions authority is not proposing any changes to their admissions arrangements, there is a duty to consult every seven years.

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

1.3 The Lead Member is advised that the new School Admissions Code 2014 came into force on 19 December 2014. This is the reason for the earlier than usual consultation date and this is the time frame which will need to be followed in future. The new School Admissions Code has been circulated to all schools in East Sussex, and is available on the gov.uk website.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 Proposals one and two should help ensure that children are able to attend their nearest local school. This may result in a reduction to the Home to School transport budget as a number of children are transported at the authority's expense because there are no places at their nearest local school. It may also reduce the number of appeals as parents are more likely to accept an allocated school if it is local to them.

2.2 The first two proposals should also reduce the likelihood of rural schools needing to call on contingency funds because they are unable to accommodate children moving into the area from their existing resources, even once KS1 top up money and growth funds have been allocated.

2.3 The third proposal will result in operational efficiencies that will help mitigate against planned savings. Currently walking routes need to be kept up to date and surveyed and some activity is spent each year in disputes with parents about whether a footpath exists and is relevant for admissions purposes.

3. The proposed Changes

3.1 Oversubscription Criteria;

Appendix 1 shows the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools. The previous oversubscription criteria are attached as appendix 2. Appendix 3 explains why we are proposing the changes to admissions priorities for voluntary and controlled schools.

3.2 Proposal to accept late applications as on time if there is clear justification;

Appendix 4 details a proposal to accept applications received after the closing date as on time (if received before a second deadline) where there is clear evidence of a change of address, or other relevant change.

3.3 Home to School Methodology for calculating distances;

Appendix 5 explains the rationale for proposing changes to the way we calculate home to school distances.

3.4 Appendix 6 shows the proposed admissions numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2017/18 school year. The Lead Member is asked to note that there are only four possible changes, and at the time of writing, the four schools were still in consultation with the Authority. The final numbers together with the other admissions arrangements will be included in a further report seeking approval from the Lead Member after the consultation closes in March 2015.

3.5 Appendix 7 outlines the co-ordinated admission schemes for the 'normal' years of entry, i.e. reception classes, transfer between infant to junior schools and on transfer between primary and secondary school. There is a small change to the schemes, as it is proposed to add a sentence to each scheme to clarify that those families who apply after the deadline because they have moved house on or after the closing date will be treated as on time applicants if they are able to provide proof of their house move by 1 February 2017 (for secondary) and 1 March 2017 (for primary). This is in line with the change proposed in Appendix 4 (see 2.5 above).

3.6 The Lead Member is advised that an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation process.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The County Council is required by law to carry out consultation on admissions arrangements every seven years or sooner if any changes to those arrangements for the schools where the local authority is the admissions authority. The Lead Member is recommended to agree to consult on the attached admissions arrangements for 2017/18 with the minor proposed changes outlined in 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 above.

4.2 The results of the consultation will be reported back to the Lead Member after the consultation period closes in January 2016 with recommendations for amendments as necessary resulting from comments received. Final admission arrangements will be determined by 15 March 2016, and subsequently published.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Jo Miles, Admissions and Transport Manager

Tel: 01273 481911

Local Members: All

Background Documents:

- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

- The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012
- The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2012
- School Admissions Code 2014

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Admissions criteria

Appendix 2- previous years' admissions criteria

Appendix 3- information regarding proposed change to the sibling link

Appendix 4- information regarding the proposed change in respect of late applications

Appendix 5- information regarding the proposed change to distance measurement

Appendix 6 - Admission numbers

Appendix 7 - Co-ordination Admission Schemes – normal year of entry