

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

**Date of meeting:** 10 February 2025

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

**Title:** Admission arrangements for East Sussex Schools 2026-27 (determination)

**Purpose:** To seek Lead Member approval of the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the 2026-27 academic year.

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

- 1) approve the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for the 2026-27 academic year as set out in Appendix 1;**
  - 2) approve the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2026-27 as set out in Appendix 2, specifically the proposed PAN reductions at Motcombe Infant school and Wadhurst CE Primary School, but not Pashley Down Infant School; and**
  - 3) approve the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in Appendices 3-6.**
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## **1 Background**

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 (‘the Code’) states that admission authorities must determine (set) their admission arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admission authority is not proposing any changes to their admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult annually; where there is no change to arrangements consultation must take place every seven years.

1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, East Sussex County Council (‘the Council’) consults annually, whether there is a change or not.

1.3 The Published Admission Number (PAN) for a school is the number of places available in each ‘relevant age group’ which a school has agreed with the admission authority it can provide. The ‘relevant age group’ is the age group in which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school.

1.4 Consultation on the proposed admission arrangements (as set out in Appendix 1) was carried out between 4 November 2024 and 15 January 2025 to satisfy the requirement to consult for at least 6 weeks and to end the consultation period by 31 January 2025 as set out in the Code. Schools were alerted to the consultation and asked to publicise it to parents by circulating the link to the relevant page on the Council’s website.

1.5 3 responses to the consultation were received via the consultation hub during this period. The results and comments are attached as Appendix 7.

1.6 The consultation also included Priory School, Lewes, and Parkland Junior School, Eastbourne, whose trusts are responsible for admissions to the schools. This is because the trusts have requested that the Council consults on their behalf as they propose to use the Council’s admission arrangements.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 The Lead Member is advised that the admission arrangements set out in Appendix 1 are unchanged from 2025-26, except in that, following the decision to close West Rise Junior School and expand the age range of West Rise Infant School to become a primary school, the Council is no longer the admission authority for any junior schools. This means that the previously listed 'priority 4' has been removed from the list of priorities and the remaining priorities have been renumbered.

2.2 There were 3 responses to this section of the consultation, of which all were in favour and none against.

### Changes to PAN

2.3 The governing bodies of three schools requested PAN changes as set out in Appendix 2:

- Motcombe Infant School- decrease from 90 to 60
- Pashley Down Infant School- decrease from 90 to 60
- Wadhurst CE Primary School- decrease from 45 to 30

2.4 There were no comments on this question in the consultation.

2.5 The headteacher and governing bodies of Motcombe Infant School, Pashley Down Primary School and Wadhurst CE Primary School have requested these reductions in PAN to reflect the falling numbers of primary school aged children in their local areas.

2.6 However, the headteacher and governing body of Pashley Down Infant School have since withdrawn their request to reduce the PAN and have advised that they would like to retain the PAN of 90 for 2026-27.

2.7 Forecasts show that these reduced PANs 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 90 at Motcombe Infant School, and 45 at Wadhurst CE Primary School, so the schools can return to admitting this number of children without additional accommodation should the demand arise.

### Co-ordinated schemes for admissions

2.7 The co-ordinated scheme for primary and junior admissions in 2026-27 (Appendix 3) is essentially unchanged from 2025-26 as the changes are only to dates to reflect the new academic year.

2.8 The same applies to the co-ordinated scheme for secondary admissions in 2026-27 (Appendix 4).

2.9 The co-ordinated scheme for in-year admissions to Community and VC schools in East Sussex in 2025-26 (Appendix 5) is likewise essentially unchanged from 2024-25. The East Sussex in-year admission arrangements for 2025-26 are attached as Appendix 6 for reference.

2.10 There were no comments on this section of the consultation.

## **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 ('the Code') states that admission authorities must determine (set) their admission arrangements annually.

3.2 Forecasts show that reduced PANs at Motcombe and Pashley Down Infant Schools, and Wadhurst CE Primary School will be sufficient to meet in area demand for the foreseeable future.

3.3 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to:

- Approve the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for the 2026-27 academic year as set out in Appendix 1.
- Approve the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2026-27 as set out in Appendix 2, specifically the proposed PAN reductions at Motcombe Infant school and Wadhurst CE Primary School, but not Pashley Down Infant School; and
- Approve the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in Appendices 3-6.

3.4 The determined admission arrangements for Community and VC schools in 2026-27 will be published on the East Sussex County Council website by 15 March 2025 as required under current legislation. Any objection to these arrangements can then be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator until 15 May 2025. The final arrangements will be published in the composite prospectus online (and available in hard copy on demand) by 12 September 2025 as required by the School Admissions Code 2021.

**CAROLYN FAIR**  
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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Standley, Ungar and all Councillors

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.