

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

Date of meeting: 23 February 2026

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Admission arrangements for East Sussex Schools 2027-28 (determination)

Purpose: To seek Lead Member approval of the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the 2027-28 academic year

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for the 2027-28 academic year as set out in Appendix 1;
- 2) approve the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2027-28 as set out in appendix 2, specifically the proposed PAN reductions at Hankham Primary School and Southover CE Primary School;
- 3) approve the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in Appendices 3-6; and
- 3) approve the altered arrangements for waiting lists following a recent decision by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator

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 17 November 2025 and 15 January 2026 to satisfy the requirement to consult for at least 6 weeks and to end the consultation period by 31 January 2026 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 Three responses to the consultation were received via the Council's consultation hub during this period. The results and comments are attached as Appendix 7 to this report.

1.6 The consultation also included Priory School, Lewes, whose trust is responsible for admissions to the school. This is because the trust has requested that the Council consults on their behalf as they propose to use the Council's admission arrangements.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The admission arrangements set out in Appendix 1 are unchanged from 2026-27.

2.2 There were three responses to this section of the consultation questionnaire- two (66.6%) were in favour and one (33.3%) against. There was one comment to the effect that 30 pupils in one class is too high.

Changes to PAN

2.3 There was one comment in respect of the proposed PANs set out in Appendix 2 to the report: this was from the governors of Heathfield Community College who wished to increase their PAN. Following discussion with the headteacher it has been agreed that the PAN should remain as it is with the option of admitting above this number should the need arise.

2.4 There were no comments received with respect to the proposed PAN decreases for Hankham Primary School and Southover CE Primary School.

2.5 Pupil forecasts show that these reduced PANs will be sufficient to meet in area demand for the foreseeable future however, the accommodation at the schools will remain sufficient to accommodate a PAN of 20 at Hankham Primary School, and 60 at Southover CE Primary School, so the schools can return to admitting this number of children without additional accommodation should the demand arise. Southover CE Primary School has already reduced its PAN, from 60 to 45, with effect from the 2022-23 academic year.

Co-ordinated schemes for admissions

2.6 The co-ordinated schemes for primary, junior and secondary admissions in 2027-28 (Appendices 3 and 4) are essentially unchanged from 2026-27 as the only changes relate to dates, reflecting the new academic year. The same applies to the co-ordinated scheme for in-year admissions to Community and VC schools in East Sussex in 2026-27 (Appendix 6). The East Sussex in-year admission arrangements for 2026-27 are attached as Appendix 6 for reference.

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

Waiting list arrangements

2.8 Following a recent decision by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, which is binding on all parties, including East Sussex County Council, unsuccessful applicants will automatically be placed on the waiting list for their preferred school in the main admission round without having to opt in, as now. They will remain on the waiting list until the end of term 2 of the year of entry, at which point they will need to opt in if they wish to remain on the waiting list. As this decision is binding, it does not require 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 Hankham Primary School and Southover 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 2027-28 academic year as set out in Appendix 1.
- Approve the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2027-28 as set out in Appendix 2, specifically the proposed PAN reductions at Hankham Primary School and Southover CE Primary School; and
- Approve the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in Appendices 3-6.
- Approve the alteration to waiting list arrangements as required by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

3.4 The determined admission arrangements for Community and VC schools in 2027-28 will be published on the East Sussex County Council website by 15 March 2026 as required under current legislation. Any objection to these arrangements can then be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator until 15 May 2026. The final arrangements will be published in the composite prospectus online (and available in hard copy on demand) by 12 September 2026 as required by the School Admissions Code 2021.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All Councillors

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None