

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023
DATE OF DECISION:	9 FEBRUARY, 2021
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR FIELKER CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND ADULTS

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY		
None		
BRIEF SUMMARY		
<p>All schools must have an admissions policy which lays out criteria for how they will decide which children secure places if more children apply than the school has spaces available for. Southampton City Council is the admissions authority for the Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in the city.</p>		
<p>For 2022 admissions, the Council are proposing changes to the admission number to two schools in the Infant/Primary policy. One of these schools will also be changing their oversubscription criteria ahead of a planned academisation. An additional priority has been added to the SCC policies for Service Pupil Premium children in recognition of the impending presentation of the Armed Forces Covenant before Parliament, to be recognised in legislation. As such, a statutory public consultation must take place for a minimum of 6 weeks. The proposed policies have been shared with all local admission authorities, all schools, other LA's and is available to view on the Council website.</p>		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
	(i)	To approve the Admissions Policies, the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) and the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and the schemes for coordinating Infant-Primary, Junior and Secondary admissions for the school year 2022-23 as set out in appendices 1 to 7.
	(ii)	To authorise the Executive Director - Wellbeing, Children and Learning to take any action necessary to give effect to the admissions policies and to make any changes necessary to the admissions policies where required to give effect to any Acts, Regulations or revised Schools Admissions or School Admissions

	Appeals Codes or binding Schools Adjudicator, Court or Ombudsman decisions whenever they arise.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	Southampton City Council (the admission authority) proposes changes to the 2022-23 admission policies for Infant-Primary, Junior and Secondary admissions. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements. Consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. Admission Authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually.
2.	The proposed policies are at Appendix 1, 2 and 3. There are changes from the 2021-22 arrangements.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
3.	An alternative option considered was to not consult on or determine local admission arrangements. This has been rejected because it would be unlawful.
4.	An alternative option considered was to not make any changes to the PANs. This has been rejected because the city is forecasting surplus places from 2022. Maintaining empty classrooms is costly; especially infant classes as they must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. The risk of not changing PANs could mean that schools do not have an intake that financially justifies the operation of additional classes, but must do so due to the infant class size regulations (e.g. a school with a PAN of 90 may only take in 62 pupils but will still have to run 3 classes rather than 2, at a significant financial loss). Given the pupil forecasting, this would not be financially sustainable.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
5.	<p>The Council has consulted on the admission arrangements for 6 weeks prior to the deadline set in the School Admissions Code. This consultation began on 14th December 2020 and will finish on 25th January 2021. All local schools, neighbouring Local Authorities and Diocesan boards have been notified of the consultation and provided with the proposed policies. These have additionally been published publicly on the Southampton City Council website. Any interested party can provide comment on the proposed policies in email or in hard copy to Zoe Snow, Admissions and School Place Planning Manager. At the time of this report (19th January 2021 <i>Note: will update before Thursday if needed</i>), only two responses to the consultation have been received. Both were seeking clarity around the respondent's personal circumstances in line with the proposed policies and neither raised objections or concerns.</p> <p>It is a statutory requirement that School Admission Authorities then determine the Admission Policy each year to approve the allocation of school places to pupils applying for a place in a Southampton School. The Council is responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Once all arrangements have been determined, arrangements can be objected to and referred to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.</p>

6.	<p>The principles of Southampton’s Admission Policies are well established. They seek to fulfil the requirement to be “fair, clear and objective” (School Admissions Code 2014). The proposed policies seek to make this process as transparent as possible. In particular they enable the Local Authority, Schools, and parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To protect the rights of vulnerable children. b) To meet significant medical or psychological needs of individual children. c) To develop, strengthen and support immediate family ties. d) To develop and strengthen links between designated feeder and receiver schools. <p>To have access to reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair criteria that avoid ambiguity in the interpretation of the policy.</p>
7.	<p>The 2022-2023 Admissions policy proposes changes to that of the 2021-22 policy. Those changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The reduction of PAN for St Mary’s Primary School* b) The reduction of PAN and change of oversubscription criteria for St Monica Primary School, ahead of planned academisation*/** c) The addition of a prioritisation of Service Pupil Premium children in the oversubscription criteria*** <p>*The primary sector is forecasting surplus places in Year R from 2022 which increases up to 2024, hence the reduction of PAN in some schools. These schools were selected because they are spread across the planning areas of the city. This gives a more even reduction and links directly with where future pupils are living. In addition to that, these schools are seeking assistance to manage their budgets and a reduction in classes equates to a reduction in staffing.</p> <p>** St Monica Primary School will academize in February 2021, joining the Inspire Learning Trust. As such, the school will cease to be a Local Authority controlled school for admission in 2022. Due to the timing of this change (post-consultation window, but pre-determination and publishing of policy), the decision was made to allow St Monica’s policy to be consulted on separately for clarity when parents come to applying for both St Monica and Local Authority controlled schools in 2022.</p> <p>The two policies are attached for direct comparison, but in summary, the changes to the oversubscription criteria for St Monica includes the addition of a category for the children of staff and the removal of the category for admission on medical/social care grounds. It does not include the category for children eligible for the Service Pupil Premium that is being added to the Southampton City Council policy. While the policies differ, both are legally sound and within the scope laid out in the Admissions Code.</p> <p>*** The Service Pupil Premium is an additional funding stream available to pupils who meet any of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service) - they have been registered as a ‘service child’ on a school census since 2016

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme <p>Southampton City Council are proposing the addition of this criteria to show continued dedication to the aims and purposes of the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>
8.	Apart from required changes of dates and wording changes for clarity, there are no material changes to the coordinated schemes for Infant-Primary, Junior or Secondary transfers, with the exception of expressing how late secondary applications will be processed.
9.	The SCC Supplementary Information Form (SIF) has been proposed on the advice of the Office for the School's Adjudicator to the Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth to ensure that denominational information is collected in an appropriate and limited way.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
10.	There are no additional revenue costs arising directly from the approval of the admission policies for the school year 2022-2023.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
11.	None.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
12.	The Education Acts, Regulations made pursuant to them and the School Admissions Code (December 2014) require Local Authorities to formulate coordinated schemes for dealing with applications to Infant-Primary, Junior and Secondary schools at the relevant age of transfer. Such schemes also include admission to schools where the Local Authority is not the Admission Authority i.e. Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Free Schools and Academies. The schemes must ensure that every parent is notified of one offer of a school place on the same day. A National Offer date of 1 March, or first working day thereafter, has been set for Secondary admissions and a National Offer date of 16 April, or first working day thereafter, for Primary sector admissions. The regulations also set National closing dates for applications of 31 October in the offer year for Secondary applications and 15 January in the offer year for Primary sector applications.
	Admission Arrangements must be fully compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010. The Council's proposed Admission Arrangements meet the legislative requirements.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
13.	None.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
14.	The proposals anticipate no changes to the current financial envelope.
15.	The recommendation presents no risks to the current service delivery.
16.	The proposals may cause low level stakeholder concern. No concerns or views have been raised in response to formal consultation on the proposed

	<p>policies. This consultation has been disseminated in line with the Admissions Code but we recognise 'low' rather than 'no' risk as recognition of the fact that many parents or carers may not consider admissions arrangements as early as the Admissions Code requires the Local Authority to, and as such may not have engagement with the consultation period. This is mitigated as much as possible in the publication of the consultation but cannot be removed completely.</p>
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
17.	The proposals anticipate no contravention to any policy framework and are in line with all national and local policy.
18.	<p>The proposals are in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25 priorities, seeking to operate in a transparent and fair way to help the city achieve its goals of becoming 'greener, fairer and healthier' with a focus on the key themes of 'wellbeing', 'Green City' and 'Successful, Sustainable Business'.</p> <p>The SCC Coordinated Scheme for all phases includes provision to ensure that applicants who are not successful in securing a preference school are allocated their nearest school with available space to both maximise the wellbeing of families through ease of school run arrangements and to minimize automotive travel emissions.</p> <p>The SCC Admissions Policies for all phases includes provision to recognise the individual circumstances of children and their families, wherever possible within the restrictions of the Admissions Code. The aim of this to maximise wellbeing of children and families and ensure fairness of practice by recognising extraordinary vulnerabilities and clearly explaining to families how applications will be considered.</p> <p>The reduction of PAN at the named schools will assist in the key theme of the Council operating as a successful, sustainable business by seeking to ensure that schools do not fall into deficit budgets that require support from the Council to mitigate.</p>
19.	In addition to the impacts expressed in line with the Policy Frameworks, the proposals are in-keeping with the priorities of the Southampton Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-20, in particular the key themes of children remaining safe, with good levels of physical and mental wellbeing. To ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the circumstances of individual children and their families, the proposals include provision for considering the requirements of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, Vulnerable Children (including those subject to Child Protection Planning), Siblings, Children with specific medical or social care needs and Children who qualify for the Service Pupil Premium.

KEY DECISION?	Yes
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	SCC INF-Primary Admissions Policy 2022-23

2.	SCC Junior Admissions Policy 2022-23
3.	SCC Secondary Admissions Policy 2022-23
4.	SCC Supplementary Information Form
5.	SCC Reception Year Coordinated Scheme
6.	SCC Junior Coordinated Scheme
7.	SCC Secondary Coordinated Scheme
8.	St Monica Primary School Admissions Policy 2022-23

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	
2.	

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	Yes/No
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Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	Yes/No
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Other Background Documents

Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	
2.	