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| DECISION-MAKER: | Cabinet |
| SUBJECT: | Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2026/27 |
| DATE OF DECISION: | 25 February 2025 |
| REPORT OF: | Councillor Winning Cabinet Member for Children and Learning |

| <u>CONTACT DETAILS</u> | | | |
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| Executive Director | Title | Executive Director for Children & Learning | |
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| STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY |
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| N/A |
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| BRIEF SUMMARY |
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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.

For 2026 admissions, the Council are proposing to add in the additional oversubscription criteria of 'feeder school' to its secondary school policy, to reflect such arrangements at other local schools. As such, a statutory public consultation must take place for a minimum of 6 weeks and is occurring from 20th December 2024 to 31st January 2025. 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.

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| RECOMMENDATIONS: |
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| | (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 2026-27 as set out in appendices 1 to 6. |
| | (ii) | To authorise the Executive Director for 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 | |
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| 1. | As a requirement of the Admissions Code 2021, all admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements by 28th February of the determination year. For 2026 entry, the determination year is 2025. |
| ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED | |
| 2. | To take no action. Rejected as would leave Southampton City Council remiss in its statutory duties. |
| DETAIL (Including consultation carried out) | |
| 3. | <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 2021). 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> |
| 4. | Apart from required changes of dates and wording changes for clarity, there are no material changes to the coordinated schemes for Infant-Primary or Secondary transfers, nor to the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). |
| 5. | <p>The 2026-2027 Secondary Admissions policy proposes changes to that of the 2025-2026 policy. Those changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The addition of an oversubscription criteria for ‘feeder schools’. <p>Such ‘feeder schools’ categories are in use at many other local schools and the proposal has been made to reflect these arrangements in the Council policy.</p> |
| 6. | A full public consultation has been held from 20 December 2024 – 31 January 2025. This has been published on the SCC website and circulated to all local and border schools, neighbouring local authorities and local Diocese. |
| RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS | |
| <u>Capital/Revenue</u> | |
| 7. | There are no additional revenue costs arising directly from the approval of the admission policies for the school year 2026-27. |
| <u>Property/Other</u> | |
| 8. | N/A |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | |
| <u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u> | |
| 9. | The Education Acts, Regulations made pursuant to them and the School Admissions Code (2021) require Local Authorities to formulate coordinated |

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| | 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. |
| 10. | 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> | |
| 11. | None. |
| RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS | |
| 12. | The recommendation to agree these arrangements presents no financial risk. The proposals anticipate no changes to the current financial envelope. |
| 13. | The recommendation presents no risks to the current service delivery. |
| POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS | |
| 14. | None. |

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| KEY DECISION? | Yes |
| WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: | All |
| <u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u> | |
| Appendices | |
| 1. | SCC Infant-Primary Admissions Policy 2026-27 |
| 2. | SCC Secondary Admissions Policy 2026-27 |
| 3. | SCC Supplementary Information Form |
| 4. | SCC Infant-Primary Coordinated Scheme |
| 5. | SCC Junior Coordinated Scheme |
| 6. | SCC Secondary Coordinated Scheme |
| 7. | ESIA |

Documents In Members' Rooms

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| 1. | N/A |
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Equality Impact Assessment

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| Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out. | YES |
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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. | | No |
| 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. | N/A | |