

CABINET MEETING – 11 MARCH 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

School Admissions Arrangements from September 2016

Author(s):

Executive Director of People Services

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval for the proposed maintained school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2016-2017 and to describe proposed amendments to published admission numbers (PANs) for the academic year 2015-2016, where it is necessary to provide additional places.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to approve the following in relation to the 2016-2017 academic year:

1. The admissions policy and procedures associated with the coordinated scheme of admissions. This includes a proposed change to the scheme as described in 5.5 – 5.7 of this report;
2. The criteria that will be applied for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools where oversubscription occurs;
3. The published admission numbers (PANS)
4. An increase in the PAN at Castletown Primary School in North Sunderland from 50 to 60 from September 2015

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes/

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Cabinet approval of the city's maintained school admission arrangements is required prior to submission to the Department for Education (DfE) and publication for parents making applications for primary and secondary school admissions for the September 2016 academic year.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Given the requirements described above there are no alternative recommendations to consider.

Impacts analysed:

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Scrutiny Committee

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the proposed school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2016-2017 and to describe proposed amendments to published admission numbers (PANs) for the academic year 2015-2016, where it is necessary to provide additional places.

2. Description of the Decision

Cabinet is recommended to approve the following in relation to the 2016-2017 academic year:

1. The admission policy and procedures associated with the co-ordinated scheme of admissions. This includes a proposed change to the scheme as described in 5.5 -5.7 of this report ;
2. Details of the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools;
3. Published admission numbers (PANs);
4. An Increase in the PAN at Castletown Primary School from 50 to 60 from September 2015.

3. Background

- 3.1 The School Standards and Framework Act (1998), implementing Regulations and the associated statutory Schools Admissions Code has established a framework for consultation on admission arrangements.
- 3.2 The Act requires the local authority (for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools) to determine, before the commencement of a school year, the admission arrangements that will apply in that year.
- 3.3 The Council is responsible for co-ordinating admissions across its area (known as the co-ordinated scheme) and is required to consult all schools (including VA, Free Schools and Academies), Church of England (CE) and Roman Catholic (RC) Dioceses and neighbouring local authorities by 1st March 2015 in order to establish the admission arrangements for September 2016. 'Own admission authorities' i.e. free schools, academies and voluntary aided (VA) schools, must also consult on their proposed admission arrangements through the co-ordinated scheme.
- 3.4 While applications for primary and secondary school places continue to be made both through paper and online methods, the 2013-2014 admissions was the first to employ a new On-Line Application system which was developed within the Council. The online application system has been made available in all Customer Service Centres, as well as other public locations. The benefits of online application have been

promoted to parents with the outcome being an increase to 89% in online applications for local secondary school places with a similar preference for online applications at primary level. A similar, if not higher, level of online take up for the 2015-2016 academic year is anticipated.

4. Current Position (2015-2016)

- 4.1 The Published Admission Numbers (PANs) consulted upon (when appropriate) and published by the Council are set based on projected demand for primary and secondary places in the city. In recent years the Council has responded to increased demand for primary places across the city through the development of both temporary and permanent increases in capacity. This has resulted in greater supply of school places particularly in Washington and the Coalfields.
- 4.2 Pupil Projections have indicated a shortfall of primary school places in North Sunderland in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Working with local schools, additional capacity has been identified to respond to the projected future shortfall of places. It is therefore proposed that Cabinet approves an increase in the PAN at Castletown Primary School from 50 to 60 for the 2015-2016 academic year and beyond. This increase will mitigate the demand for places in the area in 2015-2016 and is part of a strategy that will see a further increase in North Sunderland in 2016-2017.
- 4.4 While no further capacity increases are proposed at this time, the local authority continues to monitor demand for primary places across the city for 2015-2016. Any further changes to local PANs for maintained schools will be reported to Cabinet as appropriate once the outcome of the primary admissions round for September 2015 is fully known.
- 4.6 At this time no further primary PAN increases have been proposed for the 2016-2017 academic year. However, the Council is currently working with local schools in North Sunderland and Washington to identify additional places from 2016. Proposed PANs are attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 4.5 In the secondary sector there are only a small number of schools which are anticipated to be oversubscribed for September 2015, with the total number of surplus places in a number of schools remaining high. The Council is continuing to work with schools to understand the financial and organisational impact of surplus places on individual schools and to bring forward proposals to address this issue.

5. The Co-ordinated Scheme 2016-2017

- 5.1 On 19th December 2014 a revised School Admissions Code came in to force. It applies to admission arrangements determined in 2015 for admission in the school year 2016-2017 and any future years. Key changes to the code include the following

- Admission authorities may give priority in their over subscription criteria to children eligible for the pupil premium or service families premium
- Admission authorities may give priority in their over subscription criteria to children eligible for the pupil premium, service families premium or early years premium who are either in a nursery class which is part of the school or attend a nursery that is established and run by the school and which is named in the schools admission arrangements.
- Further changes to the admissions timetable have been made including a change to the period and dates for the consultation, determination and publication of admission arrangements as well as the deadline for any objections to admission arrangements made to the Schools Adjudicator

- 5.2 In addition to the changes outline above, the revised School Admissions Code includes a number of technical drafting details and clarification on the admission of summer born children outside of their normal age group.
- 5.3 Changes relating to the admission of children accessing the early years premium, pupil premium and service families premium are not mandatory as part of the admission arrangements for any admission authority. Sunderland has not implemented the changes for any school for which the Council is the admission authority.
- 5.4 As in previous years, the local authority proposes to offer a coordinated scheme with VA & Free Schools, Academies and neighbouring local authorities. Most Academies in Sunderland operate within the same admissions policy as community schools. The consultation period for the 2016 Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme ended on 28 February, 2015.
- 5.5 Appendix 2 sets out the co-ordinated scheme arrangements for 2016. Appendix 3 sets the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- 5.6 The Council proposed one change to its coordinated admissions scheme in the 2014/15 school admissions consultation. This change applies priority, as part of the oversubscription criteria for schools for which the Council is the admission authority, for any children attending an infant school who have an older sibling at a named feeder junior school. This change was agreed by Cabinet in March 2014 and will be implemented for entry in the September 2015 school year.
- 5.7 No changes to the Council's admission arrangements are proposed for the 2016-2017 consultation period.

6. Reason for the Decision

- 6.1 Cabinet approval of the admissions arrangements across the city is required prior to submission to the DfE and publication for parents making choices on preferred primary and secondary school places for their children for the September 2016 school year.

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 Given the requirements described above there are no alternative recommendations to consider.

8. Sustainability

- 8.1 The recommendations outlined above will ensure that there is sufficient educational provision in areas of the city where excess demand is projected and will contribute to the sustainability of provision in areas where there are surplus places.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 In line with the School Admissions Code 2014, Local Authorities must determine, consult on and publish its admission arrangements.

10. Relevant Consultation

- 10.1 Consultation has taken place with Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies of Community, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools and Academies; Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses and neighbouring Local Authorities.