

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

To: **Children and Young People Committee**

Meeting Date: **15 January 2019**

From: **Executive Director: People and Communities**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **n/a** *Key decision:*
No

Purpose: **To advise the Committee of the outcome of the consultation on the proposed admission arrangements for the 2020/21 academic year for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for whom the Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to:**

- a) approve and determine the proposed changes to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2020/21 academic year.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The School Admissions Code ('the Code'), issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, imposes mandatory requirements in relation to the admission of children to school on the Local Authority (LA) as the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all school places are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. "In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated." (Paragraph 14 of the Code)
- 1.3 Admission arrangements **must** include the oversubscription criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school.
- 1.3 Paragraph 15 of the School Admissions Code describes "How Admissions Work".

In summary, the process in relation to the determination of admission arrangements is described as follows:

- a) Admission authorities **must** set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority **must** first publically 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. This means that consultation **must** be completed by 31 January 2019 in respect of proposed changes to admission arrangements for entry to school in September 2020.
- b) Objections to admission arrangements **must** be referred to the Adjudicator by **15 May** in the determination year (in this case 2019). Any decision of the Adjudicator **must** be acted on by the admission authority and admission arrangements amended accordingly. The LA will then collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single composite prospectus.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The LA publishes the arrangements for admission to all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Cambridgeshire each year as part of its annual consultation process. These have remained essentially unchanged for many years, apart from where legislative changes have dictated otherwise.
- 2.2 The over-subscription criteria, that is the order in which places are allocated when applications are received which name the school as a parent's preference than there are places available as determined by the school's Published Admission Number (PAN), for admission to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in September 2019/20 is shown in the left-hand column of the table in Appendix 1.

2.3 As reported to the Committee at its meeting on 13 November 2018, a small number of changes to these criteria had been identified for inclusion in the annual consultation on admission arrangements. These were subsequently published as part of the LA's consultation which commenced on 19 November 2018 and ran to 13 January 2019. These are detailed below. The resulting revised proposed over-subscription criteria for entry to school from September 2020 is shown in the right-hand column of Appendix 1.

2.3 Children who have previously been in state care outside of England (new criterion 2)

2.3.1 The Minister of State for School Standards wrote to all LAs and admission authorities on 4 December 2017 (**Appendix 2**) requesting priority be given in their over-subscription criteria to children who have previously been in state care outside of England, and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted in their oversubscription criteria.

2.3.2 Further guidance regarding this was issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in August 2018, (**Appendix 3**) with the express intention that all admission authorities will make this change as part of the annual consultation process for admission to schools in September 2020/21, the earliest opportunity for this change to be made. The wording used for this new criterion in the over-subscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools is that provided by the DfE.

2.3.3 Virtual School colleagues have indicated that this will change will apply to extremely small numbers of children across Cambridgeshire.

2.3.4 The responses received in respect of this proposal will be tabled at the meeting.

2.4 Children of School Staff (new criterion 6)

2.4.1 Peterborough City Council, currently gives priority to the children of staff before the admission of children from out of catchment within their admission arrangements, in recognition of recruitment difficulties. Cambridgeshire does not, although many own admission authority schools in the county now do. Recruitment of staff can be difficult in some areas of the county and it was proposed to align policies across the two LAs.

2.4.2 The responses received in respect of this proposal will be tabled at the meeting.

2.5 Out of Catchment Children (old criterion 5)

2.5.1 The LA currently gives priority to out of catchment area children who have applied for and been refused a place at their catchment school. As more schools in Cambridgeshire have become their own admission authority, many governing bodies on reviewing their arrangements have chosen to remove this criterion. The reason for this is that it is impossible for them to administer the criterion accurately. They would not have access to the information which would allow them to determine whether a parent had applied for their catchment school, or not. It was proposed to remove this criterion from the current admission arrangements.

2.5.2 The responses received in respect of this proposal will be tabled at the meeting

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

This is a pre-emptive change to LA policy to support priority for the admission of a vulnerable group of children to school, prior to the legislative change required to amend the Code.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

This is a pre-emptive change to reflect a legislative change we have been advised will follow at the earliest opportunity available to the DfE.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

This proposed changes were published as part of the six week consultation process which took place between Monday 19th November and Friday 16th January 2019. A decision on whether to proceed to implementation will need to be taken by 28 February 2019 and the resulting determined admission arrangements for 2020/21 published on the Council's website in order to be compliant with the requirements of the Admissions Code.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

All schools and other interested parties were invited to respond to the annual consultation process.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes/No Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes/No Name of Financial Officer: Paul White
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes /No Name of Legal Officer: Shahin Ismail
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Hazel Belchamber
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	No Name of Officer: Jo Dickson
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Hazel Belchamber
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes/ No Name of Officer:

Source Documents	Location
Children and Young People Committee 13 November 2019: Report (Item 10) and minutes	https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/832/Committee/4/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx