



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Individual Cabinet Member Report

Report of:

Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director
Children, Young People and Families

Cabinet Portfolio:

Children's Services

Date:

4 February 2016

Subject:

Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year
2017/18

Author of Report:

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273 4097

Summary:

The report provides details of the Authority's proposed Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2017/18 academic year at statutory school age, including the co-ordinated admission schemes. The report also provides details of the proposed arrangements for admission to Community Sixth Form Schools for external applicants.

Reasons for Recommendations:

In order to comply with its statutory duty, the Local Authority is required to determine its Admission Arrangements for the 2017/18 academic year. There are no proposed changes to the arrangements that were approved for 2016/17.

Recommendations:

The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are requested to:

- (i) Approve the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2017/18 academic year.
- (ii) Approve the proposed Sixth Form Admission Arrangements for Community Schools for external applicants for the 2017/18 academic year

- (iii) Approve the co-ordinated Admission Scheme for 2017/18.
 - (iv) Note the overall co-ordination role undertaken by the Local Authority on behalf of all Sixth Form Schools.
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Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

If Closed add – ‘Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph... of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).’

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
No
Legal Implications
Cleared by: Nadine Wynter
Equality of Opportunity Implications
No
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
No
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
Cleared by:
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Children's Services
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People and Families
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

Proposed Oversubscription Criteria for Statutory School Age at Community and Voluntary Controlled schools 2017/18.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is submitted to ensure that the Authority meets its statutory duty with regard to admission arrangements to its schools for the 2017/18 academic year. The Authority is required to determine its admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools by 28 February 2016. These arrangements include those for the normal year of entry, i.e. Reception, Year 3 (separate junior schools) and Year 7. Where the Authority admits external students to Sixth Form schools (Year 12) it must also determine admission arrangements. The Authority must also determine its Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme.
- 1.2 The Authority's proposed arrangements comply with the requirements of the statutory School Admissions Code 2014. Its admission arrangements include the oversubscription criteria and other detailed information that explains how the Authority manages this function.
- 1.3 Where there are no proposed changes from the previous year, there is no requirement to formally consult, subject to the requirement that the Authority must consult on its arrangements at least once every 7 years. The Authority consulted last for the 2013/14 academic year. There are no proposed changes to those arrangements approved for 2016/17 and therefore the Authority has not formally consulted on them. It is still however required to formally determine its arrangements for 2017/18.
- 1.4 The City Wide Learning Body commissioned a review of the current admission arrangements in Sheffield in 2015, including the Council's current oversubscription criteria, to establish whether or not they provide the best outcomes for Sheffield families. The review included representation from parents and carers, governors, elected members, headteachers and other school representatives. The review concluded that there was still a great deal of support for the current catchment area based system. There was also strong support for siblings being able to attend the same school and this is reflected in the priority that is afforded siblings in the oversubscription criteria at paragraph 4 below.

2. What does this mean for Sheffield People?

- 2.1 There is a clear link between school attendance and attainment. Providing parents with a good opportunity of obtaining a place at their preferred school means that a child is more likely to have regular attendance. The Authority continues to operate a catchment area based system which remains popular with parents. In September 2015 75% of parents were allocated places at their catchment secondary school.
- 2.2 The admission arrangements in Sheffield enable parents to apply for up to three preferred schools. Parents are provided with access to practical

information with regard to the application process and to individual school based information. The admissions process is explained to parents in the Composite Prospectus "A Guide for Parents" which is a statutory document produced by the Authority every year. It includes details of all Sheffield schools with the exception of independent schools.

- 2.3 The catchment area system helps parents plan their children's education from primary to secondary school, with every primary school having formal linked status with at least one secondary school.
- 2.4 Whilst the Authority cannot provide a place at every parents preferred school because of oversubscription, it does nonetheless attain a high number of satisfaction with 89.6% of Reception applicants in 2015/16 obtaining a place at one of their 1st preference primary school and a further 7% obtaining places at their 2nd or 3rd preference. For Year 7 86.48% were offered their 1st preference and 7.5% their 2nd or 3rd.

3. Outcome & Sustainability

- 3.1 The Authority operates under the provisions of the statutory School Admissions Code 2014 which aims to provide local communities with a greater voice when it comes to issues such as school places and the types of schools they want for their children.
- 3.2 Sheffield residents are treated fairly and equitably. The Authority ensures that all schools comply with the rules laid down by the School Admissions Code 2014.
- 3.3 The Local Authority co-ordinates applications with other Admission Authorities on behalf of parents so that they only have to make a single application. The Local Authority is also the body that makes a single offer to the parent, ensuring transparency and consistency. The single offer is made on the national allocation dates of 1 March for Year 7 and 16 April for Reception and Year 3, or the following Monday if that date falls on a weekend.

4. Main Body of Report

4.1 Special Educational Needs

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Bodies of all schools to admit a child with an Education and Health Care Plan that names their school (formerly a Statement). This is **not** an oversubscription criterion, schools are required to admit a child in these circumstances whether they have places or not.

4.2 Sheffield City Council Oversubscription Criteria

The Local Authority has an overriding duty to comply with parental preference wherever possible. In the event of oversubscription places will be offered in the following order of priority:

(i) Priority One

Children in Care or Previously in Care (Statutory Requirement)

All Admission Authorities **MUST** prioritize the admission of Looked After Children and all previously looked after children within their admission criteria. These children are defined as: “a child who is looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989(b) and who (a) is looked after at the time an application for admission to a school is made and (b) in relation to whom the local authority has confirmed that the child will still be looked after at the time when the child will be admitted to the school.

The Authority, in its capacity as Corporate Parent, will work closely with parents and carers of Looked After Children, or previously looked after children to ensure that the most appropriate school is made available that can best meet the needs of the child.

The following is required of faith schools:

Admission authorities for faith schools may give priority to all Looked After Children and previously looked after children whether or not of the faith. They must however give priority to Children in Care and previously in care of the faith before other children of the faith.

Where the admission authority for the school also provides for the admission of pupils not of the faith, then priority shall be given to a relevant looked after child and previously looked after child not of the faith over another child not of the faith.

Children in Care or Previously in Care

– Admissions outside the normal admission round.

In accordance with the Regulations described above, Looked After Children and previously looked after children after will be prioritized for admission at their preferred school when an application is made for other year groups.

(ii) Priority Two

Attendance at the linked Infant School – Separate linked infant and junior schools only

This category applies to the transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 at separate linked Infant and Junior Schools. Priority will be afforded for places at the

Junior School to children who have attended the designated linked infant school and whose parents apply for a place there. Whilst children attending linked infant schools will be prioritized after those in category one above, admission cannot be guaranteed. In the event of oversubscription, normal admission priorities (i.e. those at iii, iv,v and vi) will be applied.

Children living in the catchment area for a separate junior school who apply for a place there but do not attend the linked infant school will be considered after any child that does attend the linked infant school.

The “sibling” priority will be afforded if a sibling attends either the infant or linked junior school.

(iii) Priority Three

Catchment area with Sibling

Children who normally reside with a parent or person with parental responsibility in the defined catchment area and who will have a brother or sister at the preferred school on the day of admission will be considered next, except for admission to separate junior school as described in 2 above.

The definition of a sibling for these purposes is given at (vi) below.

This means that all catchment & sibling applications are prioritised before catchment applicants irrespective of distance. The normal distance tie-breaker will apply within each category.

(iv) Priority Four

Catchment Area

Children who normally reside with a parent or person with parental responsibility in the defined catchment area, but will not have a sibling at the preferred school at the point of admission will be considered next.

In the event of oversubscription, tie-breakers will be used as describe below.

(v) Priority Five

Siblings of children refused a place at their catchment school

In circumstances where parents have applied for but been refused a place at their catchment school for older siblings and offered a place at a non-catchment school, any younger sibling will be afforded priority status for that school within the sibling category, disregarding distance. This will support children to attend the same school as their siblings, for which otherwise they would have a lower priority, thereby significantly reducing the possibility of families having to take children to different schools.

(vi) Priority Six

Non-Catchment Siblings

Whether in category (iii) or (v), a sibling is defined as a child who permanently or usually lives at the same address as:-

1. a brother and/or sister
2. a stepbrother and/or stepsister (to include half brother/sisters)

and in both cases will be attending the preferred school at the point of entry. Where the requested school is a separate infant or junior school, attendance at the linked junior school or infant will be included.

In circumstances where an older sibling attends a school sixth form, Sibling priority will only be afforded if the older sibling attended the school prior to Y12.

(vii). Priority Seven

Contributory Feeder School (Year 6 to Year 7 only)

Applicants for a Year 7 place whose children attend a designated feeder primary school but do not fit into any of the above categories 1, 3 or 4 above will be considered next. (Secondary Schools only)

Parents are advised in the Composite Prospectus “A Guide for Parents” that if they choose to send their children to a non-catchment primary school, they have a lower priority for entry to the linked secondary school and that there is no guarantee of a place there.

(viii) Priority Eight

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, the Authority will

- a) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria. The Authority will not refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, .

ix) Priority Nine

All other applicants

Any applicant who does not fall into one of the above categories will be considered next.

Tie Breakers

For any admission category that is oversubscribed there are two stages of further consideration.

A. *Exceptional medical, social or special educational needs*

Where exceptional medical, social or special educational needs are demonstrated and supported by a professional, an application may be prioritised by the Admission Committee (AC) but only within its admission category. It is the parent's/applicant's responsibility to provide supporting evidence.

The parent/applicant must supply sufficient supporting evidence from relevant professionals at the time of the original application, for the Authority to consider whether an individual case constitutes exceptional circumstances to be prioritised. In any event, the evidence must support the view that the child must attend the school applied for and that they could not have their needs met at any other school.

Applications will only be submitted to the Admission Committee for further consideration if they are accompanied by supporting evidence.

B. *Distance*

In circumstances where exceptional circumstances are not demonstrated, the final tie-breaker will be the distance from the home address to the school building. This is a straight line measurement from the centre of the house to the centre of the school building.

Where the remaining place could be made for a number of children living equidistant from the school the determination of the single offer will be made by random allocation:

The random allocation will:

- i) be independently supervised by a representative of the Legal and Governance Service;
- ii) take place on a date and time notified in advance to the participating parents so that they can attend as witnesses.

4.3 Equal Preference

The statutory School Admissions Code 2014 made the practice of offering places on a "First Preference First" basis unlawful. All Admission Authorities in Sheffield must operate an Equal Preference system when determining the final school offer. This means that each of the three preferences will be considered as equal preferences and oversubscription criteria applied to each preference irrespective of ranking. The ranking of the preferences is relevant only where the applicant is eligible for more

than one school. In this case a place will be offered at the highest ranked school for which the child is eligible.

4.4 Waiting Lists

A waiting list will be maintained until 31 December 2017 for transfer to separate junior schools (Year 3) and transfer to secondary schools (Year 7). A waiting list will continue to be maintained for the full academic year for admission to Reception, i.e. until 31 August 2018. The waiting list is ranked in line with the published oversubscription criteria.

5. Co-ordinated Admission Schemes

- 5.1 The Authority is required to co-ordinate all applications for Sheffield residents applying for a place in the “normal year of entry” – i.e. Reception, Year 3 (Separate Junior schools) and Year 7.

This means that a parent completes the Common application form, expressing up to three preferences and the Authority liaises with schools and other local authorities on their behalf.

- 5.2 The Local Authority will inform the parent of the outcome of their application, including the reason for the refusal and information on the appeals process if a place is refused at any of their preferred schools.
- 5.3 The Authority has determined co-ordinated admission schemes as required by law for the 2017/18 academic year.

6. In-Year Admissions

- 6.1 There is no longer any requirement for the Authority to co-ordinate in-year applications. An in-year application is made outside the normal year of entry.
- 6.2 Headteachers were consulted in the Spring Term of 2013 and agreed that they wished the Authority to continue its co-ordination roll for in-year as well as normal year of entry. This was endorsed by the City Wide Learning Body and all schools and Academies continue to support this process.
- 6.3 Effectively the Local Authority co-ordinates all admission applications for statutory school aged pupils.

7. Admission Arrangements for External Applicants for Sixth Forms

- 7.1 The Local Authority co-ordinates sixth form admission arrangements for external applicants on behalf of all Sheffield Sixth Form Schools:

All Saints Catholic High (Academy)
Notre Dame Catholic High (Academy)

Bradfield (Academy)
Forge Valley (Foundation)
High Storrs (Community)
King Ecgbert (Academy)
King Edward VII (Community)
Meadowhead (Academy)
Parkwood High (Academy)
Sheffield Park (Academy)
Sheffield Springs (Academy)
Silverdale (Academy)
Tapton (Academy)

Sheffield Local Authority is the legal body with responsibility for determining arrangements for its community schools High Storrs and King Edward VII.

- 7.2 There is no statutory requirement to co-ordinate sixth form admissions but the Authority has undertaken this role since 2005 and continues to do so as a traded service.
- 7.3 The advantages of co-ordination are that the student only has to complete one application form and all students are restricted to a single offer, ensuring that available places are maximized. Furthermore all schools operate the same closing and allocation dates so all students are treated equitably.
- 7.4 The advantage for the schools is that all applications are managed centrally.

8. Proposed Sixth Form Admission Arrangements for 2017/18

- 8.1 The Local Authority is responsible for determining arrangements for the admission of external student to sixth form at High Storrs and King Edward VII Community Schools. Proposed oversubscription criteria are set out below.
- 8.2 Exceptional Circumstances

It is important that appropriate provision is made for students in exceptional circumstances. For some applicants the Admission Authority may wish to exercise reasonable discretion for an individual young person who could benefit from the programme offered their sixth form but because of his/her exceptional circumstances has not met the minimum entry criteria.

These circumstances may include students with English as a Second Language where the current school can demonstrate that the pupil would benefit from attending the sixth form, but may not meet the minimum entry criteria. Any placement in this category would require careful discussion and the views of the school and any potential prejudice to the provision of

efficient education and/or the efficient use of resources as a result of the placement would always be considered before a decision is made. The incidence of such cases is expected to be low.

We are aware that exceptional circumstances do sometimes affect students' grades. As such it may be that we make an offer to a student who does not achieve or is not expected to achieve the minimum entry criteria or individual subject criteria.

These exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis and may include long term illness; immediate family bereavement in examination season. This category may also include students who are or who have been "Looked After" and students with special educational needs and/or physical disability with a requirement for adapted buildings and/or facilities which can only be met at this particular school.

8.3 Local Authority Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications from external candidates than there are places, places (subject to meeting the entry requirements) will be offered in the following order:

1. Looked After Children - this category also includes students who were previously in care but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order. The student should meet the minimum entry criteria described below. Exceptional circumstances may be considered.
 2. All other students who are predicted to meet the minimum entry requirement of 5 A*-C GCSE passes. Some subjects will also require a minimum subject grade at GCSE. Please see details in the school prospectus.
 3. If an entire category cannot be admitted without exceeding the number of places available then places will be offered to those students within the category that live closest to the school. All distances will be measured in a straight line from home to school.
- 8.4 Schools that are their own Admission Authority will be required to determine their own admission arrangements for 2017/18. Headteachers have been advised about the steps they must take to ensure that arrangements for 2017/18 are determined and are lawful.
- 8.5 Bradfield, Meadowhead, Parkwood High, Sheffield Park, Sheffield Springs and Silverdale have indicated that they wish to follow the Local Authority's

arrangements, these schools have been advised that they must still ratify the arrangements.

- 8.6 Forge Valley, King Egbert and Tapton will follow the Authority's arrangements but will prioritize applications from Bradfield and Stocksbridge, Newfield and Chaucer respectively.
- 8.7 All Saints and Notre Dame Catholic High Schools will determine their own arrangements but will remain part of the co-ordinated arrangements.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Authority must determine admission arrangements for its Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. The implication of not doing so would be that the Authority would be in breach of its statutory duty.

10. Reason for Recommendations

- 10.1 In order to comply with its statutory duty, the Local Authority is required to determine its Admission Arrangements for the 2017/18 academic year. There are no proposed changes to the arrangements that were approved for 2016/17.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are requested to:
 - (i) In light of the strong support for the existing arrangements expressed through the Admissions Review in 2015, approve the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Schools for the 2017/18 academic year.
 - (ii) Approve the proposed Sixth Form Admission Arrangements for external applicants for the 2017/18 academic year.
 - (iii) Approve the co-ordinated Admission Schemes for 2017/18
 - (iv) Note the overall co-ordination role undertaken by the Local Authority on behalf of all Sixth Form Schools.
 - (v) Note that in context of possible school organisation plans for expansions and new schools in future years, that it is possible that some catchment areas may be subject to review. Any changes to the current catchment areas will be subject to statutory consultation procedures.

