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Report of: *Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families*
Report to: *Cllr. Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families*
Date of Decision: *8 February 2017*
Subject: *School Admission Arrangements 2018/19*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Children's Services</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Children, Young people and Families</i>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

The Local Authority is responsible for determining school admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Consultation must take place at least once every seven years where there are no changes, or whenever there are significant changes proposed to existing arrangements. The last formal consultation was carried out for the 2013/14 academic year. This report confirms the continuation of the existing oversubscription criteria and also some minor proposed changes for the 2018/19 academic year, details are provided at paragraph 1.5 in the report.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet member is requested to determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2018/19 academic year.

Background Papers:

Catchment area maps are appended to the report showing the proposed amendments.

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Paul Schofield</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted:	<i>Cllr. Jackie Drayton</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>John Bigley</i>	Job Title: <i>Manager;Admissions & Access Inclusion & Learning Services</i>
	Date: <i>8 February 2017</i>	

1. **PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended, and the School Admission (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 require that all admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years. Even if arrangements are not consulted upon, the admission arrangements must be “determined” for each academic year.

Sheffield Local Authority is responsible for consulting upon and determining admission arrangements for all its community and voluntary controlled schools. It is not responsible for schools that are their own admission authority such as Academies, Voluntary Aided, Trust and Foundation schools.

There are some proposed minor changes to existing admission arrangements for a small number of schools for the 2018/19 academic year which are required as a result of local population increases to try and ensure that parents have access to a local school if they wish to apply there. These changes are explained at paragraph 1.5 below.

1.2 Oversubscription Criteria

All Admission Authorities must publish criteria which explain how places will be allocated if a school is oversubscribed. The oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are:

(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. Looked after 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. Previously looked after children are defined as “children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after.

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 for the older child, any younger sibling will be afforded priority status for the allocated 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 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:-

a brother and/or sister

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 i, iii, iv or vi 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.

ix) Priority Eight

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 further stages 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 home address to a designated point at 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. 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 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.

1.3 Waiting Lists

A waiting list will be maintained until 31 December 2018 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 2019. The waiting list is ranked in line with the published oversubscription criteria.

1.4 In-year School to School Transfers

Some schools experience a higher volume of in-year transfers than others. To help support schools manage higher numbers they will have the option of making a place available at the beginning of the next half term and operate induction days. Each case must however be considered on its own merits. Children may often reasonably remain at their current school until the transfer takes place. A child **must not** however miss any education as a result of a place not being made available.

1.5 Proposed Amendments to existing catchment areas

The Authority continually monitors demographic changes and patterns of parental preference in order to perform its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places. This sometimes

leads to temporary or permanent expansions at existing schools or the commissioning of new schools.

1.5.1 Dore and Totley

The Authority commissioned an additional 30 Reception places at Totley Primary School from September 2016, increasing the admission number from 30 to 60. This is in response to a sustained increase in the population in the Dore and Totley area.

Dore Primary is a community school and the Local Authority is responsible for its admission arrangements. Totley Primary is an Academy under the Mercia Academy chain and responsible for its own admission arrangements.

In order to prioritise places for children residing in the Dore and Totley area for a local school, it is proposed to offer residents of the existing Dore catchment area catchment priority status for both schools. This would mean that parents in the Dore catchment area would have equal priority for both Totley and Dore Primary schools. This means that parents who utilise all three preferences will have an improved chance of obtaining a place at a “local” school.

Mercia Academy Trust is equally committed to this proposal and is in turn consulting on a corresponding change to its own admission arrangements creating an “option” catchment area so that parents residing in the current Dore catchment area have catchment status for Totley as well.

This proposal represents positive collaboration between the Local Authority, Mercia Academy Trust and Dore and Totley Primary Schools for the benefit of the local population.

Appendix A shows the catchment areas for Totley and Dore and highlights the area that would have Option catchment area status for both schools.

1.5.2 Wybourn Primary

Wybourn and Manor Lodge Primary schools became academies on 1 December 2016 under the Sheffield South East Trust.

The Authority has permanently expanded Wybourn from 45 to 60 places. Despite this expansion 14 catchment pupils were refused admission in September 2016. Both Wybourn and Manor Lodge Primary have the same Executive Headteacher and it is proposed to offer residents of the existing Wybourn catchment area priority for both Wybourn and Manor Lodge schools to create an “option” catchment area.

The Academy Trust is now responsible for admission arrangements at both Wybourn and Manor Lodge and this is reported for information only.

Appendix B shows the catchment areas for Wybourn and Manor Lodge and highlights the area that would have Option catchment area status for both schools.

1.5.3 Wharnccliffe Side Primary School

A new housing development is being built on the former Oughtibridge Mill site. The Local Authority is consulting on extending the current catchment area for Wharnccliffe Side to incorporate the new development (shaded on the attached map at **Appendix C**) This would mean that residents of the new development would have catchment priority status for entry to Wharnccliffe Side. Residents in the existing catchment area for the school would retain priority catchment status for the school.

Appendix C shows the catchment areas for Wharnccliffe Side and highlights the proposed extension to the catchment area.

2. **HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

2.1 In 2014/15 the Authority conducted a comprehensive City wide revue of its current admission arrangements. The review considered responses from all major stakeholders including parents, young people and school leaders. The overwhelming response was that catchment areas, designated feeder schools, and priority for siblings to attend the same school remained popular and the oversubscription criteria reflect this.

The oversubscription criteria described at 1.2 help the Authority consistently deliver a higher rate of positive preferences than the national average. The catchment area and feeder school arrangements support local communities and prioritize children for places at their local schools, also helping families attend school together.

The minor changes to existing catchment areas described above at 1.5 are intended to try and ensure that parents have access to a local school in areas of population growth.

3. **HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

3.1 The Local Authority is required to consult on any proposed changes to existing arrangements. It must also consult on its arrangements at least once every seven years for a minimum of 6 weeks. The amendments described at paragraph 1.5 represent minor changes to existing catchment areas. They do not remove catchment status but

enhance parental preference by adding additional options for local schools.

The Authority consulted on its proposed arrangements from 5 December 2016 to 31 January 2017.

- 3.2 There were two responses received to the consultation, all in response to the proposed extension of the Wharncliffe Side catchment area. One from a parent and one from a parent/governor. Both responses have been sent to the Cabinet member for consideration. The issues raised are summarised as follows:

- 3.2.1 From a parent.

The parent resides in the Oughtibridge catchment area and was denied a place at the school for his eldest child in September 2016 and allocated Wharncliffe Side, as second preference. The parent is concerned that that expansion of the catchment area may deny his younger son a place at Wharncliffe Side.

- 3.22 From a parent/governor

The parent/governor was supportive of the proposal and expressed a view that it was sensible in the circumstances. He suggested a further extension to incorporate the area surrounding the new development.

- 3.23 The Dore/Totley consultation was a collaboration between Totley Primary (Mercia Trust) and Dore Primary. In December 2016 and January 2017 open meetings were held at King Ecgbert School and Totley Primary, newsletters were sent out to parents and carers, and comments were invited by email. Dore/Totley parents and carers are generally very well engaged, but there was a limited response to this consultation and no significant objections to the proposals were expressed. Taking into consideration the consultation responses, the Chair of Governors of Dore Primary has confirmed that the Governors are happy that the consultation process has been conducted and for the priority catchment area to go ahead as discussed.

- 3.24 Clifford CE Infant and Ecclesall Infant and Junior

From a parent

The parent enquired why there was no reference to the proposals for Clifford Infant CE and Ecclesall? The Local Authority is the Admission Authority for Ecclesall Infant and Junior Schools, it is not the Admission Authority for Clifford CE Infant. The consultation is specifically about proposed admission arrangements, including oversubscription criteria to which there are no proposed changes at Ecclesall. Any proposed school organisation changes for Clifford CE and Ecclesall will be subject to a separate consultation process which

will afford all stakeholders with the opportunity to formally respond.

3.25 Clifford CE Infant and Ecclesall Infant and Junior

From Lupton Fawcett solicitors on behalf of 5 parents. Alleging “absence of relevant consultation on Admission Arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes 2018/19”

As above, the consultation on proposed Admission Arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes do not propose any changes to the arrangements for Ecclesall Infant and Junior Schools. Any school organisation proposals involving the two schools will be subject to a separate statutory consultation process which will afford all stakeholders with the opportunity to formally respond.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications to this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Authority is legally obliged to consult on any changes to its admission arrangements and also to consult on the wider arrangements at least once every seven years. The changes outlined in paragraph 1.5 represent changes to existing arrangements and therefore must be consulted upon. There are no proposed changes to the oversubscription criteria set out in paragraph 1.2.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 The changes described in paragraph 1.5 are intended to give parents a better chance of accessing a local school place if they wish to apply for one. The proposals do not remove the current catchment area but offer a second catchment school. There is no detriment to any of these proposals only enhancements to current arrangements.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Admissions Review was a City wide consultation which asked whether the current admission arrangements were still supported and were still fit for purpose. There continues to be a high level of support for the current arrangements and apart from the minor amendments to existing catchment areas, there have not been any alternative arrangements considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendation to approve the proposed admission arrangements for 2018/19 will ensure that the Authority carries out its statutory duty to consult and determine its admission arrangements at least once every 7 years. The proposed amendments at paragraph 1.5 will support local parents obtain places at their local schools.