

Report to the Schools, Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

13 September 2017

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL'S FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Purpose of the Report

To brief the Committee on the outcome of consultation on the revised Fair Access Protocol which was approved by the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools on 16 August 2017.

Recommendation

That Members note the information contained in this report.

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Background

The Admissions Code 2014 sets out the basic requirements for a Fair Access Protocol. Each local authority must have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with the majority of schools in its area, to ensure that – outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. In agreeing a protocol, the local authority must ensure that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour.

All admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol in order to ensure that unplaced children are allocated a school place quickly. All schools must participate in fair access protocols, whether they are community or controlled schools, grammar, voluntary aided or foundation schools and academies and free schools. There is no duty for local authorities or admission authorities to comply with parental preference when allocating places through the Fair Access Protocol. (See attached report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools (Appendix 1).

Key Issues

Birmingham's current Fair Access Protocol was last revised in 2015. However, it does not include all the groups of children the DfE School Admissions Code (2014) says must be included and currently does not include grammar schools or 14-19 university technical colleges or the studio school.

Conclusions

As set out in the report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools, a process of co-design and then consultation was carried out (results attached as Appendix 2) to arrive at the revised protocol (attached at Appendix 3). This will be circulated to all schools for agreement prior to implementation. Implementation is anticipated to take place after October half term.

List of Appendices

Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools

Consultation responses and comments

Revised fair access protocol approved by the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools

Equality Impact Assessment