

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	Cabinet
Report of:	Strategic Director for People
Date of Decision:	14 February 2017
SUBJECT:	SCHEME FOR CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS, ADMISSION NUMBERS AND ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2018/19
Key Decision: Yes	Relevant Forward Plan Ref: 002997/2017
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved <input type="checkbox"/> O&S Chairman approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Brigid Jones, Children, Families & Schools
Relevant O&S Chairman:	Councillor Susan Barnett, Education and Vulnerable Children
Wards affected:	All

1. Purpose of report:
<p>1.1 To report the outcome of consultation on primary and secondary school admission numbers and the proposed scheme for co-ordinated admissions to schools and admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the academic year 2018/2019.</p> <p>1.2 To agree the admission numbers detailed in Appendix 1(a) and agree the proposed scheme for co-ordinated admissions to schools and admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools as detailed in Appendix 2 and 3 for the academic year 2018/2019.</p>

2. Decision(s) recommended:
<p>That Cabinet</p> <p>2.1 Approve the school admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools set out in Appendix 1(a), including the proposed change in the Published Admission Number to Thornton Primary School should it revert to a junior school and note the admission numbers and proposed admission numbers for academies and foundation and voluntary aided schools set out in Appendix 1(b).</p> <p>2.2 Approve the proposed scheme for co-ordinated admissions to schools and admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the academic year 2018/2019 as set out in Appendix 2 and 3.</p>

Lead Contact Officer(s):	Emma Leaman, Assistant Director, Education Infrastructure
Telephone No:	303 8327
E-mail address:	Emma.Leaman@birmingham.gov.uk

3. Consultation

Consultation should include those that have an interest in the decisions recommended. To this end, consultation on proposed admission numbers, admission arrangements and admission criteria for the September 2018 intake has taken place from the 21 November 2016 to the 9 January 2017 with the following:-

3.1 Internal

- An email was sent to all members inviting comments on the proposed admission arrangements there were no comments received from members.

3.2 External

- Governing Bodies of community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools in Birmingham.
- Governing Bodies of academies, voluntary aided and foundation primary and secondary schools (admission authorities) in Birmingham.
- Neighbouring local authorities (admission authorities that share a boundary with Birmingham).
- An email was sent to all Birmingham schools asking them to include in their newsletters details of where parents could view the proposed admission arrangements.
- Information regarding the consultation was included on the Schools Noticeboard.
- The consultation was published on the Birmingham City Website to ensure all Birmingham residents and parents of all children aged between 2 and 18 were consulted with.
- Consulted with the religious bodies representing the schools of a religious denomination.
- The consultation was published on the Be Heard website. Consultation was based on the proposed admission numbers set out in Appendices 1a and the proposed scheme for coordinated admissions to schools (Appendix 2) and proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools (Appendix 3).

Three comments have been received to the consultation, one expressed concern about the continuation of single sex schools. Another was about lack of school places in Boldmere. Another commented on the current process for dealing with applications where families have moved house after the closing date, please see three comments below; -

From a parent

“Please could you either (a) end single sex secondary schools, or, if they must continue, (b) give preferential spaces in local mixed schools for parents of boys and girls over parents of just boys or just girls so that they can go to the same school. Boys to the boys' school, girls to the girls' school, boys & girls to the mixed school. All siblings, regardless of gender, then get the same opportunity to stay together. The current admissions policy shows a disregard for family wishes, and discriminates against those children that have siblings of the opposite sex to them. Their peers that have same sex siblings that can go to school together, but that right is denied to other children purely on the grounds of the gender of the family group. Where we live (Brandwood), there are 7 secondary schools within walking distance of my house. Not one of these will accept both my children. This has to change.”

From a parent

“Vesey ward does not have enough school places for both primary and secondary school children. It is so wrong that children are having to be driven to schools out of area past several other schools when they could be placed in a school local to them. Boldmere School should have an additional class - this would solve the problem in the Boldmere area where there are pockets of residential areas where children cannot get into any local school. There should be an additional arrangement for admissions that provides a school place for children who cannot get into any of their 3 closest schools. If they apply for all 3 within their choices, then if they cannot be allocated any of those 3 schools or a school higher on their choice list, they should be prioritised a place at one of those 3 schools. This would encourage more children and parents to walk or cycle to school, contributing to healthier living and reducing the amount of traffic on the roads inappropriate parking by the schools. Birmingham needs to treat children as human beings and not as a statistic.”

From Assistant Head Teacher

“As the AHT who deals with admission to our Rec classes I have become aware of increasing desperation of parents to obtain a place and the lengths they go to to obtain the place. One of the most common tactics seems to be renting around the time of application but moving before the child actually starts in September. This makes it difficult for the team at Admissions to prove if they ever actually lived there. It is also grossly unfair to the families who are committed to living in the area but didn't get in as they live slightly further away. This is doubly frustrating as these families then get siblings in from a MUCH wider area than the people who apply for a first child from a genuine permanent home. We have a good relationship with the team at Admissions and find them very professional and supportive but increasingly overwhelmed by the sheer scale of this problem. They simply cannot chase up all the concerns we have. We need changes to cut out some of the cheating. I propose no sibling place if you move more than 1KM from school and no moving before the child starts school. I also think careful scrutiny of rental agreements is required-many state 12mth but then further down have a "small print" that states no commitment to stay beyond six months. I have had a conversation with Jason Sheargold about this and local MP Gisela Stuart is also being lobbied by parents.”

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?

Yes – consistent with the Council's policies around education and safeguarding.

4.2 Financial Implications

There are no additional costs for these admission arrangements, all costs will be met from the School Admissions Service budget, Directorate for People.

4.3 Legal Implications

This report exercises powers contained in Part III of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and discharges the duties contained in sections 88C and 88M of the Act and regulations made under the Act (the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 in relation to, respectively, determining the admission arrangements for maintained schools for which the authority is the admission authority and formulating a scheme for co-ordinating the arrangements for the admission of pupils to maintained schools and academies in the authority's area. All admission authorities, of which the local authority is one, are required to set ('determine') admission arrangements annually by 28 February. The arrangements so determined will apply to the next-but-one academic year (i.e. arrangements determined on 28 February 2017 will apply to the academic year 2018/19). Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements by 31 January. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least every 7 years. The local authority is also required to consult on and thereafter determine on an annual basis a co-ordinated admissions scheme which is to apply to the next-but-one academic year and to inform the Secretary of State that such a scheme has been adopted by no later than 28 February each year.

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty

The local authority has a statutory duty to co-ordinate centrally the admission arrangements of all maintained schools and academies in its area. The admission arrangements aim to provide for equality of access by parents and their children. The authority's objective admission criteria do not disadvantage particular social groups or those with special educational needs. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on 8 July 2014 (EA000124). and the need for a full assessment was not indicated.

The Equality Impact Assessment will be carried forward as part of the School Admissions Business Plan. The School Admissions Business Plan will monitor actions including; managers monitoring the use of the comments, compliments and complaints process taking particular account of equality and diversity; managers to monitor the number of preferences not received and the number of unrealistic preferences received; managers to monitor staff accreditation of the language increment allowance to allow communication with parent/carers in their first language

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

- 5.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements and publish admission numbers on an annual basis for each community and voluntary controlled school. For voluntary aided and foundation schools, the admission arrangements are determined and an admission number published by each school's governing body following consultation between governing bodies of such schools and the local authority. Admission numbers are based upon the available accommodation in each school and Appendix 1 (a) and (b) sets out the number of places proposed for September 2018. Appendix 2 sets out the proposed scheme for coordinated admissions to schools for 2018 and Appendix 3 sets out the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2018.
- 5.2 Consultation has taken place between 21 November 2016 and 9 January 2017 (minimum 6 weeks), as detailed in paragraph 3 above.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):
6.1 The consultation has not identified any support for alternative admission arrangements to those proposed.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):
7.1 To comply with the local authority’s duties to determine primary and secondary admission numbers and admission arrangements and to have a single scheme for co-ordinating admissions to schools for 2018/19.

Signatures	<u>Date</u>
Councillor Brigid Jones Cabinet Member, Children, Families & Schools
Peter Hay Strategic Director for People

List of Background Documents used to compile this report:
School Standards and Framework Act 1998 School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 School Admissions Code issued by DfE - December 2014

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (a) Community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary admission numbers for September 2018-19 intake. (b) Academies, foundation and voluntary aided and free schools admission numbers for September 2018-19 intake. 2. Proposed Scheme for Co-ordinated Admissions to Schools – September 2018-19 3. Proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools September 2018-19.

Report Version	<u>V2</u>	Dated	<u>3 February 2017</u>
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