

WIRRAL COUNCIL
DELEGATED AUTHORITY

13 OCTOBER 2016

SUBJECT:	ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE COORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2018-2019 AND EADMISSIONS UPDATE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR TONY SMITH
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council as the Local Authority (LA) is required to determine admission arrangements for community secondary schools and for community and voluntary controlled primary schools. The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) also require the Council to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools in 2018-19. Both schemes have been updated to reflect national guidance. No major changes are proposed to those arrangements currently in place. The primary scheme has been updated to reflect the change in status of some schools. The Council is required to consult on its admission arrangements and to determine those arrangements by February of the preceding year.
- 1.2 This report recommends that a public consultation is held on the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes for primary and secondary schools for 2018-2019 as required by guidance. An update is also given on usage of the Council's online school application system for parents.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Authority is required to consult on its admission arrangements and to determine those arrangements by February of the preceding year. Regulations also require the Authority to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools. A copy of the proposed primary and secondary schemes is attached (Appendices 1 and 2).

eAdmissions update

- 2.2 The Council has a statutory obligation to enable parents to apply for school places via an on-line application system. On 16th June 2011, delegated authority was given to replace the pre-existing in-house online admission system with a proprietary software module, CACI eAdmissions, which links into the Admissions administrative software, CACI Impulse.
- 2.3 Prior to the introduction of eAdmissions, levels of online applications for Wirral schools were low in comparison with other local authorities. In 2010-2011, 25%

of applicants used the in-house system (5% secondary, 45% primary). Benefits to parents of online application include a secure user account which will manage all their children's school place applications, instant acknowledgement that their application has been received and allocations sent by e-mail rather than waiting for a letter in the post.

- 2.4 The new system went live in October 2011 and has been strongly promoted to parents through the website and admissions literature. In the first year of introduction over 2,000 Wirral parents applied online. Almost three-quarters completed the optional customer satisfaction questions and 97% of those who did so rated the online application system as either "very clear" or "clear".
- 2.5 In 2015-2016 (the most recent completed year), 92% of 7,160 applications were made online (92% secondary, 91% primary), up from 87% in the previous year. Other nearby Authorities operate at over 80% online applications and Wirral has now achieved a similar level of uptake.
- 2.6 A new online admissions system, Capita Citizen Portal, has been introduced from 1st September 2016. Usage of the online admission system will continue to be monitored, with further encouragement and promotion employed to increase efficiency.

Amendments to the schemes

- 2.7 Amendments have been made to both schemes to reflect the change in status of some schools, e.g. conversion to Academy. Admission numbers for some schools have been amended to reflect changes in accommodation.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The Council is required to consult on its admission arrangements and to determine those arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year. Regulations also require the Authority to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools.
- 3.2 Failure to consult on the admission arrangements and determine those arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year would contravene the 2014 Admissions Code and associated guidance.
- 3.3 The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet for determination at its meeting of 27th February 2017 (or sooner) in order to comply with the statutory guidance.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposed co-ordinated schemes will be circulated to all Wirral admission authorities and statutory consultees.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 None.
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7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 None.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The cost of the Mainstream Admissions service is £365,400 which is funded from the Schools Budget. The Mainstream Admissions team ensures that every Wirral child is provided with a school place, including vulnerable and hard to place children. This includes meeting the Council's statutory obligations in relation to admission to schools, the co-ordinated admission schemes, school appeals and school place planning and forecasting. The team administers the selective tests on behalf of the Wirral Consortium of non-Catholic grammar schools, and assesses eligibility for free home to school travel against the Council's policy.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

a) Yes and impact review is attached - <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-families-wellbeing>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 This report recommends that a public consultation is held on the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes for primary and secondary schools for 2018-2019 as required by guidance.

13.2 The outcome of the public consultation is expected to be reported to Cabinet for determination at its meeting of 27th February 2017 (or earlier) in order to comply with statutory guidance.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 The Council is required to consult on its admission arrangements and to determine those arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year. Regulations also require the Authority to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

APPENDIX 2: SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The School Admissions Code 2014 and School Appeals Code 2012

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET	22 nd February 2016
DELEGATED AUTHORITY	8 th October 2015
CABINET	12 th March 2015
DELEGATED AUTHORITY	6 th November 2014
CABINET	13 th March 2014
DELEGATED AUTHORITY	7 th November 2013