



## **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 28 January 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2022-2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report invites the Children, Young People and Education Committee to determine the Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the co-ordinated schemes for 2022-2023. This is a statutory requirement.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Children, Young People and Education Committee agree the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2022-2023 as set out in the appendices to the report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Authority is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) also require the Authority to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2022-23. The proposed schemes are attached along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendices 1 and 2).

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The arrangements could remain unchanged, however, it is recommended that the variations detailed in section 3 are made for the reasons set out in the report.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Coronavirus (COVID-19) amendments to co-ordinated scheme for secondary schools: In August 2020 the co-ordinated scheme was amended in accordance with paragraph 3.6 of the School Admissions Code to take into account Department for Education guidance issued July 2020, "Coronavirus (COVID-19); assessment processes for selective school admissions".

These amendments included expanding the number of preferences from three to five to allow for Wirral parents to submit up to three selective preferences and two non-selective preferences, as the outcome of the selective assessments taking place in October 2020 (as per DfE guidance), would not be known until after 31<sup>st</sup> October deadline for applications. Where pupils did not reach the standard, the selective preferences would be withdrawn and their non-selective preferences become their highest preferences.

- 3.2 The variations to the secondary Scheme were consulted upon with the four non-Catholic selective schools, all other local schools, neighbouring authorities and the Diocesan bodies under paragraph 1.44 (c), (d) and (f) of the School Admissions Code, and submitted as per the DfE guidance to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), although the variations proposed did not require formal OSA approval.
- 3.3 At the current time, it seems prudent to continue to retain five preferences within the secondary scheme; this will be reviewed again in Autumn 2021 for the 2023-2024 scheme (entry to Year 7 in 2023).
- 3.4 Minor updates have been made to both schemes to reflect and rationalise current day to day operational arrangements in place in the Admissions team, such as the introduction of an online Portal for Wirral schools to view applications. These amendments do not affect the admission policy criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools.
- 3.5 No other significant changes are proposed to be made to the admission arrangements in the co-ordinated schemes for admissions for primary or

secondary schools. A consultation was therefore not required (see 8.1), however the Schemes were published in accordance with the Admissions Code on the Council's School Admissions website and circulated to the standard consultees for any comments. Information relating to the status of schools and admission numbers has been updated to reflect the current position. This information is updated throughout the school year as it changes.

- 3.6 The Council as the admission authority must determine the admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from the previous year and a consultation has not been required. This must take place by 28<sup>th</sup> February each year.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. There is additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and FAP correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the Schools Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State.
- 5.2 Section 8.20 of the secondary co-ordinated scheme and 7.8 of the primary co-ordinated scheme refers to overseas applications. This section may need to be further revised in the light of upcoming changes to the United Kingdom's position in relation to the European Economic Area. If so, amendments will be made at the time.
- 5.3 The date by which the arrangements must be determined is 28<sup>th</sup> February. These admission arrangements must then be published on the Council's website by 15<sup>th</sup> March. The deadline for objections against the admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator is 15<sup>th</sup> May.
- 5.4 In summer 2020, the Department for Education ran a consultation on revisions to the existing School Admissions Code (2014). The outcome of the consultation is awaited at time of writing. The Wirral co-ordinated schemes may therefore require amendment to bring them in line with any future version of the School Admissions Code as published by the DfE.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 The Fair Access Protocol requires a Local Authority Clerk to organise Fair Access Panels, prepare paperwork and disseminate Panel decisions to parents and schools. Fair Access Panels include Local Authority officers from various disciplines. The cost of this is met from the Council's budget.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Failure to determine the admission arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year would contravene the 2014 Admissions Code and associated guidance.
- 7.2 See also 5.1 above.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 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 there have been no changes during that period. The previous consultation was held in Autumn 2018 covering both primary and secondary schemes.

Variations made to the co-ordinated scheme for secondary schools in relation to 2021-22 due to COVID-19 DfE guidance were consulted on in August 2020 and have been ratified by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The variations are being retained for a further year.

- 8.2 Other than minor operational amendments not affecting the admission policy criteria, no significant changes are proposed to either scheme, therefore a consultation is not required in relation to the 2022-23 co-ordinated admission schemes. However, the proposed Schemes were published on the Council's website on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and notified to the standard consultee groups for comments. No comments were received during the consultation period.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 An equality impact assessment has been completed and can be found at:  
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017-1>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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## **APPENDICES**

Primary co-ordinated scheme for admissions 2022-23  
Secondary co-ordinated scheme for admissions 2022-23

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[School Admissions Code](#)  
[Wirral Fair Access Protocol](#)

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> February 2019</b>
<b>Delegated Authority</b>	<b>2nd October 2018</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>