



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

**Monday, 31 January 2022**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2023-24</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF 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 2023-2024.

This is a statutory requirement and affects all Wards within the Borough. The Wirral Plan priority "Brighter Futures" is supported by clear and objective admission arrangements in conjunction with a fit for purpose sufficiency strategy.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2023-2024 as set out in the appendices to the report.
2. agree the proposed change in the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Woodchurch Road Primary School to 30.

## **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 Authority is also required to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2023-24. 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 main 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 On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 the Department for Education published a new School Admissions Code. The Wirral schemes for 2021-22 and for 2022-23 were therefore revised and republished in Summer 2021 to reflect changes required by the new Code.
- 3.2 The principal points updated in relation to the Wirral schemes were:
- A new requirement for own admission authority schools to actively “opt-in” to in-year transfer co-ordination on an annual basis
  - Amendment to the definition of previously Looked After Children to include children adopted from overseas.
  - Amendments to the Fair Access Protocol (published separately to the Schemes) in relation to mandatory categories of children, and clarification of the definition of “challenging behaviour”
  - Changes to paragraphs 8.20 of the secondary co-ordinated scheme and 7.8 of the primary co-ordinated scheme to reflect changed status for overseas applicants from within the European Union area and residency requirements.
- 3.3 The co-ordinated schemes for 2023-24 incorporate all prior published amendments. No significant changes have been made to the body of the schemes.
- 3.4 As part of the work to deliver the Pupil Place Planning Strategy (Phase 1), discussions have taken place with schools to progress options. Some recommendations require a Scheme consultation at this point in the academic year in accordance with the School Admissions Code. In this regard, the governing body of Woodchurch Road Primary School have agreed to reduce the admission number from 2023 entry to Foundation 2 onwards, from 71 to 30, ahead of a phased reduction in the school’s use of the existing accommodation, which is substantially larger than is required for a single form entry (210 place) school.

This is intended to reflect changing demographics in the area, allowing the governing body to plan for a financially viable single form entry school and secure community school provision in this small planning area going forward. As a reduction in the admission number this required a consultation before introduction of the new admission number. The new admission number will allow the school to comply with

the Infant Class Size limit of 30 pupils to a qualified teacher and potentially make the financial situation of the school more manageable.

- 3.5 The Pupil Place Planning Phase 1 review involves consideration of options for all schools – both community and own admission authority schools such as Academy and Voluntary Aided schools. In this regard, the Academy Trust of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Birkenhead) have consulted on reducing the Published Admission Number from 60 to 30 with effect from 2023-24.
- 3.6 Outside of Phase 1 of the Review, the governing body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Upton) has also consulted on a reduction in PAN from 45 to 30 with effect from 2023-24.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Releasing surplus to requirements accommodation within school buildings to become available for other uses may provide opportunities for co-location of community or education-related services with a potential to generate revenue for the school and/or reduce costs elsewhere.
- 4.3 Accommodation changes may have financial implications in future years and would be subject to the usual building regulations, planning and other requirements as necessary.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) require the Authority to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2023-24.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

#### **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 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

## **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 December 2020-January 2021, covering both primary and secondary schemes.
- 8.2 Amendments to the Schemes were made in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and DfE guidance in Summer 2021.
- 8.3 No significant amendments are proposed to the Secondary Scheme, and this does not formally require a consultation. The proposed reduction in the admission number at Woodchurch Road Primary School requires a consultation within the overall primary Scheme.
- 8.4 Both proposed Schemes were published on the Council's website on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and notified to the standard consultee groups for comments. No comments were received during the consultation period which ended on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

## **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 carried out and can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

## **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.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The consolidation of Woodchurch Road Primary School into a single form of entry school is intended to secure the school for the foreseeable future, alongside the added value the school already provides within it's local community. Investing in children's futures supports the community through quality efficient education provision, enhancing life chances for children, families and the wider community.
- 11.2 Surplus accommodation no longer required for core school purposes could over time be repurposed for other educational, or community based organisational use, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Schools 2023-24  
Appendix 2 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Schools 2023-24

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[School Admissions Code](#) (2021)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Children, Young People and Education Committee	<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>
Children, Young People and Education Committee	<b>28<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
Cabinet	<b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>
Cabinet	<b>25<sup>th</sup> February 2019</b>