

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>School Admission Arrangements 2021-22</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>11 November 2019</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director for Families, Children &amp; Learning</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Richard Barker,</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 290732,</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report details the proposed school admission arrangements for the city's schools, for which the Council is the admission authority, for the academic year 2021-22.
- 1.2 When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on those arrangements that will apply. 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.
- 1.3 The committee will be asked to approve a consultation based on the proposals being suggested and will then receive a further report in January 2020 seeking their determination of those arrangements.
- 1.4 Local Authorities must also set out schemes for co-ordinated admissions, including key dates in the admission process, and also the arrangements for consultation with own admission authority schools in the city and with other local authorities. They also establish the area (the "relevant area") within which the admission consultation should take place.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 The committee agree to make no changes to the council's admission arrangements or school catchment areas, where applicable.
- 2.2 The committee agree to consult upon a change to the Published Admission Number (PAN) for West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road site) from 90 pupils to 60 pupils and a change to the PAN for Hove Junior School (Holland Road site) from 128 pupils to 90 pupils.
- 2.3 That the Committee agree to consult upon a change of PAN for Mile Oak Primary School from 90 pupils to 60 pupils and a change to the PAN for Hangleton Primary School from 90 pupils to 60 pupils.

- 2.4 That the Committee agree to make no changes to the “relevant area”.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In the School Admissions Code it states who must be consulted in relation to school admission arrangements. This includes parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen; other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions; all other admission authorities within the relevant area and any adjoining neighbouring local authority areas, where the admission authority is the local authority.
- 3.2 The consultation takes place approximately 18 months in advance of the school year in which pupils will be admitted under the proposed arrangements. The relevant papers for the 2021-22 admission year for the City of Brighton & Hove are attached as appendices to this report.
- 3.3 Local authorities must also set out schemes for co-ordinated admissions, including key dates in the admission process, and also the arrangements for consultation with own admission authority schools in the city and with other local authorities. They also establish the area (the “relevant area”) within which the admission consultation should take place.
- 3.4 The consultation process must have been concluded by 31 January 2020, with a minimum of 6 weeks consultation time. The Council must have reached its decisions and confirmed its admission arrangements for 2021-22 by 28 February 2020 in order to conform to the requirements of the School Admissions Code.
- 3.5 It is proposed to start the consultation on 15 November 2019 and for it to conclude on Monday 6 January 2020.

#### **Admission Priority**

- 3.6 There are no proposed changes to the council’s admission arrangements as detailed in appendix 3.

#### **Published Admission Number**

- 3.7 Starting school places for September 2019 at the City’s infant and primary schools were allocated on 16 April 2019. At that time there were 2560 places offered and 380 places unfilled.
- 3.8 In July 2019 a request to the school’s adjudicator was agreed for a temporary reduction in PAN by 30 places for the following schools: West Blatchington Primary, Hangleton Primary and West Hove Infant – Connaught Road and Mile Oak Primary School. These were all agreed for September 2019 with the support of the schools for a one year arrangement only.
- 3.9 A reduction of PAN for Westdene Primary School was consulted upon last year and will reduce permanently by 30 pupils from September 2020.

- 3.10 In September 2020 the Council is projecting that there will be 2588 applications leaving 322 places unfilled.
- 3.11 In September 2021 pupil numbers are projected to be 2518 leaving 392 places unfilled should no reduction of places take place.
- 3.12 If the reduction in PAN for West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road), Mile Oak Primary School and Hangleton Primary School are agreed the projections indicate there will be 302 unfilled places in September 2021.
- 3.13 Having too many surplus places can lead to schools having financial difficulties when, for example, they have a PAN of 60 pupils but only admit 36 starting school places. Under infant class size regulations a school must have a maximum of 30 pupils taught by one teacher and so the school would be required to fund two class teachers with an average class size of 18 pupils.
- 3.14 In preparation of these proposals, informal discussions took place with some school leaders where a possible reduction in PAN seemed plausible, with the intention of reaching consensus about consulting upon a planned reduction in PAN from September 2021.
- 3.15 Discussion has taken place with the head teacher and chair of governors of Mile Oak Primary School They understood the need to reduce primary places in the city and the impact on schools if no action is taken. They felt that as a school they needed to weigh this against growing and improving their own school. They would prefer to go for a temporary reduction in the first instance and then review the situation over time.
- 3.16 Discussion has taken place with the head teacher and chair of governors at Hangleton Primary school. They understood the strategy of reducing the number of primary places and the potential impact on other schools if no action is taken. They would prefer not to make a decision regarding reducing their PAN until they could see how the future numbers look. They were concerned that reducing places at a good local school was reducing parental opportunity to attend their local school.
- 3.17 Both schools look forward to having an opportunity to feedback their views and concerns as part of the formal consultation.
- 3.18 It is recognised that the length of time before these proposals would come into effect and the recognition that parental preference can change over a period of time can make it difficult for schools to commit to a reduction of PAN.
- 3.19 This has been an area of discussion for a number of years but it has not been possible to reach a consensus on additional proposals to reduce the PAN of other schools.
- 3.20 Community schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the PAN set for them is lower than they would wish. There is a strong presumption in favour of an increase to the PAN to which the Schools Adjudicator must have regard when considering any such objection.

- 3.21 The admission number for West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) has been reduced from 90 to 60 pupils in the other year groups.
- 3.22 A corresponding reduction in PAN at the linked junior school, Hove Junior (Holland Road) is being proposed to ensure there is both sufficient capacity to accommodate all pupils moving up from the infant school but without the potential financial implications associated with the need to operate small classes.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Council could propose to make other changes to its current admission arrangements as part of the consultation process.
- 4.2 The Council could seek to make no change to the PAN of any primary school. Whilst this may ensure the council can meet a high level of parental preferences it places more schools at risk of financial difficulty.
- 4.3 The Council could propose to change the PAN of other primary or infant schools. Under the School Admission Code this must be undertaken following a consultation with the governing body. All admission authorities must consult where they propose a decrease to the PAN. Community schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the PAN set for them is lower than they would wish. There is a strong presumption in favour of an increase to the PAN to which the Schools Adjudicator must have regard when considering any such objection.
- 4.4 It is possible for the Council to again seek agreement from the Schools Adjudicator for a variation to the PAN of schools with effect from September 2020 after notifying all other admission authorities within the relevant area.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Council scrutinised the Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools and Free Schools' proposed admission arrangements for 2019/20. VA schools are required to consult their religious authority (in this case the Diocesan Authority) before consulting others. The Council will review the final document published by the Governing Bodies before deciding whether it should comment or act further.
- 5.2 The Council has previously requested that Headteachers and Chairs of Governors inform it if a future reduction in PAN was a proposal that they would wish to undertake. No other schools have indicated a willingness to undertake such a reduction.
- 5.3 If recommended, it is proposed to start the consultation on the reduction on PAN at West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road site), Mile Oak Primary School, Hangleton Primary School and Hove Junior School (Holland Road site) on 15 November 2019 and for it to conclude on Monday 6 January 2020. As a result it is expected that the report for the 13 January 2020 committee will be a late report.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 It is proposed to consult on reducing the Published Admission Number for West Hove Infant School (Connaught Road) and the linked Hove Junior School (Holland Road) each by one form of entry.
- 6.2 It is proposed to consult on reducing the Published Admission Number for Mile Oak Primary School and Hangleton Primary School each by one form of entry. This will support a reduction in the amount of surplus primary school places available in the city.
- 6.3 If the reduction in PAN is determined at all three schools it is projected that there will be 302 unfilled places in September 2021.
- 6.4 It is proposed to make no further changes to admission arrangements and to undertake a public consultation with the results and final recommendations coming back to this committee in January 2020.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The main driver of a school's budget is pupil numbers, therefore as there are no proposed changes in admission arrangements or catchment areas, most schools will not be effected.
- 7.2 For the four schools Hangleton Primary, Mile Oak, West Hove Infant and Hove Junior schools, they will need to plan their budgets over the period of the change in PAN to reflect the expected reduction in pupils and budget accordingly.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore*

*Date: 25/10/19*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.3 Section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012 require admission authorities to determine their admission arrangements annually. Arrangements must be determined 18 months in advance of the academic year to which they apply.
- 7.4 Where changes such as a decrease in the PAN are proposed to admission arrangements the admission authority must first publicly consult on those proposed arrangements. The School Admissions Code 2014 states that consultation must be for a minimum of six weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. The admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2018.
- 7.5 Community schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the PAN set for them is lower than they would wish.
- 7.6 The 1998 Act also requires local authorities to establish a relevant area in which admission authorities must consult regarding their admission

arrangements. The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 requires local authorities to consult on these proposals every two years.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Serena Kynaston*

*Date: 16/10/2019*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.7 An equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. There are no proposed changes to the council's admission arrangements and it is not expected that the proposed change to PANs will result in a significant impact for those with protected characteristics.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.8 There are no sustainability implications as a result of the proposals in this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.9 None

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Various implications
2. Published Admission Numbers for Primary and Secondary schools.
3. Admission arrangements and priorities for community primary and secondary schools
4. Coordinated scheme of admissions – primary.
5. Coordinated scheme of admissions – secondary.
6. Coordinated scheme of admissions – in year arrangements

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.2 Any change to school attendance patterns and pupil numbers will impact directly on resource allocation both revenue and capital, and on the Council's ability to meet parental expectations on school places. Pupil data and broader population data is used to identify the numbers of school places required and where they should be located. This feeds into the capital programme so that resources are allocated where they will have the most beneficial effect.

Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 The allocation of school places affects all families in all parts of the city and can influence where people choose to live. Failure to obtain the desired choice of school can create a strong sense of grievance. The process of expressing a preference and if disappointed, entering an appeal can create intense anxiety for many families in the city. Admission arrangements together with school place planning are framed in such a way as to be mindful of supporting the needs of communities.

