

Subject:	Review of Council Policy Framework – School Admission Arrangements		
Date of Meeting:	15 November 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director People		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Gil Sweetenham	Tel: 293433
	Email:	gil.sweetenham@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20th October 2011, full Council agreed to include annual school admissions arrangements as part of the Council's policy framework. It was further agreed that a report should be brought to full Council in December with a description of current policies as they relate to school admissions.
- 1.2 This report sets out the documents and policies in existence which relate to school admissions and clarifies those elements that are proposed to be brought to full Council as part of the policy framework.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Governance Committee notes the documents and policies in place for Brighton & Hove City Council relating to school admissions.
- 2.2 That Governance Committee recommends to full Council that the Council's policy framework should include "school admission arrangements" and that this will be interpreted to cover the Council's admissions policy (as represented by the admissions booklet for primary and secondary schools) and the School Organisation Plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Full Council reviewed the plans and strategies that make up the Council's policy framework at its meeting on 20th October 2011 and agreed to include annual school admission arrangements as part of the policy framework.
- 3.2 There are a number of documents and policies in existence which relate to school admissions in Brighton & Hove and full Council resolved to receive a report which sets these out and clarifies which elements would form part of the policy framework to be approved by full Council.

3.3 The four key documents and policies relating to school admissions are:-

1. The Statutory School Admissions Code

3.4 The School Admissions Code came into force on 10 February 2010 and applies to admissions to all maintained schools. Where mandatory requirements are imposed by this Code it is stated that relevant bodies 'must' comply with the particular requirement or provision. The Code also includes guidelines that the relevant bodies should follow.

3.5 All admission authorities must comply with the mandatory requirements of this Code and admissions legislation. Academy funding agreements require their arrangements to be in accordance, or consistent, with the Code.

2. The Council's admissions policy as represented by the admissions booklet for primary and secondary schools

3.6 The City Council must conform to legislative requirements on the publication of admission arrangements which reflect the requirements of the Admissions Code. Part of this process is to publish Admissions Booklets for parents detailing the processes and criteria for school entry for their children.

3.7 Two booklets are published, one for Secondary Schools and one for Infant, Junior and Primary Schools. The booklets provide individual school information and relevant data to enable parents and guardians to express three preferences for their child's school place.

3. Annual consultation report on admissions

3.8 Each year local authorities must consult upon school admission arrangements and school admission numbers with community schools and voluntary aided schools, neighbouring LEAs and with parents living in the City. This consultation takes place approximately 18 months in advance of the school year in which pupils will be admitted under the proposed arrangements.

3.9 The report for the 2012/13 admission year for Brighton & Hove went to CMM meeting on 22 March 2011. The report for 2013/14 will be delivered in March 2012.

3.10 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 Voluntary Aided schools in the City and with other local authorities. They must also establish the area (the "relevant area") within which the admission consultation should take place.

3.11 The consultation process must have been concluded by 1st March each year, with a minimum of 8 weeks consultation time. The City Council must have reached its decisions and confirmed its admission arrangements for by April of that year in order to conform to the requirements of the Admissions Code.

4. The School Organisation Plan

- 3.12 The School Organisation Plan in which Local Education Authorities set out a five year plan for monitoring and reviewing their statutory responsibilities in respect of the provision of school places, is no longer a statutory requirement.
- 3.13 However given the continuing pressure on school places in Brighton & Hove we are in the process of creating a new School Organisation Plan for 2012 to 2016 which will identify the issues and potential solutions for school place planning within the city. It is anticipated that the first draft of this plan will be available by the end of 2011.

Proposals for the Council's Policy Framework

- 3.16 Following the Council's decision on 20th October 2011 to include school admission arrangements as part of the Council's policy framework, it is important to clarify which of the documents set out above should be brought to full Council for approval.
- 3.17 It is proposed that the two key policy documents that shape the Councils' admissions arrangements be brought to full Council – these are the School Organisation Plan and the Admissions Policy as represented by the admissions booklet for primary and secondary schools.
- 3.18 In relation to the other admissions arrangements documents referred to in this report, the Schools Admissions Code is a statutory Code produced by Government and is not a document that can be approved or otherwise by the Council. It is not proposed to bring the annual consultation report on admissions to full Council because this is not a plan or strategy but operational work which then feeds into to the admissions booklet for the following year. The proposed admissions booklet will be brought to full Council.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 These proposals have been discussed internally with officers. No external consultation has been carried out because the decision is one that relates to internal governance arrangements for the Council.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 04/11/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The proposals in this report are consistent with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (England) 2000. The Regulations specify certain plans and strategies which must be approved by full Council and enable

full Council the flexibility to approve other plans and strategies. Full Council must approve the changes to the policy framework and therefore this report makes recommendations to full Council.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 31/10/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 This report explains the current admissions documents and policies and sets out which documents are to be approved by full Council. The recommendations will not impact adversely on any protected groups.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 It will be important to ensure that any sign off required by full Council is sought in accordance with the statutory timetables for the publication of admission arrangements.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The new proposals will bring a greater degree of scrutiny to the admission proposals by requiring full Council approval.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Taking the admission arrangements to full Council is not a statutory requirement but is something the Council can choose to do. Council has resolved to make these changes.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The report sets out the current school admission policy documentation and proposes a way forward for implementing the Council resolution of 20th October 2011 in relation to the Council's policy framework.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. School Admissions Code
2. Infant, Junior and Primary School Admissions 2012/13 Booklet
3. Secondary School Admissions 2012/13 Booklet

