

Decision Report – Key decision  
Proposed decision date – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Admission Arrangements for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools for 2019/20

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr F Nicholson – Cabinet Member for Children & Families  
Division and Local Member(s): All  
Lead Officer: Dave Farrow, Head of Outcomes and Sufficiency  
Author: Jane Seaman, Access & Admissions Manager  
Contact Details: Tel: 01823 (355615)

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	County Solicitor	Honor Clarke	16.01.18
	Monitoring Officer	Julian Gale	15.01.18
	Corporate Finance	Kevin Nacey	22.01.18
	Human Resources	N/A	
	Property / Procurement / ICT	Richard Williams	22.01.18
	Senior Manager	Julian Wooster	22.01.18
	Local Member(s)	All members	
	Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr J Lock – Opposition Group Spokesperson - Children & Families	08.01.18
	Relevant Scrutiny Chairman	Cllr Leigh Redman for Scrutiny Children & Families	08.01.18
Cabinet Member	Cllr F Nicholson – Cabinet Member for Children & Families	22.01.18	
<b>Forward Plan Reference:</b>	FP/17/11/02		
<b>Summary:</b>	This report seeks authority for Cabinet to determine the Local Authority admission arrangements for all Voluntary Controlled and Community schools for 2019/20 as required by the School Admissions Code and associated legislation.		
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>That the Cabinet agrees the determination of the Admission Arrangements for all Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools for 2019/20 as set out in this report.</b>		
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	It is a requirement of the School Admissions Code that all Admission Authorities determine their admission arrangements for 2019/20 by 28 February 2018.		

<b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</b>	<p>Links to the County Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to protect and care for the most vulnerable children, adults and families in the community and support their carers.</li> <li>• Improve the prospects of children and young people most at risk of being disadvantaged.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultations undertaken:</b>	<p>The proposed changes have been considered in light of the School Admissions Code December 2014. The School Admissions Code is national statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education which all admission authorities must adhere to. A statutory minimum 6 week consultation was undertaken between 15 December 2017 and 31 January 2018.</p>
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	<p>There are no financial implications. The admission arrangements meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998.</p>
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	<p>The admission arrangements meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998.</p>
<b>HR Implications:</b>	<p>There are no HR implications. The admission arrangements meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998.</p>
<b>Risk Implications:</b>	<p>There is minimal risk to the Local Authority as the admission arrangements proposed are compliant with the School Admissions Code.</p>
<b>Other Implications (including due regard implications):</b>	<p>The impact of the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for Voluntary Controlled and Community schools are minimal and ensure the Local Authority as the Admissions Authority is compliant with the School Admissions Code 2014.</p>
<b>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</b>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1. The School Admissions Code 2014 requires all admission authorities to determine their 2019/20 admission arrangements by 28 February 2018. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January the year before those arrangements are due to apply. Once all arrangements have been determined, arrangements can be objected to and referred to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May. Any decision taken by the adjudicator must be acted upon by the admission authority.

## **2. Proposed Amendments**

### **Removal of the word 'older' from the over-subscription criteria**

- 2.1** The admission arrangements for Somerset Voluntary Controlled and Community schools are fit for purpose, are clear and transparent and support the principle of local schools for local children. Therefore, there is just one minor change proposed to the over-subscription criteria. This is to remove the word 'older' from the criterion that prioritises children with an **older** sibling at the school so that all children with a sibling at the school are prioritised in this criterion. This ensures that in year admissions for children who have a younger sibling at the school can be considered under the sibling criteria and are not disadvantaged.

There is a further proposed change to the way in which separate applications for different schools submitted by parent / carers for the same child are dealt with. When shared care arrangements are in place and two applications are made Somerset LA has previously asked parent/carers to withdraw one of the applications. However, if neither application is withdrawn both are processed, two school place offers are made and when the child attends school the alternative school place is withdrawn.

### **Two separate applications for one child**

The proposed change is that where shared care arrangements are in place and parents/ carers of the child submit two separate applications for different schools, the LA will only accept one application. In making a decision about which application should proceed the LA will consider where the child lives for the majority of the week. The LA will ask parents to write to the LA stating the number of days each week the child spends with them. The LA may also ask for evidence of which parent/carer was in receipt of child benefit at the point of application. If the parent/carer is not in receipt of child benefit, the LA will ask for proof of the child's home address as held by the doctor's surgery at the point of application. If the child's home address cannot be verified the LA reserve the right to request further documentary evidence to support any claim of permanent home address.

Where there are exceptional grounds such as on-going court proceedings for example, these applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

For the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 intakes one child was disadvantaged each year by being refused a school place because another child was holding the place which subsequently was not taken up. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer of a school place can be made. Offering two school places also impacts on school place planning and causes further difficulties in areas where there is a shortage of school places. Further to this it makes it more difficult for schools to plan accurately and can cause them to lose funding for that place if it has not been filled by the October census date.

### **Waiting lists**

Somerset LA have been keeping waiting lists for every year group since September 2017 and the waiting list section has been updated accordingly to reflect this change.

The consultation ends on 31 January 2018 and to date no responses have been received

### **3. Background Papers**

School Admissions Code 2014

[https://www.gov.uk/government/School\\_Admissions\\_Code\\_2014\\_-\\_19\\_Dec.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf)

Local Authority 2019/20 Primary Admission Arrangements

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=127756>

Local Authority 2019/20 Primary Co-ordinated Scheme

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=127758>

Local Authority 2019/20 Secondary Admission Arrangements

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=1277>

Local Authority 2019/20 Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=127760>

Sixth Form Policy 2019/20

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=127763>

2019/20 Published Admission Numbers for VC and Community schools

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=127762>