

Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

22 January 2019

CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon Executive Member for Families, Education and Children
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This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. To outline the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and seek the views of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Support the Council's proposed Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020/21
2. Provide a response for the consultation to help shape strategy

Council Priorities

2. The Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary schools supports the Council's priority to improve educational attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

- 3 As the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the Council is required by Section 88C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the 1998 Act") to determine, on an annual basis, the admission arrangements which are to apply to such schools for the next-but-one school year. Accordingly, for September 2020 admissions, the Council is required to determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- 4 Before determining admission arrangements, the Council is required by Section 88C(2) of the 1998 Act to carry out such consultation about the proposed arrangements as may be prescribed in regulations (in this case, the School Admissions Regulations, Chapter 3 of which prescribes, amongst other matters, the persons who must be consulted, the manner of consultation and the time for consultation and determination of admission arrangements).
- 5 As Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations impose statutory duties on the Council, a failure to consult on and determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area would amount to a breach by the Council of these duties, the possible implications of which include legal challenges by interested parties and intervention by the Secretary of State for Education, who has the power under Section 497 of the Education Act 1996 to give such directions as appear to him to be expedient to a local authority which has failed to discharge a statutory duty imposed on it under the Education Acts.
- 6 Accordingly, it is imperative that the Council consults on and determines the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area in accordance with Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations.

Financial and Risk Implications

- 7 There are no financial implications for this report.

Equalities Implications

- 8 The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 9 Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex

and sexual orientation. As part of the consultation on the Admissions Arrangements the Council will check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

Appendices

The following Appendices are provided through an electronic link:

- 10 Appendix A – Executive report of 4 December 2018; Consultation on the admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21
- 11 Appendix 1 – Proposed Community and Voluntary Controlled schools Admissions Policy and PANs 2020/21.
- 12 Appendix 2 – Lower, Primary and Middle 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 13 Appendix 3 – Secondary and Upper 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 14 Appendix 4 – Confirmation of Religious Affiliation form.

Background Papers

None

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