

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 12 March 2012

ITEM 7(e)

Title: Determination of School
Admission Arrangements 2013

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and
Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr David Lilly

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: John Scott

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Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to consider and determine the proposed admission arrangements for all Community Schools in North Tyneside for the 2013/2014 academic year including the co-ordinated admissions schemes, following consultation with schools, other local authorities, the Diocesan Authorities and the North Tyneside Trust Schools. There are no changes to the admissions arrangements for community schools since approved last year.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Approve the proposed admission arrangements and limits for Community Schools, as outlined in Appendices 1 to 6, subject to the appropriate publication of Statutory Notices.
- (2) Authorise the Head of Access and Inclusion to proceed in administering admission arrangements for the September 2013/2014 academic year subject to the publication of statutory notices and compliance with obligations required by the Secretary of State in accordance with the timescales set.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report appears on the Forward Plan for the period 1 January 2012 to 30 April 2012.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report is relevant to Council Delivery Plan theme 'Our Families and Children' – Raising Aspirations, to give every family the opportunity to have an excellent quality of life and all our children achieve their potential.

The proposals support the key priorities of the Council Strategic Plan (Widening Horizons) 2011-2015 and the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2014.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Co-ordinated admission schemes

All Local Authorities are required to formulate and consult on a scheme for each academic year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools within their area. This requirement includes maintained boarding schools, but excludes maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools. Co-ordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is practical, every child living in a Local Authority area who has applied in the normal admissions round receives one, and only one, offer of a school place on the same day. While it is for each Local Authority to decide the scheme that best suits its residents and its schools, they must ensure that they:

- a. comply with law and regulations, including all the process requirements (for example, the common application form allowing at least 3 preferences, information sharing with other Local Authorities, sending out not more than one offer to all seeking places at its maintained schools or academies on the same day); and
- b. do not disadvantage applications to their schools from families resident in other Local Authorities.

The Scheme applies to applications received from September 2012 for entry into maintained schools in September 2013. Regulations require the Local Authority to exchange specified information on applications with neighbouring Authorities.

The purpose of the Scheme is to co-ordinate admissions into all mainstream maintained first and primary, middle and high schools in North Tyneside. The Regulations also place a duty on all Local Authorities to make arrangements within their Scheme for cross-border co-ordination of admissions.

The Regulations state that Local Authorities must consult annually with the Admissions Forum on the Scheme and thereafter with each governing body which the Local Authority are proposing should adopt the Scheme – that is those governing bodies of Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools that are their own Admissions Authority.

The Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes are shown in Appendices 1 and 2.

1.5.2 Admission numbers

All schools must have an admission number for each 'relevant age group'. This is defined in law as 'an age group in which pupils are or will normally be admitted' to the school in question. Admission Authorities of maintained schools must set admission numbers with regard to the capacity assessment for the school under Regulation 4 of the Admission Arrangements Regulations.

The Planned Admission Numbers are shown at Appendix 3.

1.5.3 Admission Policies

Pupils will be able to go to their preferred school unless there are more applications to that school than there are places available.

If there are more applications than places available at a school, oversubscription criteria will be used to allocate places after any children with a statement of special educational needs have been provided for where the statement names a specific school.

Admissions Policies for admission to North Tyneside Community Schools and Nurseries for which the Local Authority is the Admissions Authority are shown at Appendices 4 to 6.

1.5.4 Oversubscription Criteria

The oversubscription criteria used by the Local Authority where there are more applications than places available are set out in Appendices 4, 5 and 6 of this report.

1.5.5 Admissions to Year 12 (sixth form)

Where a secondary school operates a sixth form and admits pupils from other schools at age 16, for instance, an admission number will be required for Year 12 as well as for the main year or years. Admission numbers must refer to pupils being admitted to the school for the first time and not transferring from earlier age groups. The entry requirements for 6th form are largely dependent on the course of study that a student wishes to access. Details of specific requirements and courses available may be obtained for individual schools. All schools publish information about their post 16 provision.

Admission numbers for entry into Year 12 (6th form) at North Tyneside Schools are shown at Appendix 3.

1.5.6 Learning Trust

The North Tyneside Learning Trust was established in September 2010 and comprises of 26 schools. The Local Authority consulted on behalf of these schools with regards to their admission arrangements. The governing bodies of these schools are responsible for determining their arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code. 5 of the schools in the Learning Trust are Special Schools and these arrangements do not apply to them.

1.5.7 Voluntary Aided Schools

The Local Authority consulted on behalf of the Voluntary Aided schools within North Tyneside with regards to their admission arrangements. The governing bodies of these schools are responsible for determining their arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

1.5.8 Trust High School

The Local Authority consulted on behalf of the Trust High school within North Tyneside with regards to its admission arrangements. The governing body of this school is responsible for determining its arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report.

Option 2

Not approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The recommendations contained in this report are made to secure compliance with statutory requirements as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Primary

Appendix 2: Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Secondary

Appendix 3: Proposed Admissions Numbers September 2013

Appendix 4: Proposed Admissions to Community Nursery Policy September 2013

Appendix 5: Proposed Admissions to Community First and Primary Schools Policy September 2013

Appendix 6: Proposed Admissions to Community Middle and High Schools Policy September 2013

1.9 Contact officers:

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1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information has been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) School Standards and Framework Act 1998

(2) School Admissions Code 2012 (in force February 2012).

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The School Admissions Code applies to admissions to all maintained schools and sets out certain mandatory requirements and prohibited practices according to the relevant law. The Local Authority's determined admission arrangements must comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. The Code is made under s.84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The Local Authority was required to consult on the admission arrangements for those schools for which it is the Admissions Authority by 1st March 2012, which consultation has been undertaken as set out in section 2.3. The Local Authority must consult upon the full details of its admission arrangements and the arrangements must be consistent with the co-ordinated scheme operating in the area. The admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April 2012. The requirement to consult is contained in s.88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Each year, the Local Authority is required to have in place a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools in the area (s.88M of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and The School Admissions (Co-Ordination of Admission Arrangements)(England) Regulations 2007). There is no requirement to co-ordinate applications for places at school sixth forms/year 12.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

- The Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Learning has been consulted in relation to the proposals.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with:

- All NT First, Primary , Middle and High Schools, Headteachers and Governing Bodies
- Chair and Link Governors via Governor Services agenda pack and all NT Governors
- Families Information Service
- Neighbouring Local Authorities; Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland, South Tyneside
- Diocesan Authorities (RC and C of E)
- All residents of North Tyneside through notice in the Residents magazine delivered to every household
- Consultation available on the Council's website

There were no objections to the arrangements received following consultation.

2.4 Human rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 confers a right of access to education. This right does not extend to securing a place at a particular school. Admissions Authorities, however, do need to consider parents' reasons for expressing a preference when they make decisions about the allocation of school places, to take account of the rights of parents under the Act, though this may not necessarily result in the allocation of a place. These might include, for example, the parents' right to ensure that their child's education conforms to their own religious or philosophical convictions (so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure).

2.5 Equalities and diversity

Under Section 85 of the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for any education provider, including a private or independent provider, to discriminate between pupils on grounds of sex, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, or sex. Discrimination on these grounds, which are known as 'protected characteristics', is unlawful in relation to admission arrangements. There are exceptions to these requirements set out in Schedule 11, including in respect of admissions to single sex schools, schools with a religious character and in respect of other types of education providers such as further and higher education.

In addition the Act introduces the following duties on the responsible bodies of schools:

- (a) A duty not to harass a pupil or a person who has applied for admission (on the basis of protected characteristics, sexual harassment or less favourable treatment);
- (b) A duty not to victimise a person in its admission arrangements;
- (c) A duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of the admission of prospective pupils who may be disabled and not to discriminate in respect of the same.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s) X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Strategic Director with
Responsibility for Community
Engagement X