



Leicester
City Council

CABINET

2ND April 2007

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2008 AND BEYOND

Report of the Corporate Director for Children and Young Peoples Services

1.1 Purpose of the Report

As Admissions Authority for the majority of maintained schools in the City Leicester City Council is required to consult upon and publish its admission arrangements for entry in September 2008 by 15th April 2007.

This report briefs Cabinet on the outcome of the recent Consultation exercise for Admission Arrangements for 2008 and seeks immediate approval for City Council arrangements for 2008.

The report also draws Cabinet attention to possible future developments in this area for 2009/10 and beyond and seeks approval for the proposed approach.

Finally, this report briefs Cabinet on the improved number of first preferences being met at secondary transfer for September 2007.

1.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for Cabinet consideration are detailed in depth at Sections 6 & 7 of this Report. These are summarised below.

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.2.1 Approve the proposed admissions arrangements for 2008 as detailed in section 6.1 of the report and at appendix A.
- 1.2.2 Endorse and support the proposed methodology for future consultation in connection with admission arrangements for 2009/10 and beyond as detailed in paragraph 6.2 and 6.3 of the report.
- 1.2.3 Endorse and support the proposed methodology and approach to the possible future Nursery/ F1 issues as a result of requirements stemming from the new Childcare Act 2006 as detailed in sections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 of the report.
- 1.2.4 Cabinet is requested to endorse and support the proposed methodology and approach to possible future variations to accommodate mandatory changes

stemming from new statutory Admissions Code as detailed in sections 6.6.1 and 6.6.2 of the report.

1.2.5 Cabinet is asked to note improved performance at secondary and junior transfer for September 2007 entry as detailed at section 7 of the report.

2.0 REPORT

Description of the consultation process

- 2.1 Initial stakeholder consultation (including parents and young people) was undertaken by Tribal Education as part of a strategic review of admissions and school place planning during November and December 2006. Outcomes from this exercise informed the format and content of this year's consultation.
- 2.2 The current City consultation document for admission arrangements for entry in 2008 was issued on 27th January with responses invited by 23rd February 2007.
- 2.3 This consultation document had two separate parts.
- 2.4 **Part 1** related solely to changes for 2008 entry only. This part invited comment upon proposed changes to admission numbers at a limited number of schools and a new priority criterion for transfer between linked infant and junior schools.
- 2.5 **Part 2** indicated that the Authority was minded to make significant changes to admission arrangements from 2009 onwards. This Part indicated that these changes would relate to changes in both priority criteria and priority areas. Part 2 made clear that the Authority was minded to explore establishing families of feeder schools and provided one such exemplar for comment while making clear that was only one of many possible options.

3. Responses to Consultation exercise

- 3.1 In total the Consultation attracted 43 respondents.
- 3.2 9 secondary schools responded
 - Babington Community Technology College
 - Crown Hills Community College
 - Fullhurst Community College
 - Hamilton Community College
 - Lancaster School
 - Riverside Community College
 - Rushey Mead School
 - Sir Jonathan North Community College
 - Soar Valley College
- 3.3 16 primary schools responded:
 - Caldecote Primary School
 - Coleman Primary School
 - Dovelands Primary School
 - Fosse Primary School

- Eyres Monsell Primary School
- Herrick Primary School
- Highfields Primary School
- Knighton Fields Primary School
- Linden Primary School
- Mowmacre Hill Primary School
- Parks Primary School
- Rushey Mead Primary School
- St Barnabas CE Primary School
- Slater Primary School
- Willowbrook Primary School
- Wolsey House Primary School

3.4 6 infant schools responded:

- Catherine Infant School
- Green Lane Infant School
- Imperial Avenue Infant School
- Inglehurst Infant School
- Merrydale Infant School
- Overdale Infant School

3.5 4 junior schools responded:

- Braunstone Frith Junior School
- Catherine Junior School
- Overdale Junior School
- Uplands Junior School

3.6 2 voluntary aided schools responded:

- English Martyrs RC School
- St Patricks Catholic Primary School

3.7 1 consolidated response was received from City Professional Associations:

- TCC Teachers Panel

3.8 1 school from another authority:

- Abington High School

3.9 4 responses from other agencies:

- Leicester Strategic Partnership
- Leicester Parent Partnership Scheme
- Special Education Service
- Voluntary Action Leicester

4. Questions asked and answers received

Q1. Do you agree with the new priority over-subscription criteria for infant/junior transfer?	YES	30
	NO	0
	No comment	8
	N/A	5

Q2. Admission Numbers - do you agree with the figure for your school?	YES	30
	NO	8
	N/A	3
	No comment	2
Q3. Do you agree with the figure for other schools in your area?	YES	31
	NO	2
	N/A	3
	No comment	7
Q4. Proposals for 2009 - general priority order over-subscription criteria - do you agree?	YES	30
	NO	6
	N/A	0
	No comment	7
Q5. Feeder families - in principle, do you support such a model?	YES	28
	NO	12
	N/A	3

A summary document of responses received can be inspected in the Members Library.

5. Summary of consultation outcomes

- 5.1 With regard to **Part 1**, (entry in September 2008) it is clear that there is wide support for the new infant – junior transfer priority criteria. Responses were mixed, however, with regard to Admission Numbers.
- 5.2 Admission Numbers responses have therefore been reviewed subsequently by a project team of officers drawn from the Admissions and Property and Planning Teams who are responsible for school place planning. As a result of this review a number of proposed changes have been withdrawn and new variations are proposed. The revised position and proposed arrangements are summarised in **Appendix A**.
- 5.3 With regard to **Part 2** (initial discussion of propositions for entry in 2009 and beyond) the situation is less clear.
- 5.4 Although the above responses appear to indicate a general support for revised priority criteria along the lines recommended by Tribal and the idea of establishing a feeder model it would not be prudent to draw immediate conclusions from this analysis.
- 5.5 Responses to date suggest that there will be considerable discussion around the priority accorded pupils/ students with SEN and how any revised criteria would impact upon them and their families. Additionally, there will be a need to scope out the implications of the new Admissions Code which takes effect from end of February 2007, particularly with regard to low income families and those wishing to express a choice for a particular

school on the grounds of religious belief where choice options are in theory being expanded.

- 5.6 A number of respondents have expressed a view that the initial propositions for entry in 2009, particularly the family feeder exemplar provided, would in fact mitigate against parental choice and are over simplistic in design. This has, in part, been reflected in the content of a feature article in the Leicester Mercury on 17th February 2007. Further coverage has been received via local radio networks
- 5.7 A number of helpful suggestions, however, have been made about the principles around which alternative models could be created and a number of individuals have expressed an interest in working with officers to help design these.
- 5.8 The Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee considered the review of the admissions arrangements at their meeting on February 14th 2007. Scrutiny Members were pleased to see positive progress with the admissions process and supported the approach being taken by the department. The Scrutiny Committee minute extract is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 5.9 Finally, the consultation has attracted a number of critical responses on the quality of the content and work undertaken by Tribal. It is clear, however, that there is a desire for change and considerable willingness on the part of schools and parents to consider alternative options.

6. Recommendations & next steps

- 6.1 Recommendation for Admission arrangements for 2008: Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposed Admission Numbers detailed at **Appendix A** and agree the introduction of a new Transfer Priority criterion for linked infant –junior transfer to allow for formal publication of these arrangements from 15th April 2007. Members are reminded that schools have a right to appeal to the Schools Adjudicator about the admission number set.
- 6.2 Recommendation for future consultation in connection with admission arrangements for 2009 and beyond: The Department is committed to further consultation around priority (over subscription) criteria, priority areas and feeder models in the summer and autumn terms of 2007. It is intended that this consultation seek the active participation of young people, their families and their communities.
- 6.3 In recognition of the range of observations made during the current consultation exercise, future consultation will have regard to the following:
- Impact of any revised priority criterion on young people with SEN
 - Impact of any new requirements stemming from the new Admissions Code
 - Impact of any school relocations/ remodelling as a consequence of BSF and other strategic developments
 - Alternative ways of linking schools e.g. via school specialisms, development groups etc
 - Building relationships with the Samworth Academy and its admission policies and practices
 - Revised school capacity calculations and demographic projections

- 6.4 Cabinet is recommended to note and support this intended course of action.
- 6.5.1 Recommendation on the resolution of possible future Nursery/ F1 issues: The Childcare Act 2006 will come into force on September 1st 2008. Exact details are, as yet, unpublished. There is however an expectation that a new statutory framework will come into effect for nursery (F1) classes and that this will apply to all early years providers. It is believed that this will require a teacher and a level 3 T/ANNEB in every nursery (F1) class with a maximum of 26 children per class.
- 6.5.2 In view of this the current F1 numbers shown for City establishments at **Appendix A** to this report may need to be reviewed in the light of resource availability to ensure the appropriate staffing.
- 6.5.3 Officers within the Department will review this matter and a further report will be brought before Committee should this be required. Cabinet are recommended to note and support this approach.
- 6.6.1 Recommendation on further changes possible to accommodate requirements of the new Admissions Code: A new statutory Admissions Code came into effect at the end of February 2007. Adherence to this Code by Admissions Authorities is mandatory. The Government recognise that the introduction of this Code may necessitate a number of changes to local authority admissions policies for 2008 and beyond. To expedite this Regulations have been promulgated to enable Admission Authorities to make variations to their schemes without the need to undertake a further consultation exercise.
- 6.6.2 The Local Authority is currently reviewing the implications of the new Code and will take action to ensure the Council remains within the law. Officers will strive to ensure transparency in the progression of any further changes to the Admissions Policy for 2008 and will report all significant changes to elected members. Cabinet are recommended to note and support this approach.

7. Improved performance at secondary and junior transfer in September 2007

- 7.1 The number of 1st preferences within the City increased from 84.4% last year to 85.6% this year. The Authority has also been able to meet 95.2% of parents' preferences at 1st, 2nd or 3rd. (Reports in the national media indicate that only 64% achieved first preference in Birmingham and that a similar figure was achieved in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea & Brent. It is believed that the national average is 85%)
- 7.2 The Admissions Team has had to refuse 155 applications for Judgemeanow and 101 for City of Leicester, however, this could lead to a significant number of appeals at these Schools.
- 7.3 The Admissions Team has been able to meet all preferences for Rushey Mead and Sir Jonathan North, and refused very few applications for Beaumont Leys and Fullhurst, which have all generated significant appeals in previous years.
- 7.4 With regards to the junior transfer process the Team has been able to meet all preferences apart from Folville Junior, which was over subscribed. Therefore, 9 applications have been refused for this School.

7.5 Cabinet is asked to note the above improvements in performance.

8. Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposals in this report, although admissions arrangements in general play a part in promoting the effective use of resources across schools. Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, C&YP, ext 7750.

9. Legal implications

The legal issues are dealt with in the main body of the report and there are no other issues to draw to Cabinet's attention. Guy Goodman, Head of Community Services Law - ext 7054.

10. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	No	
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

11. Report author: Dr Trevor Pringle, Education Officer (Client & Governor Services)

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward.
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Appendix A: Proposed Admission Numbers for City Schools and new Priority Criterion for linked Infant – Junior Transfer.