

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 February 2022

Present:

Members: Councillor Dr K Sandhu (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Education and Skills: J Essex, S Heawood

Law and Governance: M Rose

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable interests.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February, 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

3. Community and Voluntary Controlled School Admission Policies for 2023/24 and Co-ordinated School Admission Schemes for 2023/24

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Director of Children's Services (on behalf of Director of Education and Skills) which indicated that annually the Department for Education required Local Authorities to determine the co-ordination schemes for school admissions in their areas and the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools which were the responsibility of the local authority, by 28 February.

In April 2006, Cabinet agreed that consideration of reports on school admission arrangements would be delegated to the appropriate Cabinet Member in years where there were no significant changes to admission arrangements. (Cabinet minute number 253/06 referred). For 2023 there was a reduction of the published admission number at one primary school for which a consultation had taken place. Also, to comply with the School Admissions Code 2021, the definition of previously looked after children and the publication of in year admissions arrangements wording had been amended to meet statutory requirements.

The local authority was the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled primary, infant and junior schools in Coventry and was responsible for setting the admission arrangements for these schools. It was proposed to reduce the published admission number (PAN) at Howes primary school and therefore in

line with the requirements for the School Admissions Code 2021 a consultation had taken place on the admission arrangements for 2023.

The co-ordinated schemes for admissions into all primary and secondary schools must be adopted by 28 February each year and published. As there had been no significant change to the schemes since the consultation in November 2018, there was no requirement to consult on these co-ordination scheme arrangements.

After several years of expanding primary schools across the city, recently birth rates had been reducing and there was a lower demand for places in reception at primary schools. This trend was forecast to continue. Where schools had high numbers of spare places this created financial difficulties for the schools. To meet these challenges as a local authority we needed to be able to offer a sustainable level of school places to offer parental choice whilst supporting schools to manage their financial position.

All primary schools were notified in 2019/20 academic year of the general picture of falling demand. Figures were updated in autumn 2020 which show forecasts of 14% available spaces across the city which was considerably above the Department for Education recommended levels of 4 – 8% spare capacity. Schools were asked to consider whether their governing bodies would wish to consult on reducing their published admission numbers (PAN). Since 2020, 7 primary schools had reduced their PAN, and for 2023 one academy consulted on a reduction along with Howes Community primary school.

The proposals in this report were to determine the admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for 2023/24 (see appendix 1 to the report). Determine the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2023/24 (appendix 2 to the report) and to determine the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2023/24 (see appendix 3 to the report).

The consultation period was held from 30 November 2021 to 11 January 2022 using the council online consultation platform Let's Talk Coventry. At the close of the consultation survey 15 responses were received. 2 responses from parents with 1 supporting the reduction and the other neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposal. 7 respondents with an interest in school admissions with 2 supporting, 4 disagreeing and 1 neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposal. 6 school staff responded, 5 staff from Howes disagreeing and 1 staff member from another school supporting the proposal. Further details of comments and responses were shown in appendix 4 to the report.

The Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member discussed with officers the application process and the consultation responses.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:-

- 1) Determine the Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for 2023/24 (see appendix 1 to the report).**

- 2) **Determine the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2023/24 (see appendix 2 to the report)**
- 3) **Determine the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2023/24 (see appendix 3 to the report).**

4. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

5. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.35 pm)