

## **CABINET – 12 JANUARY 2016**

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

### **LEICESTERSHIRE'S POLICY ON ADMISSIONS TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS: DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **PART A**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval of Leicestershire's School Admission Policy, for entry from September 2017 as detailed in Appendix A to this report, and Leicestershire's oversubscription criteria and the three co-ordinated schemes for the normal round of transfers, set out in Appendix B.
2. It is proposed that no changes are made to the existing School Admission Policy, oversubscription criteria, and three co-ordinated schemes, which were agreed by the Cabinet approved in March 2015.

##### **Recommendations**

3. The Cabinet is recommended to:
  - a) Agree that Leicestershire's School Admission Policy for entry September 2017 remains unchanged;
  - b) Agree that Leicestershire's oversubscription criteria and the three co-ordinated schemes for the normal round of transfers remain unchanged.

##### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. The County Council, as an admitting authority, is required to ratify school admissions arrangements, even if there are no changes, by 28 February 2016.
5. No changes to Leicestershire's School Admission Policy are proposed due to the Government's decision to begin a consultation in 2016 on changes to the National School Admissions Codes, the outcome of which will come into effect from entry 2017 and will be likely to affect Leicestershire's local admissions policy.

##### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

6. The policy must be determined by 28 February 2016 and must be made available on the County Council's website no later than 15 March 2016. A summary of the Admissions Policy will appear in the annual publication "Your

Guide” for parents and carers, which is made available early in September of each year.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

7. The County Council’s policy in this area is relevant to admissions to community schools, voluntary controlled schools, and those Academies (including Free Schools) that have adopted the Local Authority’s admissions policy. The policy must contain clear and objective criteria for administering parents’ requests for school places and all applications must be treated equally, regardless of whether or not the parents live in Leicestershire. To this end, the County Council must have regard to the Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code (released December 2014) and School Admissions Appeals Codes. The County Council also has a duty to ensure sufficient school places for every Leicestershire child whose parents seek one.
8. On 16 March 2015 the Cabinet approved Leicestershire’s Schools Admissions Policy for entry from September 2016, its oversubscription criteria and three co-ordinated schemes for the normal round of transfers.

### **Resource Implications**

9. None arising from this report. The cost of administering the admission arrangements is borne within existing budgets.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

10. None. Members will be advised, via the Members News in Brief service, when the policy is published on the County Council’s website.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

11. As explained above, Leicestershire's existing Admissions Policy was agreed by the Cabinet in March 2015 and it is proposed that this remains unchanged as the Government has announced that it will consult shortly on changes to the National School Admissions Codes and this will affect Leicestershire's policy.
12. Early indications from the DfE imply a strong likelihood of the Government consulting on tidying up aspects of the Codes and taking the opportunity to seeking views on:
  - the parental right to delay school entry by a year for summer born children;
  - raising the rank of the 'sibling criterion' in the oversubscription criteria rankings that are used to determine who gets a school place, for all admitting authorities (the priority criteria are set out in Appendix B).
13. No clarity as yet has been offered as to whether the consultation would propose giving the right of delayed entry to all summer born children or only those that meet set conditions i.e. premature birth children, children with significant medical needs etc.
14. Similarly, there is no indication as to whether it will be a mandatory requirement to have the sibling criterion second to children in care. The general reasoning indicated by the DfE to raise the sibling criterion is in response to parental wishes to keep siblings together at the same school.
15. As no date has been given to when the Government's consultation will commence and admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February, the Cabinet is asked to confirm continuation of the current policy."

### **Background Papers**

National School Admissions Codes

<http://ow.ly/Waxbl>

Report to the Cabinet, 16 March 2015 "Leicestershire's Policy on Admissions to Mainstream Schools: Determination of Admission Arrangements" and minutes of that meeting.

<http://ow.ly/WaxeO>

<http://ow.ly/Waxji>

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

16. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment questionnaire was completed to ensure no child would be disadvantaged based the proposals that had been put forward (this is attached as Appendix C to this report).

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Admissions Policy

Appendix B – School Admissions Oversubscription Criteria entry September 2017

– The three Co-ordinated Admission Schemes include: First Time Admissions; Infant to Junior transfers; Secondary School Transfers and Mid-Term Transfers During the 2015-16 Academic Year

Appendix C – Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment