

**CABINET – 10 FEBRUARY 2023****LEICESTERSHIRE'S POLICY ON ADMISSIONS TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS: DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval of a revised Leicestershire School Admissions Policy, for admissions from September 2024, and the three associated Coordinated Schemes for first-time admissions, infant to junior transfers, and secondary transfers and mid-term transfers.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Leicestershire School Admissions Policy for entry from September 2024 and associated coordinated admissions schemes for first-time admissions, infant to junior transfers, secondary transfers and mid-term transfers, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

3. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places an obligation on the County Council to determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in Leicestershire. As an admitting authority the County Council is required to determine the admission arrangements for such schools in Leicestershire from September 2024 by 28 February 2023 and make them available on the Council's website no later than 15 March 2023. This will then provide all parents and carers with more than a year's notice to allow them to make informed preferences when applying for a school place from 2024.

**Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

4. The Admissions Policy must be determined by 28 February 2023 and be made available on the Council's website no later than 15 March 2023. A summary of the 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**

5. The County Council's policy in this area is relevant to admissions to community schools, voluntary controlled schools, and those Academies that wish to model their policy on the Local Authority's policy. The policy must contain clear criteria for parents' requests for school places, and all applications must be treated fairly, regardless of whether or not the applicants live in Leicestershire. To this end, the County Council must have regard to the Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code (September 2021) and School Admission Appeals Codes (October 2022). The County Council also has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure the availability of sufficient school places.
6. The current School Admissions policy was approved by the Cabinet on 11 February 2022.

### **Resource Implications**

7. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of administering the admission arrangements is borne from within existing budgets.
8. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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

9. All Members will be advised once the Policy has been published on the County Council's website.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

10. The School Admissions Policy sets out the Council's admission arrangements for the purposes of allocating school places at community and voluntary controlled schools within Leicestershire, for which the Council is the admission authority. The Policy does not apply to other schools, including those within other local authority areas (including Leicester City), voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, independent schools or academies, studio schools or admission to post-16 education.
11. Leicestershire's current Admissions Policy was approved by the Cabinet in February 2022. Since then, the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) received a challenge to the Local Authority's Admissions policy, regarding a lack of general clarity, crown servants featuring as a priority within Leicestershire admissions criteria, and feeder schools not being named. The OSA investigated this challenge and made recommendations which have now been reflected in the revised Policy. These recommendations focused on improving clarity in language, and improving the sectioning of the policy to offer clarity for statutory and non-statutory application processes and procedures. In terms of naming of feeder schools, this is now obsolete, as it only affected secondary schools, and Leicestershire is no longer responsible for any secondary schools. The OSA also advised that in signposting parents to further reading hyper-links should be included, for example to which schools the policy is responsible for. The final aspect of the OSA's recommendation concerned deleting repetitive information.
12. In regard to Leicestershire no longer being responsible for maintained secondary schools, the Oversubscription Criteria is detailed in the Appendix at Section 11.0. This now only provides the criteria for maintained and voluntary controlled primary schools. This criteria are only required where there are more applications than places available. In such instances the applications received are ranked using the appropriate admissions criteria, and the school is filled with the highest-ranking applicants.
13. Whilst making the above revisions, it is also important to remind the Cabinet that changes arising from the Armed Forces Covenant have been absorbed into Leicestershire's Policy to ensure compliance when receiving an application for a child whose parent is in the armed forces. A report on the Council's response to the Armed Forces Act 2021 is also on the agenda for this Cabinet meeting.
14. There has been no requirement to consult on the revisions to the policy as the changes adopted (arising from the OSA recommendations) are statutory and due to the removal of obsolete references to secondary school arrangements.

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

15. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening questionnaire was completed to ensure the variation applied equally to all children including armed forces children covered by the covenant. A full EHRIA was not required.

### **Appendix**

School Admissions Policy for entry from September 2024 and Leicestershire's Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for First Time Admissions Infant to Junior transfers, Secondary School transfers and Mid-Term Arrangements during the 2024-25 Academic Year

### **Background Papers**

National School Admissions Code September 2021 – <https://bit.ly/3GXV0Xi>

Report to the Cabinet on 11 February 2022 - Leicestershire's Policy on Admission to Mainstream Schools: Determination of Admission Arrangements:  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6773&Ver=4>