

21st September 2020**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND
SKILLS****COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES FOR FIRST ADMISSION TO PRIMARY
SCHOOL AND TRANSFER FROM INFANT TO JUNIOR/PRIMARY SCHOOL IN
SEPTEMBER 2021, AND FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S STATUTORY
CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2022-2023****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to run a publicity campaign to inform parents and families about applying for school places for September 2021 for children starting school for the first time (reception) and transferring from infant school (year 2) to junior/primary education (year 3).
2. This report also seeks approval to carry out the statutory consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2022-2023.
3. This report also seeks approval of a communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2022-2023.

Information**Children starting school for the first time (reception) and transferring from infant school (year 2) to junior/primary education (year 3)**

4. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that a school place is allocated for all Nottinghamshire children whose parents require one.
5. Parents have the best chance of being allocated a place at a school they prefer if they apply on time, make four preferences, and ensure that at least one preference is for a school where their child has high priority within the oversubscription criteria.
6. Previous publicity campaigns to make this information widely available have been effective. For first admission (reception) in September 2020, 92.4% of on-time applicants were allocated their first preference, and 98.4% of on-time applicants were offered one of their preferences.

7. It is proposed that posters reminding parents of the need to apply for a school place, and of information available to support them when applying, will be communicated to the following:
- Known Early Years providers – including children centres
 - All schools in Nottinghamshire
 - Chairs of governors of schools clerked by the Council
 - County Councillors
 - Borough/District Councillors
 - Parish Councils
 - Dioceses
 - MPs
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities
 - GP surgeries
 - Nottinghamshire Libraries
 - Nottinghamshire Leisure Centres
 - Internal services - including
 - Elective Home Education
 - Fair Access
 - Integrated Children's Disability service (ICDS)
 - Place Planning
 - School Improvement.
8. A hard copy of the poster will be sent to Early Years providers and GP surgeries where no email address is available.
9. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council's intranet from the opening of the admission round (9th November 2020) to the closing date (15th January 2021).
10. Promotional videos about applying for school places will be posted on the Council's public website and on social media.

Consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2022-2023

11. All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 28th February every year.
12. Nottinghamshire County Council, as the local authority, is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools in Nottinghamshire and is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these schools.
13. The County Council is also responsible for coordinating admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools in its area. These requirements are described in the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998 and the School Admissions Code (SAC) 2014 which are available from the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk

14. Where changes to admission arrangements are proposed, all admission authorities must consult for a minimum of six weeks between 1st October and 31st January in the determination year on the admission arrangements for those schools for which they are responsible (School Admissions Code 2014, paragraphs 1.42 – 1.50).
15. Admission authorities **must** consult with:
 - a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen years
 - b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed arrangements
 - c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools)
 - d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority
 - e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority
 - f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.
16. Nottinghamshire County Council's consultation on school admission arrangements 2022-2023 will take place from 5th October 2020 to 29th November 2020.
17. Nottinghamshire County Council's consultation on school admission arrangements 2022-2023 will include:
 - proposed minor change to a small part of the catchment areas for West Bridgford Infant School and West Bridgford Junior School where it has been identified that properties are bisected by the existing catchment boundary of these schools.
 - variation for admission to voluntary controlled schools with faith criteria. During the COVID 19 pandemic, churches and other places of worship have been closed by law for public worship and for other uses. Parents and their children are unable to meet this criterion under the terms of the current admissions arrangements. A statement will be included in the definition of worship to clarify that attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.
 - proposed change to published admission number at Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School (Rushcliffe district) increase from 70 to 90.
 - minor changes to the dates within the coordinated schemes.
18. To ensure that all stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to respond to the consultation, it is proposed that a poster advising of the consultation and a summary of the consultation will be sent by email to those listed in **paragraph 7** above.
19. A hard copy of the poster and summary of the consultation will be sent to Early Years providers and GP surgeries where no email address is available.
20. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council's intranet.

Other Options Considered

21. Without the publicity about applying for school places for September 2021 for children starting school for the first time and transferring from infant school to junior/primary education, there is a risk that parents, particularly vulnerable groups, will not apply on time for a school place. Late applicants are more likely to receive an alternative offer of a place at a school which can be at a greater distance from the home address than the schools they prefer.
22. Consultation regarding the proposed changes for the school admission arrangements 2022-2023 is not optional.

Reason/s for Recommendations

23. To enable the County Council to meet its statutory responsibility to consult on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed admission arrangements for 2022-2023.
24. The methods used are cost effective, particularly the use of social media.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

26. Consideration has been given to using electronic communication wherever possible to reduce postage costs. To reduce costs, the posters for the admission round (which opens on 9th November 2020) will be sent with the posters and summary of the statutory consultation (which opens on 5th October 2020). The cost will be met by the Admissions budget.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the publicity campaign to inform parents and families about applying for school places for September 2021 for children starting school for the first time (reception) and transferring from infant school (year 2) to junior/primary education (Year 3) be approved.
- 2) the proposal to consult on Nottinghamshire County Council's school admission arrangements 2022-2023 be approved.

- 3) the communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the statutory consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2022-2023 be approved.

Marion Clay
Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Karen Hughman
Group Manager
Education Access and Partnership
T: 0115 977 2572
E: karen.hughman@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (AK 27/08/20)

27. The report falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 27/08/20)

28. Consideration has been given to using electronic communication wherever possible to reduce postage costs. To reduce costs, the posters for the admission round (which opens on 9th November 2020) will be sent with the posters and summary of the statutory consultation (which opens on 5th October 2020). The cost will be met by the Admissions budget which is £1.106m and funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Determined Admission Arrangements 2021-2022, available at:
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-admissions/determined-admission-arrangements/2021-2022>

School Admissions Code 2014, available at www.education.gov.uk

School Admission Appeals Code (SAC) 2012, available at www.education.gov.uk

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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