

13<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Agenda Item: 7

## **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 2022, AND FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2023-2024**

#### **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 2022 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 2023-2024 including:
  - Relevant areas
  - Proposed Published Admission Number reduction at Carnarvon Primary School.
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 2023-2024.

#### **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 2021, 93.4% of on-time applicants were allocated their first preference, and 98.8% of on-time applicants were offered one of their preferences.
7. It is proposed that information 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 electronically:
  - 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. Parents of known children living in Nottinghamshire will receive information, posted to their home address, about how to apply for a school place. An additional visual publication will accompany this correspondence giving parents useful tips and reminders about the application process.
9. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council’s intranet from the opening of the admission round (8 November 2021) to the closing date (15 January 2022).
10. Promotional videos about applying for school places will be posted on the Council’s public website and on social media throughout the application round.

### **Consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council’s proposed school admission arrangements 2023-2024**

11. All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 28 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) 2021 which are available from the Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)
14. Where changes to admission arrangements are proposed, all admission authorities must consult for a minimum of six weeks between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year on the admission arrangements for those schools for which they are responsible (School Admissions Code 2021, paragraphs 1.45 – 1.48).
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 2023-2024 will take place from 4 October 2021 to 28 November 2021.
17. Nottinghamshire County Council's consultation on school admission arrangements 2023-2024 will include:
  - a review of the relevant areas, these are set by the local authority and must be reviewed every two years. The relevant area details the area which the admission authority for that school must consult all other prescribed schools on changes to its admission arrangements. It is proposed to retain the existing arrangement which is coterminous with the district boundaries.
  - proposed change to Published Admission Number at Carnarvon Primary School (Rushcliffe district) to decrease from 70 to 60. The school has experienced challenges managing a Published Admission Number of 70 and whilst additional classroom capacity was created there is not sufficient capacity to provide three classes per year group each year. There is provision in the area at first admission that can support the reduction to the Published Admission Number.
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. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council's intranet throughout the consultation period.

20. The consultation will include a direct link to the online survey on the Council's public website where respondents can provide comments on the consultation.

### **Other Options Considered**

21. Without the publicity about applying for school places for September 2022 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 proposed changes for the school admission arrangements 2023-2024 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 2023-2024.
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. The cost of publications for parents and consultees 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 2022 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 2023-2024 be approved.

- 3) the communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the statutory consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2023-2024 be approved.

**Marion Clay**  
**Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (ELP 25/08/21)**

27. The recommendations fall within the delegation to Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (MDN 19/08/21)**

28. Consideration has been given to using electronic communication wherever possible to reduce postage costs. The cost of publications for parents and consultees will be met by the Admissions budget. The cost will be met by the Admissions budget which is £1.116m 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 2022-2023, available at <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/3769248/determined-arrangements2022-2023.pdf>

School Admissions Code 2021, available at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

School Admission Appeals Code (SAC) 2012, available at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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