

16 October 2017

Agenda Item: 11

## **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 2018, AND FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2019-2020**

#### **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 2018 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 of a communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the statutory consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2019-2020.

#### **Information and Advice**

##### **Children starting school for the first time (Reception) and transferring from infant school (Year 2) to junior/primary education (Year 3)**

3. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that a school place is allocated for all Nottinghamshire children whose parents require one.
4. 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.
5. Previous publicity campaigns to make this information widely available have been effective. For first admission (Reception) in September 2017, 92.2% of on-time applicants were allocated their first preference, and 98.2% of on-time applicants were offered one of their preferences.
6. 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, be sent to the following:
  - 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
    - Integrated Children's Disability service (ICDS)
    - School Improvement
    - Elective Home Education
    - Place Planning
    - Fair Access.
7. A copy of the poster will be sent to Early Years providers and GP surgeries where no email address is available.
  8. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council's intranet from the opening of the admission round (6 November 2017) to the closing date (15 January 2018).
  9. Two short videos about applying for school places will be posted on the Council's public website.

### **Consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2019-2020**

10. All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 28 February every year.
11. 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.
12. 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](http://www.education.gov.uk)
13. 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 2014, paragraphs 1.42 – 1.50).
14. 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.
15. Nottinghamshire County Council's consultation on school admission arrangements 2019-2020 will take place from 2 October 2017 to 26 November 2017.
16. 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 6**.
17. A 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.
18. There will also be publicity via social media and the Council's intranet.

### **Other Options Considered**

19. Without this publicity regarding applying for school places for September 2018 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.
20. Consultation regarding the proposed school admission arrangements 2019-2020 is not optional.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

21. To enable the County Council to meet its statutory responsibility to consult on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed admission arrangements 2019-2020.
22. The methods used are cost effective, particularly the use of social media.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

23. 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**

24. 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 6 November 2017) will be sent with the posters and summary of the statutory consultation (which opens on 2 October 2017). The combined cost will be £498 and this 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 2018 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 communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the statutory consultation on Nottinghamshire County Council's proposed school admission arrangements 2019-2020 be approved.

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### **Constitutional Comments (SLB 27/09/17)**

25. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 02/10/17)**

26. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraph 24 above.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

None.

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

All.

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