

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## CABINET

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**Date of meeting:** 24 March 2009  
**Report of:** John Weeks,  
**Title:** School Admissions

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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This Decision Paper reports on the outcome of the consultations held during the Spring Term 2009 on Cheshire East's proposed coordinated scheme and admission arrangements for the school year commencing September 2010 in order that arrangements can be determined by 15 April in the year preceding admission, in accordance with Statutory requirements.

### 2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve
- the proposed **coordinated admission schemes**, which all local authorities are required by section 88M of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA) and the Co-ordination Regulations to have in place;
  - the proposed **admission arrangements** for its community and controlled schools, which are the overall procedure, practices, criteria and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places, and;
  - notification of the determined arrangements to all consultees within 14 days of determination.

### 3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 None

### 4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 Members should note that the costs of School Admissions are charged to the Dedicated Schools Grant within the element for central expenditure.

### 5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Authority has a duty to comply with the mandatory requirements imposed by the School Admissions Code (or by statutory provisions) The Code is made under section 84 of the SSFA 1998 as amended by section 40 of the EIA 2006.

- 5.2 It is a mandatory requirement of the School Admissions Code, made in accordance with section 88M of the SSFA and The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2007 and 2008, that local authorities determine a scheme by 15 April for coordinating the admission arrangements for maintained schools within their area.
- 5.3 Admission arrangements must also be determined by 15 April and authorities must, within 14 days of determination, give notice in writing to all consultees. A copy of the determined arrangements must also be included on the Authority's website, including information on how objections to the Schools Adjudicator can be made (which should be by 31 July in the determination year).

## **6.0 Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 If the Local Authority does not determine its admission arrangements and coordinated scheme before 15 April 2009, it will be in breach of its statutory duty to comply with the provisions of the School Admissions Code. If the Local Authority does not notify the Secretary of state that it has adopted a coordination scheme by 15 April, the Secretary of State may impose one.

## **7.0 Background and Options**

- 7.1 Following authorisation by the Cabinet on 2 December 2008 consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes for 2010 was notified to parents, local groups, schools in the relevant area, neighbouring local authorities, and to trade unions regarding proposed increases to published admission numbers.
- 7.2 Consultation, which commenced on 1 January and ended on the statutory closing date of 1 March 2009, included the following proposed changes:

### **Primary Admissions:**

- Admissions timetable revised resulting in an earlier decision on applications;
- Coordinated Scheme revised timetable - adjusted around the proposed change to the admissions timetable;
- Amendment to *sibling* criterion within the oversubscription criteria to remove infant to junior school cross-linked siblings.

### **Secondary Admissions**

- Proposed oversubscription criteria for considering external applications for sixth form places where more applications are received than there are places available;
- Proposed minimum entry requirements for admission to sixth form (internal and external candidates);
- Proposed Published Admission numbers for admission to sixth forms for external applicants.

#### Primary and Secondary Admissions:

- A later closing date for submitting appeal applications with a separate date for accepting and declining places;
- Change to the oversubscription criteria with the removal of category 6 and the addition of social need alongside medical need within category 2;
- Change to the arrangements for considering applications submitted by parents/carers stating residency based on shared responsibility for a child;
- Proposals to vary some schools' current admission numbers for September 2010 admissions, in line with net capacities
- Proposed re- zoning arrangements

7.3 The consultation exercise has produced a small number of responses. In total this year only 16 responses have been received on Cheshire East Council's proposed arrangements. As a comparison, in the past no more than 50 responses were received from all consultees on Cheshire County Council's proposed arrangements.

7.4 Proposed arrangements for 2010 were notified as follows:

- Information on the consultation exercise was included in the Spring Term Director's report with full details being made available on Cheshire County Council's website.
- An e-mail was sent out to all Cheshire East maintained schools, neighbouring authorities, local groups (e.g. travellers service) and trade unions. Full copies of the proposed arrangements were included as attachments to the e-mail.
- Notices were published in newspapers across Cheshire to inform parents and local groups with an interest, in accordance with the mandatory provision of the School Admissions Code.
- A further e-mail was sent to all schools reminding headteachers of the closing date of 1 March for responses.

7.5 The responses received are summarised within **Appendix 1**. Overall, the majority of respondents have expressed either no view or shown support for the proposed arrangements, with the exception of a small number of comments received on the proposed changes to catchment areas (**Appendix 2**) and published admission numbers (**Appendix 3**) for some schools.

7.6 The Admissions Forum will consider the aforementioned responses at its meeting of 17 March 2009. The Forum's recommendations will be reported orally at the meeting of the Cabinet on 24 March 2009 and a revised decision paper will be provided before the meeting.

7.7 The Admissions Forum will be invited to recommend to the Cabinet that the proposed admissions arrangements, with changes set out below, be approved, with any further changes proposed by the Forum,

and that all consultees be notified of the arrangements, as required by the appropriate Regulations.

- Additional text to be included in respect of waiting lists, which states: 'Precedence over other children held on the waiting list for children who are the subject of a direction to admit; are part of a managed transfer from a closing school; or who are allocated in accordance with the Authority's 'in Year Fair Access (Hard To Place) Protocol

7.8 No objections have been received to the proposed coordinated scheme for 2010. It should be noted however, that following the introduction on 10 February 2010 of the new Schools Admissions Code, it is now statutory that all local authorities coordinate applications for school places made outside the normal admission round with effect from September 2010. This includes all applications made 'in year' and into any year group other than at the normal point of entry in September. The new School Admissions Code and associated Regulation (The School Admissions (Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008) require that schemes for coordinating this process do not have to be determined until 15 April 2010, but will apply with effect from September 2010. It will therefore be necessary to revise the current arrangements for 'in year' applications at a later date and by 1 January 2010. The proposed scheme has therefore been revised as an interim measure as follows:

- The removal of the proposed 'in year' application process for September 2010, included within the consultation document, replaced with information on the requirement for local authorities to formulate a scheme by 1 January 2010, in accordance with legal requirements.

7.9 The proposed scheme for 'in year' admissions will be subject to consultation with the Admissions Forum, neighbouring local authorities and all admission authorities in Cheshire East.

7.10 The arrangements are, therefore, referred to this meeting for approval, with any further changes as recommended by the Admissions Forum.

## **8.0 Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues**

8.1 East Authority determines on 15 April arrangements for admission in September 2010 following consultation (completed by 1 March 2009) within the newly determined relevant areas (determined on 2 December 2008). In accordance with the School Admissions Code (2009) arrangements will be subject to consultation in future years.

## **9.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

9.1 The recommendation will enable the Authority to meet its statutory duty to determine for September 2010 the admission arrangements for Cheshire East community and controlled schools and the Authority's

coordinated scheme by 15 April in the year preceding admission, and notify all consultees of the decision, in accordance with legal requirements.

***For further information:***

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***Background Documents:***

School Admissions Code 2009; The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2007; The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008; The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008  
Proposed coordinated schemes for 2010  
Proposed Admission Arrangements for 2010

*Documents are available for inspection at:*

*Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ*