

Extract from minutes of People Scrutiny Committee – 7 January 2020

Schools Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme 2021 - 2022

The committee considered a report which set out the proposed school admission arrangements for the 2021 – 2022 academic year. The report set out that admission authorities were required to consult on proposed admission arrangements prior to determination and detail of the consultation undertaken was provided. The report also considered the proposed reduction in pupil admission numbers for three schools in the Dorset Council area.

The People Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to comment on the proposed arrangements prior to the report being considered by Cabinet on 28 January 2020.

The committee considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, the following points were raised:

- A discussion was held with regard to proposals to reduce pupil admission numbers in three schools and it was noted that the proposals had been made in consultation with the schools
- The principles considered when determining admission numbers, and therefore the number of classes in a year, were discussed, including the funding issues that had to be considered by the school
- It was noted that the reduction in class numbers could result in mixed age classes in some schools and councillors discussed the issues around this area
- It was noted that there was some flexibility to fund additional places where required and appropriate, or that children could be placed in alternative local schools. The guiding principle was to be able to provide places in local schools for local families
- Where there became a level of demand for places at a particular school, in consultation with the school, pupil admission numbers could be increased at relatively short notice
- In response to a question with regard to keeping children from one family within one school, it was noted that parents were able to preference for a particular school. In addition, the inclusion of a sibling link in the admissions criteria would also assist in these circumstances
- Education Authorities had a statutory duty to educate children who were resident in the UK. The impact of EU Exit was considered and it was noted that following this, EU citizens would only be able to apply for a school place in the UK once they were resident in the UK, which was a change to the previous situation, when a school place could be applied for before becoming resident
- Members of the committee thanked officers for the clear report in what could be a complex area
- The Portfolio for Children, Education and Early Help also thanked officers for the report and made reference to comments raised with

regard to the use of mixed use classes in some schools which could have positive benefits. This view was echoed by some members of the committee.

Following discussion the following recommendation was agreed.

Recommendation to Cabinet

- a) That the following policies that make up Dorset Council's School Admissions Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme for school place allocations from September 2021 be adopted:
1. Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable 2021-2022
 2. Primary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 3. Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 4. In Year Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 5. Admissions Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools 2021-2022.
 6. Admissions to Maintained Nursery Units Policy 2021-2022
 7. Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2021-2022
 8. Guidance on Placement Outside of Normal/Chronological Age Group 2021-2022
 9. Armed Forces Policy 2021-2022
 10. Guidance on Consulting on Admissions Arrangements – November 2021.
- b) That the reduction of Pupil Admissions Number be agreed for:
- St. Mary's First School, Charminster lowering its PAN from 42 places to 30 places from September 2021
 - Manor Park First School, Dorchester lowering its PAN from 90 places to 60 places from September 2021
 - Holy Trinity Primary School, Weymouth lowering its PAN from 90 to 60 places from September 2021.