

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

24 January 2023

### School Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2024/25

#### Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek views from Members on the response to the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the school year 2024/25, and to seek approval for recommendation to the County Council for determination.

## 2.0 Background

**2.1** As the Admission Authority for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in North Yorkshire, the local authority consults annually on admission arrangements. The local authority is currently required to determine its admission arrangements, which includes admissions policy and admission numbers, annually by 28 February each year. When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult by 31 January. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every seven years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

**2.2** Consultation must last for a minimum of six weeks and take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. This means that schools are consulted in the autumn term each year for admissions nearly two years later. The process is therefore, based to some degree on schools’ best estimates of the numbers of requests for places informed by the local authority’s forecasting model, which takes into account the patterns of parental preference over the years. Since the Council is the only body that may determine the matter, it falls to the Council in February each year.

**2.3** The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 124) require local authorities to determine relevant areas for consultation on admission arrangements. The relevant areas for schools maintained by North Yorkshire County Council are as follows:

For Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, the relevant area for consultation is the entire County of North Yorkshire, plus the City of York and the area of Bradford Metropolitan Authority served at secondary level by South Craven School.

For Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust Schools and Academies the relevant area for consultation is North Yorkshire County Council and admission authorities within a radius of 3 miles of the school, including admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas.

It is proposed that relevant areas for consultation remain unchanged.

**2.4** Consultation has taken place with the headteachers and governors of three Nursery Schools, 300 Primary schools (90 Community, 80 Voluntary Controlled (VC), 21 Voluntary Aided (VA), 85 Converter Academy Schools, 21 Sponsored Academy schools, two Free Schools and one Foundation Trust). The local authority also consulted 43 Secondary schools (14 are Community, one Voluntary Aided (VA), 19 Converter Academy Schools 8 Sponsored Academy Schools and one Free School), parents and other groups in the local area, the 13 neighbouring authorities, and with the relevant diocesan authorities. The consultation took place between 20 October and 9 December 2022 and was

published on the NYCC website; all schools are asked to display a poster promoting the consultation providing a link to the consultation and giving details of how to obtain a hard copy of the consultation documents.

- 2.5** At the closing date of 9 December 2022 a total of 241 responses had been submitted. The majority of responses were from schools and in respect of their published admission numbers (PAN). Any Member wishing to see the detail of a response from a school in their area may do so by contacting the Admissions Team at [schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk)
- 2.6** Schools were asked to express their agreement or otherwise with the proposals relating to their own proposed Published Admission Number (PAN), the proposed admissions policy for LA maintained, Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, the proposed admissions policy for LA maintained Nursery schools and classes, pre-reception classes and pre-schools under school governance. In addition, they had the opportunity to make any other comments. Not all school respondents commented on every proposal within the consultation.
- 2.7** As in previous consultations it has been seen that many consultees simply respond to the agree/disagree questions. In an effort to encourage greater interaction with the wider range of consultees, all respondents were asked to put forward comments on any aspect of the consultation.
- 2.8** There are three key areas to the consultation, details of which are set out below:

### **3.0 Admission Policy**

- 3.1** Admissions policy (criteria for determining admissions where schools are oversubscribed):

The proposed admission policy for local authority maintained community and voluntary controlled schools, and the proposed policy for nursery schools and schools with nursery and pre-reception classes have been updated to reflect the relevant dates.

- 3.2** Responses to the proposed Admission Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

Of the 241 schools who responded in relation to their published admission number, no comments from schools were received regarding the NYCC proposed policy.

One member of the public responded regarding the inclusion of an additional oversubscription criterion in relation to children attending a feeder nursery attached to a school and that they be given a higher priority, they commented:

*I would like to propose an amendment to the priority ranking that is applied when allocating primary school places. Currently, the priority ranking makes no allowance for if a child is already attending a nursery that is associated with / part of a primary school. I suggest this is changed and propose that children attending a nursery associated with a school should be given a high priority for attending that primary school. I propose this because I believe that children benefit significantly from attending a stable environment with the same friends and the same staff. I believe this is particularly true for children who will be starting primary school in 2024/25, due to the impact that the covid pandemic had on their early years*

Within the School Admissions Code there is the option for an admission authority to give priority to children attending a school's nursery provision and also to feeder schools.

Not all primary schools have a nursery. If the suggestion were adopted then parents would potentially have priority for two schools, one based on their home address and another based on the nursery that their child attends. Therefore, schools without a nursery may be adversely affected through inclusion of this criterion.

If the Authority were to propose this as an oversubscription criterion, then consideration would also need to be given to having feeder schools as a criterion applicable at the point of transfer for junior / secondary schools. It is of note that some parents already choose for their child to attend a school or

nursery that is some distance from their home address. This would be likely to increase if feeder schools were to be included within the junior / secondary oversubscription criteria, and a negative impact on the popularity of certain infant / primary schools across the county can be foreseen.

Officers fully understand the point that the respondent makes but consider that a child's home address should be held as the key factor rather than the school or nursery that a child attends, and therefore no change to the proposed arrangements has been made.

- 3.3** Responses to the proposed Admission Policy for Nursery Schools, Schools with Nursery and Pre-reception classes. A total of 241 schools responded. No comments were received regarding the proposed policy.

#### **4.0 Published Admission Numbers (PAN)**

- 4.1** The proposed Published Admission Numbers (PAN's) for 2024/25 are attached at appendices 4 and 5. The County Council sets the admission limits of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in consultation with the governing body of the school.

- 4.2** An own admission authority school (Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust Schools, Academies or Free Schools) is not required to include a proposal to increase or keep the same admission number in any consultation on admission arrangements. Conversely, all admission authorities must consult if they propose a decrease in PAN. As the admission authority for a community or voluntary controlled school the local authority must consult the governing body of each school whether it proposes to increase, decrease or keep the same admission number. Community and Voluntary Controlled schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the PAN set for them is lower than they would wish.

- 4.3** The Authority has consulted with the governing bodies of all community and voluntary controlled schools as part of this annual consultation process. There are 184 Community and Voluntary Controlled schools of which 136 agreed, five requested a PAN change and 43 schools didn't respond. The Authority has been able to agree the request of all five schools who requested a change.

- 4.4.** The local authority is responsible for school place planning across the whole of the county and must ensure that there are sufficient school places for every child of statutory school age. This means that schools cannot be considered in isolation, and the wider impact of any change in admission numbers must be taken into consideration.

#### **5.0 Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements**

- 5.1** All admission authorities must participate in co-ordination and provide the local authority with the information it needs to co-ordinate admissions for the normal admission rounds by the dates agreed within the scheme.

The dates have been updated to reflect the academic year 2024/2025 (Appendix 1)

There is no longer a mandatory requirement for local authorities to undertake in-year co-ordination for schools for which we are not the admission authority. We can however coordinate in year admissions with the agreement of the relevant admission authorities.

- 5.2** It is proposed that within North Yorkshire the local authority will continue to co-ordinate in-year admissions for all community and voluntary controlled schools. In order for the scheme to operate effectively across all schools, including own admission authority schools, it is proposed that the local authority will also continue to co-ordinate in-year admissions on behalf of the governing bodies of own admission authority schools which elect to be party to the scheme.

The In Year Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements Scheme (Appendix 1a) proposes the retention of in-year co-ordination of admissions by the local authority including own admission authority schools

- 5.3** The School Admissions Code 2021 states that ‘local authorities must, on request, provide information to a parent about the places still available in all schools within its area. Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside the normal admission round.
- 5.4** Own admission authority schools must, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the local authority of both the application and its outcome, to allow the local authority to keep up to date figures on the availability of places in the area.
- 5.5** Of the 241 school respondents, no schools made comment in respect of the proposed arrangements. No responses have been received from any of North Yorkshire’s neighbouring LA’s.

## **6.0 General Comments**

- 6.1** All schools were given the opportunity to submit any general comments in relation to the consultation, the majority of schools did not do so.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1** The consultation on proposed admissions arrangements for 2024/25 is in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation. Failure to comply with admission arrangements as determined can lead to challenge by way of objections to the Schools Adjudicator or complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 7.2** The authority has considered that if the recommendations are accepted they have universal application, and therefore no adverse impacts upon any person or groups who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

<b>8.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2024/2025 be recommended to the County Council for approval on 22 February 2023 include:</li><li>• the proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements appendix 1</li><li>• the proposed co-ordinated in year admission arrangements appendix 1a</li><li>• the proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled schools appendix 2</li><li>• the proposed admission policy for nursery schools, schools with nursery classes and pre-reception classes, appendix 3</li><li>• the proposed published admission numbers (PAN’s) for community and voluntary controlled schools as shown in appendices 4(Primary) and 5 (Secondary)</li></ul>

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COUNTY HALL  
NORTHALLERTON  
January 2023

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## **Relevant Legislation**

School Admissions Code 2021

The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 124)

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements scheme
- Appendix 1a - proposed co-ordinated in year admission arrangements
- Appendix 2 - proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled schools
- Appendix 3 - proposed admission policy for nursery schools, schools with nursery classes, pre-reception classes and school run pre-schools under school governance
- Appendix 4 - proposed PAN's – primary
- Appendix 5 - proposed PAN's – secondary