

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

23 January 2024

School Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2025/26

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

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 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 2025/26, and to seek approval for recommendation to the Council for determination.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As the Admission Authority for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in North Yorkshire, the Council consults annually on admission arrangements. The Council 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 complete a consultation 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 Council’s forecasting model, which takes into account the patterns of parental preference over the years. Since North Yorkshire Council is the only body that may determine the matter, it falls to the Council to determine the arrangements 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 Council are as follows:
- 2.3.1 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.
- 2.3.2 For Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust Schools and Academies the relevant area for consultation is North Yorkshire Council and admission authorities within a radius of 3 miles of the school, including admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas.
- 2.3.3 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, 297 Primary schools (85 Community, 77 Voluntary Controlled (VC), 21 Voluntary Aided (VA), 90 Converter Academy Schools, 21 Sponsored Academy schools, two Free Schools and one Foundation Trust). The local authority also consulted 43 Secondary schools (13 are Community,

one Voluntary Aided (VA), 20 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 27 October and 15 December 2023 and was published on the NYC website; all schools are asked to display a poster promoting the consultation and providing a link to the consultation with details of how to obtain a hard copy of the consultation documents.

- 2.5** At the closing date of 15 December 2023, a total of 208 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
- 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 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.

3.0 Key aspects of the consultation and responses

- 3.1** Admissions policy 2025/26 (criteria for determining admissions where schools are oversubscribed)
- 3.1.1 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 for 2025-26.
- 3.1.2 Of the 207 school respondents, no schools made comment in respect of the proposed arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools. No responses have been received from any of North Yorkshire's neighbouring LA's.
- 3.1.3 Equally, no schools or neighbouring LA's made comment in respect of the proposed Admission Policy for Nursery Schools, Schools with Nursery and Pre-reception classes
- 3.2** Proposed co-ordinated Admission Arrangements 2025/26
- 3.2.1 The proposed co-ordinated Admission Arrangement documents were updated to reflect the relevant dates for 2025-26 and consulted upon.
- 3.2.2 Of the 207 school respondents, no schools made comment in respect of the proposed co-ordination arrangements. No responses have been received from any of North Yorkshire's neighbouring LA's.
- 3.3** Proposed changes to school catchment area – Thirsk School and Sixth Form College
- 3.3.1 Officers identified that there were three villages in an area that is served by Knayton CE Primary School where the secondary catchment area differs to the remaining villages in the same primary catchment area. These villages are Kewwick, Over Silton and Nether Silton

3.3.2 Kewick, Over Silton and Nether Silton are served by Northallerton School and Sixth Form College. The remaining villages in the Primary catchment area are served by Thirsk School and Sixth Form College.

3.3.3 This resulted in an anomaly whereby the majority of children living in the Knayton CE Primary area were given priority for places at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College under Criterion 3 of the Admission Arrangements (in catchment), whereas the children living in Kewick, Over Silton and Nether Silton are not given the same priority as they were considered to be out of area for Thirsk School and Sixth Form College.

3.3.4 To remove any potential issues for parents, carers and children who currently live in Kewick, Nether Silton and Over Silton it is proposed that the current catchment area for Thirsk School and Sixth Form College is extended to include those three parishes.

3.3.5 Parents and carers within this extended area will still be able to preference Northallerton School and Sixth Form College as their catchment School and Thirsk School and Sixth Form College as their joint catchment school.

3.3.6 One consultee responded regarding the proposed change to the catchment area:

Knayton Parish Council supports the proposal that the three villages - Kewick, Over Silton and Nether Silton - served by Knayton CE primary school should have the catchment area changed so that they are served by Thirsk School and 6th Form College.

4.0 Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

4.1 The proposed Published Admission Numbers (PAN's) for 2025/26 are attached at appendices 6 and 7. The 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 Council 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 Council 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. Officers have been able to agree the request of all five schools who requested a change.

4.4. The Council 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 Council with the information it needs to co-ordinate admissions for the normal admission rounds by the dates agreed within the scheme.

5.2 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.

5.3 It is proposed that within North Yorkshire the Council 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 Council 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 Council including own admission authority schools

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 2025/26 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 Council 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.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 The Executive is asked to recommend the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2025/2026 to full Council for approval on 21 February 2024 and include:

- the proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements (appendix 1)
- the proposed co-ordinated in year admission arrangements (appendix 1a)
- the proposed admission policy for community and voluntary controlled schools (appendix 2)
- the proposed admission policy for nursery schools, schools with nursery classes and pre-reception classes (appendix 3)
- the proposed published admission numbers (PAN's) for community and voluntary controlled schools as shown in appendices 6 (Primary) and 7 (Secondary)
- Proposed changes to school catchment area – Thirsk School and Sixth Form College (appendix 8)

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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 - Primary Schools and addresses

Appendix 5 - Secondary Schools and addresses

Appendix 6 - Proposed PAN's – primary

Appendix 7 - Proposed PAN's – secondary

Appendix 8 - Proposed changes to school catchment area – Thirsk School and Sixth Form College