

## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 14 March 2017
<b>Report Subject</b>	School Admission Arrangements 2018
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise on the admission arrangements for September 2018 and to recommend approval.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the proposed admission arrangements for 2018/19 be approved.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS</b>																				
1.01	<p>In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the local authority is required to undertake a statutory consultation exercise on its admission arrangements for the following year. Consultation must be complete by 1 March and the admission arrangements must be determined by 15 April each year. Statutory consultees include all schools in the area, the diocesan authorities, and neighbouring authorities.</p>																				
1.02	<p>Consultation must cover the full admission arrangements including the admissions policy, over-subscription criteria, the timetable for admissions and admission numbers (ie the maximum number of pupils to be admitted into each year group). This information is attached as Appendices 1 and 2.</p>																				
1.03	<p>The current admission arrangements have been in place since 2003 and the majority of parental preferences continue to be met (approximately 96%). For information, the number of admission appeals in recent years is detailed in the table below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 943 968 1135"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Year</b></th> <th><b>Secondary</b></th> <th><b>Primary</b></th> <th><b>Total</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>46</td> <td>81</td> <td>127</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014/15</td> <td>20</td> <td>54</td> <td>74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>66</td> <td>71</td> <td>137</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17*</td> <td>36</td> <td>50</td> <td>86</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*to date</p> <p>It is anticipated that oversubscription will continue at secondary and primary level in some areas of the County as a consequence of parental preference.</p>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	2013/14	46	81	127	2014/15	20	54	74	2015/16	66	71	137	2016/17*	36	50	86
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1.04	<p>During the consultation process, there was a comment received from a primary headteacher regarding admission from Nursery to Reception in the light of several Nursery pupils not being able to gain places in the Reception class at the same school last year. The headteacher commented that this caused disruption not only to the children and parents but the school too was disappointed given the hard work and effort put in by staff in what they see as the most important class in the school. The suggestion was that Nursery education should be made statutory or that the provision should be taken away entirely. This view is reflected amongst some other primary headteachers too.</p> <p>However, local authorities are constrained by the Welsh Government School Admissions Code which clearly states that attendance at Nursery is not statutory and can have no bearing on the allocation of places at Reception. The reasons given are (a) it can advantage those parents willing to travel a distance to allow their child to attend Nursery and they would then have priority over local parents for Reception places, and (b) it can disadvantage local families who have opted for other providers at Nursery stage or who have private child care arrangements. In the absence of a statutory change it is not recommended that local provision is changed or withdrawn.</p>																				

1.05	The proposed admissions timetable has been drawn up in consultation with neighbouring authorities and takes into account factors such as allowing parents sufficient time to visit schools and express their preferences, the time needed to process applications, etc. The timetable also incorporates the “common offer dates” prescribed by the School Admissions Code (ie 1 March for secondary and 16 April for primary).
1.06	There are no changes proposed to the admissions oversubscription criteria themselves. However, the opportunity has been taken to amend the wording in the admissions procedure to urge parents to express more than one preference for a school. If their single preference cannot be met, applicants can find themselves being offered places that are remaining at other schools after all other allocations to second preferences have been completed. Expressing a preference for a school gives an applicant an advantage over those who have not. The revised wording is reflected in Appendix 1, page 3. Similarly, the wording regarding the procedure for applying to change schools during the school year (Appendix 1, page 7) has been amended to clarify that all such applications are managed by the local authority, in consultation with schools.
1.07	The opportunity has been taken to amend the admission numbers in respect of several schools to reflect changes in accommodation. These include Ysgol Cae'r Nant, Ysgol Parc y Llan, Connah's Quay High School, St David's High School, and St Richard Gwyn. All changes have been approved by the headteachers concerned.
1.08	Applications for places are made using the Council's online system and this is working well. Assistance is provided by both the Admissions Team and Flintshire Connects for any parents experiencing difficulties with the online system. 100% of applications are now received online. However, hard copies of application forms will continue to be made available on request to any parent who does not have access to an on line facility.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Numbers of appeals will continue to be monitored to ensure sufficient capacity to present and clerk appeals in a timely manner.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	All statutory consultees have been consulted in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	The annual determination of admission arrangements must be carried out in accordance with the framework and timetable in the School Admissions Code. Consultation has been completed and approval is being sought within the deadlines set out in the Code. Adherence to the Code minimises

	the risk of challenge to the Public Services Ombudsman by way of judicial review.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Admission Arrangements 2018/19 Appendix 2 – Admission Numbers

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Gill Yates, Pupil Support Services Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704187 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gill.yates@flintshire.gov.uk">gill.yates@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>School Admission Arrangements</b> – the overall procedure and practices about how to apply for a school place, including the criteria to decide how places are allocated, application procedures, the timetable for the admissions process, how late applications are handled, waiting lists and the appeal process.</p> <p><b>School Admissions Code</b> – a Code issued by Welsh Government in respect of the discharge of admissions functions. All admission authorities have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the Code.</p> <p><b>Oversubscription criteria</b> – a list of criteria which an admission authority must adopt to be used for the allocation of places if there are more applications received than there are places available.</p> <p><b>Admission Number</b> - the number of school places that an admission authority may offer in each year group.</p>