

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting**

Provisions for Children without a School Place / Fair Access

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise provisions for children without a school place and the Council's Fair Access process.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- a) To make any comments or recommendations in response to information provided at the meeting.
- b) To consider whether any further scrutiny of this issue is required.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The number of children being considered through Fair Access has increased drastically over the past 12 months due to a lack of capacity across many city schools and an increased rate of migration in to the city.
- 3.2 The majority of secondary schools are full in all year groups, resulting in almost every secondary aged child who moves in to the city being placed through the Fair Access process instead of the normal admission process. A large number of primary schools are also full, especially in certain areas of the city and in certain year groups, which has led to the establishment of primary Fair Access panels from September 2024.
- 3.3 When an application is unsuccessful through the normal in-year admission process, the cases are picked up via the Local Authority's without a school place process and then ultimately through the Fair Access Process if a place cannot be secured.
- 3.4 When an application meets consideration through the Fair Access process, the Local Authority must offer suitable education provision within 20 school days.
- 3.5 The Local Authority has a dedicated budget for Fair Access, to allow schools to put into place any support that is required to ensure a successful admission. This could include things such as paying for uniform when the family are suffering financial hardship, paying for a TA

to support, or funding support through services such as Behaviour Support Team.

- 3.6 Last academic year saw the highest number of children considered under our Fair Access Process. The main reason for this was a large increase in inward migration to Nottingham City from other parts of the world, such as Africa, Pakistan and India. Due to an increase in the number of children needing to be placed through Fair Access, the Local Authority had to consult on changes to the Fair Access Protocol.
- 3.7 The Committee may be minded to assess the risk that is posed to the Council if the current levels of children moving into the City remains. This includes not being to place children within a reasonable walking distance, and thus the Council could be failing in our duty to provide education provision, or have to incur significant transport costs for children/families who are being placed out of area.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Report from the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, the Corporate Director for Children and Education, and the Director of Education.

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None.

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 None.

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All.

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
damon.stanton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk