

Executive Board – 17 December 2024

Subject:	School Admission Arrangements 2026/2027
Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Jill Colbert (Corporate Director), Nicholas Lee (Director)
Executive Member(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Report author and contact details:	Danny Hall – Service Delivery Lead (Education) Danny.Hall@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 01158764628
Other colleagues who have provided input:	
Subject to call-in:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Criteria for Key Decision:	
(a)	<input type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £750,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision
and/or	
(b)	Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Type of expenditure:	<input type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital If Capital, provide the date considered by Capital Board Date:
Total value of the decision:	Nil
Section 151 Officer expenditure approval	
Has the spend been approved by the Section 151 Officer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/a
Spend Control Board approval reference number:	
Commissioner Consideration	
Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any comments the Commissioners wish to provide are listed below.	
Wards affected:	All
Date of consultation with Executive Member(s):	
Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:	
Clean, Green and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in Our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):	
<p>Nottingham City Council is making changes to the admission arrangements for community schools and the processes for coordinating admissions with other admission authorities. The key changes include increasing the number of secondary school preferences available to parent/carers from 4 to 6, which will improve the chances of families securing a preferred secondary school and help streamline the appeals process.</p> <p>Additionally, we plan to extend the waiting list operating period, amending the closing date from May each year to June, offering more flexibility for families moving into the area whilst remaining mindful of the end of term.</p>	

A new Year 6 waiting list will also be introduced to bring it in line with processes for other year groups, reduce repeat-applications and support vulnerable families that disproportionately find themselves applying for in-year transfers.

Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?

No.

Recommendation(s):

- 1 To approve the local authority's proposed admission arrangements for introduction at the 2026/2027 academic year.

1. Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 Nottingham City Council is seeking to make changes to the admission arrangements for community schools and the processes for coordinating admissions with other admission authorities. The three changes being proposed are:
 - 1.2 Increase Secondary Preferences: We propose expanding the number of school preferences for secondary applications from 4 to 6. This adjustment will significantly improve parents chances of securing a school placement of their preference. By offering more choices, we aim to decrease the number of appeals and late applications, which currently add complexity and delay to admissions processing. Ultimately, this change will streamline and simplify the admissions journey, resulting in a smoother experience for families and the Admissions Team processes.
 - 1.3 Extend Waiting List Closing Date: We recommend extending the closing date for school waiting lists from the May half-term to the end of June. This extension will be particularly beneficial for families relocating to the area toward the end of the academic year, offering them a realistic opportunity to secure a suitable school placement without unnecessary delay, waiting for the new academic year. For schools, it provides a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and the numbers on roll ahead of the new academic year, minimising last-minute disruptions by still acknowledging any applications received from the beginning of July will not be considered for a start prior to September. By clarifying that applications received on or after July 1st will apply to the new academic year, we ensure a more organised and predictable transition for all and benefits to the administrative processes.
 - 1.4 Introduce Year 6 Waiting List: To address challenges faced by families, particularly vulnerable households and those with language barriers which we see disproportionately as part of inward migration, we propose introducing a dedicated Year 6 waiting list. This will eliminate the need for weekly reapplications which is the current process in order to continue being considered should a place become available. The change makes the admissions process more accessible and equitable for all families. By reducing barriers to securing a school place, we ensure that more children, regardless of their backgrounds, have access to education when they arrive, or begin to be supported through our processes where a place cannot be offered. We do however still acknowledge the challenges of moving children in Year 6 and so parents/carers of the potential impacts and discourage families from doing so where an existing school place is available to them

- 1.5 The unamended sections of the arrangements continue to support the Council with complying with the School Admissions Code and providing services that are efficient and citizen focused.

2 Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 2.1 The local authority is the admissions authority for community schools and is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these schools.
- 2.2 Local authorities are required to consult on any changes to their admission arrangements whenever changes are being proposed. If there are no changes proposed, there must be at least one consultation every 7 years. The consultation window for such processes is 1st October to 31st January and all consultations must run for a minimum period of 6 weeks. As the arrangements proposed for 2026/2027 include changes, a consultation was opened on the 1st October.
- 2.3 The consultation results are included as an appendix to this report alongside a summary report explaining the responses in detail and our consideration toward them.

3 Other options considered in making recommendations

- 3.1 The alternative option would be to make no change to the arrangements however, when considered, and taking into account the context this would not be in the interest of parent/carers of Nottingham. For context, there has been an increasing number of in-year applications due to inward migration which has placed additional pressures on KS2 and secondary phase capacity.

In addition, the process for a Year 6 in-year application is different and more difficult to that of other years, which was previously to discourage movement in the last year of primary however as the demographic of the city continues to change with more inward migration and vulnerable groups navigating the process in-year, it is important to implement changes to support them.

4 Consideration of Risk

- 4.1 There are no known risks associated to the proposed changes.

5 Best Value Considerations, including consideration of Make or Buy where appropriate

N/A

6 Commissioner comments

- 6.1 Commissioners have reviewed and approved with no further commentary.

7 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant from this report as this is an administrative change.

- Susan Woodland – Interim Senior Commercial Business Partner (Children and Education) 24/10/2024

8 Legal colleague comments

- 8.1 All admission authorities are required to have an Admissions Policy which complies with the Schools Admission Code 2021. As stated in 2.2 above admission authorities are required to consult on any changes to their admission arrangements whenever changes are being proposed and the consultation window is fixed to a minimum 6 week period which must run between 1 October – 31 January
- 8.2 Admissions arrangements need to be determined by 28 February and once determined there is a power for objections to be made to the Schools Adjudicator.
- 8.3 As indicated in the Response Report, the consultation responses were significantly in support of the proposed changes and therefore whilst legislation provides an opportunity for objections to the Policy to be made to the Schools Adjudicator once it has been adopted, the risk of that happening would appear low at this stage.

Ann Barrett – Team Leader, Legal and Governance – 12/11/2024

9 Other relevant comments

N/A

10 Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)

Admission arrangements are set to enable all school age children to access a suitable school place at the appropriate time, as far as possible according to their parents' preference, so that they are not vulnerable to crime and disorder.

11 Social value considerations (If Applicable)

11.1 N/A

12 Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)

12.1 N/A

13 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

13.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

An EIA is not required because this is an administrative change without any disadvantage or material change that could impact on any protected groups.

Yes

14 Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

14.1 Has the data protection impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

A DPIA is not required because this does not include any personal information, and in accordance with s.88C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the admission authority for a maintained school must, before the beginning of each school year, determine the admission arrangements which are to apply for that year.

Yes

15 Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)

15.1 Has the carbon impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

A CIA is not required because this is in relation to an administrative process.

Yes

16 List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

16.1 None.

17 Published documents referred to in this report

17.1 School Admissions Code 2021.

17.2 The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.