

Report to: EXECUTIVE CABINET

Date: 8 February 2023

Executive Member: Councillor Leanne Feeley – Executive Member (Education, Achievement and Equalities)

Reporting Officer: Ali Stathers-Tracey – Director, Children’s Services

Subject: **SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING**

Report Summary: The report sets out the proposed admission arrangements for Tameside community, and voluntary controlled schools for admission in September 2024 following a public consultation exercise. There are proposed changes to the Published Admission Number at two community high schools and slight amendments to the wording of the school admission arrangements to comply with the School Admissions Code. The latest information on school place planning is presented which concludes that there are currently sufficient places to meet expected demand. The school place planning process must continue to be dynamic particularly in view of significant housing development that is predicted within the borough and the impact that will have on demand and travel to learn patterns. Consideration also needs to be given to predicted rising levels of surplus capacity in some areas of the borough and the need to consider reducing admission numbers in future years. The report concludes that there is a need to continue to develop capacity for specialist places given the predicted continuing rise in demand.

The report also asks the Cabinet to consider approving capital spend to support the establishment of a new specialist resource base at Dane Bank Primary School.

Recommendations: The Executive Cabinet be recommended to:

- (i) Approve the determination of admission arrangements for all Tameside community and voluntary controlled schools for 2024/25 as set out in **Appendix 1** of the Report;
- (ii) Approve a reduction in the published admission number at Hyde Community College to 210 from September 2024
- (iii) Approve a reduction in the published admission number at Denton Community College to 270 from September 2024
- (iv) Approve a grant agreement for £63,066 with The CLIC Trust to create a safe outdoor space; a breakout space; a sensory room and remodel a current classroom to accommodate a new resource at Dane Bank Primary School. This will provide 10 resourced pupil places for children with communication and interaction needs for at least 10 years from Easter 2023.

Corporate Plan: The proposals contained within this report will support the delivery of the Community Strategy, through the delivery of sufficient and suitable places in 2024/25

Policy Implications: The amendments proposed in this report will enable Tameside Council to continue to operate within the School Admissions Code. The admission arrangements for 2024/25 academic year for all voluntary controlled and community schools are broadly similar to those for 2023/24 as determined on 26 January 2022.

**Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the statutory
Section 151 Officer)** All schools places are funded from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant which must be fully allocated to all schools and Academies in the borough.

Mainstream Schools and Academies are funded on a per pupil basis, any schools with falling numbers of pupils on roll face financial pressures, which will need be managed.

The continued demand for Specialist Provision is creating further financial pressures on the High Needs budget that is already significantly in deficit and subject to a deficit recovery plan. The Local Authority is working with the Department of Education as part of the Delivering Better Value Programme to seek to address the deficit.

Specialist resource bases in mainstream school provide a good value for money proposal in terms of cost to the High Needs Block. Special Provision Capital Grant funding is available to support the £63k capital works required to establish the resource base places.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough
Solicitor)** The legal implications for the School Admissions Code are set out in the main body of the report.

With regards the grant agreement legal services will provide support to ensure that the agreement is appropriate and deliver the required outcomes.

Risk Management: Failure to determine admission arrangements and a coordinated admissions scheme by 15 March 2023 could result in the Secretary of State imposing admissions arrangements on the Council and lead to the displacement of children from community high schools.

Background Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Catherine Moseley, Head of Access Services



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All admission authorities are required to consult on their coordinated admission scheme and on changes to admission arrangements. Where no changes are proposed to the coordinated admissions scheme or admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.
- 1.2 Admission authorities must consult once every seven years as a minimum.

2. CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND ADMISSION NUMBERS IN COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

- 2.1 For entry to school in September 2024 a consultation took place on a change to published admission numbers (PAN) at Hyde High School and Denton Community School as outlined below. The proposed PAN change will only affect two community high schools and will not affect any academies, voluntary aided or free schools who are responsible for their own admission arrangements.
- 2.2 There was also a consultation on minor changes to the definition of the child's home address and to update all arrangements to improve alignment with the Admissions Code for the definition and procedure for admission outside of normal age range.

Proposed changes to published admission numbers

- 2.3 Since 2005, the birth rate in Tameside has been gradually increasing with births peaking in 2012. Due to the increase in the birth rates, this required an increase in school places to meet demand, firstly in the primary sector and subsequently in high schools as children moved from year 6 into secondary education.
- 2.4 Additional places were added at a number of high schools across the borough with a mix of temporary and permanent places. The peak of births has now passed and the birth rate has reduced and has sustained at lower levels over the last 2 years, with rates predicted to remain at these lower levels over the next few years. In light of this, there is a need to remove the additional places created to meet this higher demand and the council consulted on a reduction to the published admission number at two community high schools.
- 2.5 Following agreement with Hyde High School, it was agreed to consult on a reduction in the published admission number from 240 to 210.
- 2.6 Following agreement with Denton Community College, it was agreed to consult on a reduction in the published admission number from 330 to 270.

Proposed change to the wording of home address in the admission arrangements

- 2.7 To provide further clarity on the definition of wording on home address where parents have shared responsibility for a child, each for part of week, it was proposed to amend the wording to change from:
- 'Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the child travels to school for the majority of school days per week
- and amend the definition to:
- 'Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the parent receives the child benefit'.
- 2.8 The following documents are proposed to be updated to reflect this change (**Appendix 1**):
- Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools
 - Admission Arrangements for Community High Schools
 - Coordinated Admissions for Schools in Tameside for 2024-25

- Admission Arrangements for Stalyhill Junior School

Admission outside Normal Age Group

- 2.9 The consultation proposed that this section of the admission arrangements be updated to improve the wording to align with the Admissions Code and to ensure further clarity on the example reasons a parent may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group.
- 2.10 The following documents are proposed to be updated to reflect this change:
- Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools
 - Admission Arrangements for Community High Schools
 - Coordinated Admissions for Schools in Tameside for 2024-25

Consultation

- 2.11 On 3 November 2022, the Local Authority circulated the proposed published admission numbers and admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for consultation. The closing date for the consultation was 15 December 2022.
- 2.12 The following organisations were consulted:
- The Headteacher and Governors of all Tameside maintained schools;
 - Parents;
 - Derbyshire Local Authority;
 - Manchester Local Authority;
 - Oldham Local Authority;
 - Stockport Local Authority;
 - Tameside Local Authority;
 - Chester Diocese;
 - Manchester Diocese;
 - Salford Diocese;
 - Shrewsbury Diocese; and
 - Local MPs
- 2.13 A Public Notice was also published in the Tameside Reporter on 3 November 2022 in order to notify parents and other groups in the area of their rights to be consulted and the consultation was posted on the Tameside MBC website.
- 2.14 No responses were received to the consultation and it is recommended that the changes outlined above are implemented for September 2024.

3. SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

- 3.1 School place planning in the borough is reviewed on an annual basis and forms part of the annual report on admission arrangements that is reported to Executive Cabinet in January. **Appendix 2** sets out the latest information.
- 3.2 All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet demand in the area. These may be school places available at provision maintained by the local authority, academies, or other non-maintained schools. In order to carry out this statutory duty, Councils need to carry out school place planning and forecasting.
- 3.3 Planning for fluctuations in demand for school places is an important function which needs to be carried out at a local level and will differ depending on the phase of learning, for example, pupils will travel further to secondary schools than primary schools. The compact geography of the borough and the mix of types of school eg single sex means that place planning happens at a level higher than wards or towns.

- 3.4 School place planning is a complex process, that takes account a range of factors including the number of births in the borough, in year movement and cohort survival rates as well as parental preference and planned housing development. With rapid shifts in economic conditions for families and changing patterns of migration, planning for basic need for school places requires a proactive approach to best respond to both short and medium-term demand for places.
- 3.5 By being proactive and working in partnership with all our schools over a number of years, the Council has been able to meet the demand for places in spite of significant variations in pupil numbers.
- 3.6 After the sustained period of growth, data indicates the need to consider reducing levels of surplus that are predicted to increase in primary and secondary schools over the next few years.
- 3.7 There is a need to engage in dialogue with primary school leaders to begin to consider options to reduce projected levels of surplus capacity. Whilst levels of surplus in secondary schools are not expected to increase for a number of years, dialogue will begin to ensure that temporary places added to cope with the increase in pupils over recent year are removed first.
- 3.8 Whilst there are currently sufficient places to meet expected demand in mainstream provision, this is not the case for specialist places. The school place planning process must continue to be dynamic particularly in view of significant housing development and predicted increases in children and young people requiring support for their additional needs within the borough and the impact that will have on demand and travel to learn patterns.

4 ESTABLISH A 10 PLACE SPECIAL RESOURCE BASE FOR PRIMARY AGED CHILDREN AT DANE BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 4.1 In line with the information presented in the School Place Planning Annual report, there is a current proposal to increase specialist resource provision at Dane Bank Primary School. Data projections indicate that over the next 10 years, Tameside will see growth of 260% in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans with Communication and Interaction as the primary area of need.
- 4.2 Dane Bank Primary School is an academy school in Denton and part of The Changing Lives in Collaboration (CLIC) Trust. The school expressed an interest in establishing a resource base and the Head of SEND has worked with the school to agree the proposal.
- 4.3 The resource base will be a 10 place unit for primary aged children with for communication and interaction needs from Easter 2023. The school has identified accommodation within the site that can be used for the resource base. The capital works will create a safe outdoor space; a breakout space; a sensory room and remodel a current classroom to accommodate the base.
- 4.4 The Dane Bank Primary School resource base proposal was considered by a meeting of the SEND Sufficiency Group on 2 December 2022, who determined that the proposed additional specialist places are in line with the Council's plan to increase specialist sufficiency across the borough and are required to address the projected growth in this area of need. The panel therefore recommended that the Council support the proposal.
- 4.5 The works will be commissioned by The CLIC Trust with oversight from the Council's Capital Projects Team and a grant agreement would be put in place to fund the project. Quotes have been received from the school and it is recommended that a grant agreement be agreed with The CLIC Trust for £63,066.33 to provide 10 places for at least 10 years. Ongoing monitoring of the project would be through the grant agreement and reported to the Strategic Planning

and Capital Monitoring Panel.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 As set out at the front of the report.