





## REPORT TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY BOARD

27 January 2020

<b>Subject:</b>	Annual Admissions
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Councillor Joyce Underhill - Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life
<b>Director:</b>	Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b> 	  
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### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**That Scrutiny Committee:**

1. Considers the report which provides an update on how the council has continued to meet school preferences against the background of higher demand.

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on how the council has continued to meet school preferences against the background of higher demand.

#### 2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 The recommendation in this report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising

aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future, Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.

### 3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Sandwell's Admissions Team processes between 9,500 and 10,000 annual admission requests each year. By offer day in 2019, 4908 Year 7 requests had been administered, together with 4519 reception applications. A significant number of late requests are also received and processed up to the start of the school year in September.

- Of those applications offered places in reception, 89% were at schools requested as first preference (0.8% increase on the previous year and 3% increase on 2017). 95% of parents / carers secured places in one of their first three preference schools.
- Of those applications offered places in Year 7, 72.4% secured places in their first preference school (1.4% fewer than last year and 2.25% down on 2017). 89% of parents / carers secured places in one of their first three preference schools. The disparity between the level of preferences met for primary and secondary relates to the following:
  - (i) 2019 saw the highest secondary cohort for many years while a lower birth rate was responsible for a smaller reception cohort;
  - (ii) Given its popularity and an admission policy that prompts applications from all 6 towns, Sandwell Academy continues to be a school of first preference for a significant number of parents /carers, the majority of which will not receive an offer (the academy received 641 on time first preferences for 200 places;
  - (iii) The provision of 5,000 new primary places over the last eight years has raised the percentage surplus level to over 7% in reception and increased the LA's ability to meet more parental preferences.

3.2 How the meeting of preferences compared with the national, regional and statistical neighbour average on national offer day 2019.

## Primary

Region	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences met (%)	Parents who were offered one of their top 3 (%)
National	90.6	97.5
West Midlands	92.0	98.1
Stat Neighbour	90.4	97.6
Sandwell	91.2	96.6

## Secondary

Region	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences met (%)	Parents who were offered one of their top 3 (%)
National	80.9	93.0
West Midlands	78.4	91.7
Stat Neighbour	74.5	90.3
Sandwell	73.3	89.6

### 3.3 Appeals

The number of secondary annual appeals has increased in the last 4 years while there has been a significant decrease in reception and junior transfer appeals. This is in line with demand for places as lower primary cohorts move into reception while higher cohorts move into Year 7.

Year	Secondary Appeals	Primary Appeals
2016	264	343
2017	305	230
2018	275	171
2019	384	151

## 4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The process relating to reception and Year 7 admissions falls within an annual cycle, the latest position for which has been outlined in section 3 above.

## 5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 This is not applicable to this report.

## 6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no alternative options.

## **7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This is not applicable to this report

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct legal and governance implications. In accordance with the Education Act 1996 the council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places available for the children of Sandwell.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 All groups are potentially affected by the policy of expansion. This report demonstrates that this is uniformly applied in response to where pupil demand is expected although size and type of expansion is restrictive as it is dependent on the availability of government capital funding.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10.1 There are no data protection implications in this report.

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

11.1 There are no crime and disorder issues relevant to this report.

11.2 In so far as risk is concerned, the council's strategic risk register currently includes a red risk around school place planning: SOPB 2 - If the LA is unable to exert sufficient strategic control over school place planning and the direction of capital investment, then it will be unable to deliver on its statutory duties. An appropriate project management structure is in place, and the School Organisation Programme Board meets on a regular basis.

## **12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

12.1 Plans for future school provision are only sustainable with continuing government funding directly to the LA through basic need or through the provision of new places via the government's free school programme.

## **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

13.1 A sufficient level of school places in local areas where there is demand is of benefit to the local community. Enhanced community provision is often included when schools expand their facilities.

## **14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

14.1 There is no direct impact in the recommendation on any council managed property or land.

**15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 The report outlines the council's past actions and future plans with regard to school place provision. Consequentially the recommendation is to note the report.

**16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 None

**17 APPENDICES:**

**None**

**Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger**

**Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward**