

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER****DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2024****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLARE CURRAN - CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING****LEAD OFFICER: JULIA KATHERINE - DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING****SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: No One Left Behind****Purpose of the Report:**

The purpose of this report is to seek authorisation to consult on changes to the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2026.

Admission authorities must consult on any changes they wish to make to admission arrangements for 2026 and consultation must run for at least six weeks between 1 October 2024 and 31 January 2025. Thereafter, admission arrangements for 2026 must be determined by 28 February 2025.

This piece of work helps Surrey County Council meet its organisational strategy objective of 'No One Left Behind' by ensuring, as far as possible, that children are offered a place at a preference school.

**Recommendations:**

That the Cabinet Member authorises the Service Manager for School Admissions to go out to statutory consultation on the proposed changes to admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2026, as follows:

- Reigate Priory School - reduction of Year 3 PAN from 150 to 120 (paragraphs 5 to 13)
- Audley Primary School – introduction of Year 3 PAN of 2 (paragraphs 14 to 16)

**Reason for Recommendations:**

There is a statutory requirement to consult on admission arrangements every seven years, or sooner if there is a proposal to change any part of a school's admission arrangements. The local authority is proposing some changes to the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and, as such, there is a statutory duty to consult on these changes. The consultation will also seek views on the admission arrangements for which there is no proposal for change.

**Executive Summary:**

1. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014 require all admission authorities to consult on their admission arrangements every seven years, unless they are proposing any changes to their arrangements, in which case they must consult each year they are proposing a change.
2. Consultation on the admission arrangements for 2026 must take place for a minimum of six weeks, between 1 October 2024 and 31 January 2025 and all admission authorities must then determine their arrangements by 28 February 2025, whether or not they have been subject to consultation.
3. Surrey County Council (SCC) is proposing some changes to its admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and as such is intending to consult on these changes between 2 October and 13 November 2024.
4. A summary of the changes being proposed is set out in paragraphs 5 to 18.

### **Reigate Priory School – Reigate & Banstead**

5. It is proposed to formally consult on a reduction to the Year 3 PAN at Reigate Priory School from 150 to 120. This change is reflected in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2026 admission.
6. The primary planning area for Reigate comprises of Dovers Green and Holmesdale Community infant schools; Reigate Priory Junior School; and Sandcross and Reigate Parish primary schools.
7. Holmesdale reduced its Reception PAN from 120 to 90 in September 2023 in response to a fall in birth rates. Holmesdale is a feeder school to Reigate Priory, with the majority of children transferring to this school. The proposal to reduce the Year 3 PAN at Reigate Priory is a direct consequence of the reduction in PAN at Holmesdale, because there will be fewer children seeking to transfer to Year 3 in the Reigate planning area in September 2026.
8. Dovers Green is also a feeder school to Reigate Priory and will retain its PAN of 90. Historically, one third of pupils from Dovers Green transfer to Reigate Priory and two thirds transfer to Sandcross Primary School, which has a PAN of 60 for both Reception and Year 3.
9. Across Dovers Green and Holmesdale infant schools, there will be a maximum of 180 children seeking a Year 3 place in September 2026. Taking into account the proposed PAN reduction at Reigate Priory to 120 and the Year 3 PAN at Sandcross of 60, the total Year 3 PAN in the primary planning area of Reigate will be 180, which will match the number of Year 2 places at Dovers Green and Holmesdale.
10. Place planning forecasts indicate that there will be a need for 286 Year 3 places in September 2026 in the primary planning area of Reigate. If Reigate Priory reduces its PAN from 150 to 120, there will be a total of 300 Year 3 places in the planning area across all schools - Reigate Parish (60), Reigate Priory (120) and Sandcross (120). There will therefore continue to be a sufficient number of Year 3 places across the whole planning area if Reigate Priory reduces its PAN.
11. The forecasts predict that the number of pupils needing a school place in Year 3 in the planning area of Reigate will remain between 263 and 298 from 2026/27 to the end of the forecast period 2032/33.

12. The proposed reduction in PAN at Reigate Priory is linked to the fall in birth rates and this consultation is separate to any decision about the future provision of primary school places in Reigate. As part of the consultation, parents will be directed to find out more about the current work with primary schools in the planning area of Reigate on Surrey's dedicated webpage [Provision of primary school places in Reigate - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/primary-school-places).
13. This decrease in PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

### **Audley Primary School - Tandridge**

14. It is proposed to formally consult on introducing a Year 3 PAN of 2 at Audley Primary School. This change is reflected in bold in Appendix 1 of Annex 1 which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2026 admission.
15. A Year 3 PAN at Audley Primary School will formalise the arrangement that already takes place, whereby two additional children are offered a place from the waiting list at Year 3. However, the existence of a published PAN will ensure parents know about the intake and they will be invited to apply for a place as part of the Junior intake to the school.
16. Surrey's Education Place Planning team are supportive of this proposal, as are the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

### **Points of clarification that are not subject to consultation**

17. Section 20 of Annex 1 has been amended to remove reference to an offer of a place being withdrawn 'even if the child has already started at the school'. This is because registered pupils may only be removed from roll in the limited circumstances set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
18. Section 21 of Annex 1 has been updated to ensure the wording in relation to travel assistance reflects the recent changes to Surrey's travel assistance policy.

### **Consultation:**

19. The Education Place Planning team has been involved in considering the proposals for change.
20. All schools directly affected by the proposed changes have been consulted.
21. All community and voluntary controlled schools have been consulted on the PAN that is to be proposed for 2026 admission.
22. Parents, schools and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed admission arrangements, including any changes being proposed, throughout the six-week consultation.
23. As the local authority is only responsible for consulting on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before consultation begins will be removed from the paperwork.

### **Risk Management and Implications:**

24. The risks of consulting on these changes are low. There may be some local opposition to some of the proposals from those cohorts or groups that may be disadvantaged by the proposals, but it is important to identify those concerns as part of the consultation.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications:**

25. The admission criteria for the majority of community and voluntary controlled schools in Surrey conform to Surrey's standard criteria. The more schools that have the same admission criteria, the more the processes can be streamlined and thus present better value for money. However, where required, the admission criteria for some schools vary from Surrey's standard but these can currently be managed within existing resources.
26. Normally schools are funded for the year based on the number of pupils on roll on previous October census date. However, where a school has reduced PAN there is often a planned reduction in the number of pupils and, where there is such a reduction, in previous years the Council has applied for a disapplication from the Secretary of State to reduce funding in year to reflect that planned reduction. No such reductions were made in 2023/24 or 2024/25 and none are proposed for 2025/26. The council will consider its policy on this issue for future years in due course in consultation with schools forum and those schools affected. If there was an overall shortfall of places in the area in September 2026 the council would have to fund additional places from the Dedicated Schools Grant growth fund allocation. However, current estimates suggest that that will not be necessary.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary:**

27. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
28. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.
29. In this context the Section 151 Officer recognises the importance of a clear and compliant admissions policy. Funding for schools is allocated through the annual funding formula approved by Cabinet, the cost of which is contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant, as such the S151 supports the recommendations of this report.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:**

30. The proposed admission arrangements comply with legislation on School Admissions and the School Admissions Code.

- 31. The local authority will carry out a consultation on all changes for a period of six weeks between 2 October and 13 November 2024, which is in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 32. The consultation will be carried out with all persons required under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014.
- 33. The local authority will give due regard to the responses to the consultation before considering the recommendations to put before Cabinet.
- 34. The public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies to the decision to be made by the Cabinet Member in this report. There is a requirement when deciding upon the recommendations to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the equalities paragraphs of the report and in the attached equalities impact assessment (EIA).

**Equalities and Diversity:**

- 35. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached as Annex 2. The adoption of determined admission criteria is a mandatory requirement supported by primary legislation. The policy as it relates to community and voluntary controlled schools does not discriminate by age, gender, ethnicity, faith, disability or sexual orientation.
- 36. Measures have been taken to reference vulnerable groups both in terms of exceptional arrangements within admissions, the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) process and the Fair Access Protocol. In addition, a right of appeal exists for all applicants who are refused a place at a particular school.

**Other Implications:**

37. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Set out below
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Environmental sustainability	Set out below
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

**Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications:**

38. As required by the School Admissions Code, the proposed admission arrangements give top priority to children who are Looked After by a local authority and to those children who have left care through adoption, a child arrangements order or a special

guardianship order, including those who have been adopted from state care outside England.

#### **Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications:**

39. The efficient and timely administration of the school admissions process coupled with the equitable distribution of school places in accordance with the School Admission Code and parental preference contribute to the County Council's priority for safeguarding vulnerable children.

#### **Environmental sustainability implications:**

40. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.
41. The admission arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend a local school and in doing so reduces travel and supports policies on cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

#### **What Happens Next:**

- If approval is given to consult, the local authority will consult on the proposed admission arrangements for six weeks between 2 October and 13 November 2024.
- As the local authority is only responsible for consulting on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before consultation begins will be removed from the paperwork.
- Details will be distributed to:
  - all schools and nurseries in the county including a form of wording that they may wish to display on their website, in newsletters or on notice boards.
  - out of County schools which are close to the border of Surrey
  - each of Surrey's neighbouring local authorities
  - each Diocesan Body representing schools in the county
  - all Surrey County Council Members and Borough/District Members, asking them to share the details with local community and resident groups as appropriate
  - Parish Councils within the area of Surrey County Council
  - Surrey MPs
- A paper summarising the outcome of the consultation and making recommendations will then be passed to Surrey's Cabinet on 28 January 2025 for decision and then to Full Council on 4 February 2025 to ratify the decision so that the admission arrangements for Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools for 2026 can be determined before the statutory deadline of 28 February 2025.
- As the local authority is only responsible for determining the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, the details of any school that becomes an academy before determination will be removed from the paperwork.
- The admission arrangements for September 2026 will then be published by 15 March 2025 on Surrey's website and a notice will be sent to all those consulted.

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#### **Report author:**

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#### **Consulted:**

Education Place Planning Team

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Director Education and Lifelong Learning  
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**Annexes:**

ANNEX 1	Proposed admission arrangements for C&VC schools
APPENDIX 1	Proposed published admission numbers
APPENDIX 2	Proposed schools to be considered for shared sibling priority
APPENDIX 3	Proposed catchment map for Southfield Park
APPENDIX 4	Proposed catchment map for Stamford Green
APPENDIX 5	Proposed catchment map for Walton on the Hill
APPENDIX 6	Supplementary Information Form for social/medical applicants
APPENDIX 7	Supplementary Information Form for children of staff applicants
ANNEX 2	Equality Impact Assessment

**Sources/background papers:**

- School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014
  - School Standards and Framework Act 1998
  - Education Act 2002
  - School Admissions Code 2021
  - Equality Act 2002
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