

Report subject	School Admissions Arrangements 2027/28
Meeting date	4 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	BCP Council is responsible for administering admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools. There is a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation. The local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2027/28 academic year. A public consultation on the proposed 2027/28 admission arrangements was held on from 10 November 2025 until 22 December 2026. The proposed change is a reduction to the Published Admission Number at Burton CE Primary School to reflect the broader trend of fewer families seeking school places in the area due to falling birth rates. It is recommended that the arrangements are determined by council members.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: (a) Cabinet consider any comments from the consultation and from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the Schools Admissions Arrangements 2027/2028 for community and maintained schools; and (b) Cabinet support the determination of the arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.
Reason for recommendations	BCP Council is legally required to determine admission arrangements for the 2027/28 academic year for all maintained schools for which it is an admission authority and to agree coordinated admission arrangements for all admission authorities in the area. Arrangements must be determined by BCP Council by 28 February 2026.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton – Portfolio Holder, Children’s Services
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council and schools that are deemed to be an ‘admission authority’ are required each year to set arrangements explaining how and when they will decide to offer school places.
2. The Council is required to have an admissions policy for its four maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools located in Christchurch.
3. The Council must also set an administrative scheme setting out for parents and schools how the application and offer process will be co-ordinated.
4. Reductions in Published Admission Numbers (PANs) must be publicly consulted on in accordance with the requirements detailed in the School Admissions Code 2021.

Admission arrangements and published admission numbers

5. The admissions arrangements must explain how to apply for a school place and, once an application is received, how it will be processed. The policy must contain clear oversubscription criteria should there be more applications than there are places available. The number of places available at a normal point of entry for each school, the published admission number (PAN), must also be set and included in the policy for parents.
6. The proposed admissions policy is attached at appendix one. In addition to the reduction in PAN, additional clarification for the oversubscription criterion for children of school staff has been provided and minor date alterations have been made. All other areas of the arrangements (catchments, supplementary information form, and the policy for requests for applications for a place in a different year group to that determined by date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children) remain the same.
7. The proposed published admission numbers (PAN) for each of the maintained primary schools are detailed at the end of appendix one. The proposed change that required consultation is the reduction in PAN at Burton CE Primary School.
8. Burton’s school governing body has requested a reduction in PAN. Reducing the school’s intake from 45 to 30 will enable the school to organise classes efficiently. It also reflects the broader trend of fewer families seeking school places in the area due to falling birth rates.

Coordinated Scheme

9. The Council is required under paragraph 2.22 of the Department for Education's School Admissions Code 2021 to set a coordinated scheme for the processing of school applications for entry to school in September 2027.
10. The scheme recommended and attached at appendix two is a single scheme for the whole of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. The scheme is in principle the same as that set by the Council for the 2026/27 academic year with minor date alterations.

Consultation

11. The statutory period for consultation required by the School Admissions Code 2021 is a minimum of six weeks. The admission arrangements were consulted on from 10 November 2025 until 22 December 2026.
12. The consultation was available on Have Your Say and the School Admissions webpages. All schools in the Relevant Area, neighbouring local authorities and relevant dioceses were notified. Schools and early years settings were asked to inform families about the consultation whilst social media and BCP Council newsletter emails also publicised it.
13. No responses were received regarding the Council's proposed admission arrangements during the consultation period.

Options Appraisal

14. The existing arrangements cannot continue as the Council has an annual statutory requirement to determine the admissions policy. Taking no action is therefore not an option.
15. The reduction in PAN supports Burton Primary School to manage its resources more effectively and deliver education effectively.
16. It is recommended that the Council determine the arrangements and the coordinated scheme.

Summary of financial implications

17. The admissions function is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Therefore, there are no wider revenue budget implications to the Council. The recommendations set out above are intended to be accommodated within the existing budget allocated from within the DSG for this purpose.

Summary of legal implications

18. The Council must determine the coordinated scheme, admission arrangements and published admission numbers no later than 28 February 2026.
19. If no action is taken, the Council will not meet its statutory duty to have admission arrangements which meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Summary of human resources implications

20. There are no anticipated changes to human resources from determining the policy and coordinated scheme.

Summary of sustainability impact

21. BCP Council is committed to encouraging children and young people attend their nearest or catchment school.

22. The draft admissions policy includes oversubscription criteria that gives high priority to children living in their school's catchment area. Attendance at a local school provides families with greater opportunity to travel to school on foot or by cycling, scooting or using public transport in line with the Transforming Travel agenda.

Summary of public health implications

23. Ensuring families can apply for a school place supports the health and wellbeing of children and young people by enabling them to attend school.

Summary of equality implications

24. An equality impact assessment screening tool was completed and is attached at appendix three.
25. The admissions policy and co-ordinated scheme will be accessible online for all BCP Council residents and paper copies will be provided on request.
26. School applications will be assessed using the policy oversubscription criteria. Where the child/young person and/or their family have additional needs or requirements these will be considered in line with the policy.
27. Families will have the opportunity to access an independent appeal process if they are unhappy with the school offered.

Summary of risk assessment

28. If BCP Council do not determine admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools by 28 February 2026, the Council will not have met its statutory duty as defined in the School Admissions Code 2021 and the Department for Education may impose arrangements upon the Council.

Background papers

[School Admissions Code](#) – Published works

[School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) – Published works

Appendices

Appendix one – BCP Council admissions policy 2027/28

Appendix two – BCP Council coordinated scheme for 2027/28

Appendix three – Equality impact assessment conversation screening tool