

<b>Report title</b>	Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2025-2026	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Jacqui Coogan Jobs, Skills and Education	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children's Services	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Dave Kirby	Service Manager, School Organisation and Support 01902 554152 <a href="mailto:David.Kirby@wolverhampton.gov.uk">David.Kirby@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Education Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	18 January 2024 30 January 2024

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### Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for secondary and primary school admissions at the normal year of entry for 2025-2026 and that the Secretary of State be notified by 28 February 2024.
2. Approve the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025-2026, including the reduction of 15 places at Lanesfield Primary School. There are no proposed changes to any other aspect of the arrangements.

### Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The outcome of the external consultation in relation to the Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2025-2026 included in section 5 of this report.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To approve the schemes for co-ordinated school admission arrangements for secondary and primary schools and the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025-2026 (please see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To approve the reduction of 15 places at Lanesfield Primary School, commencing from Reception entry 2025.

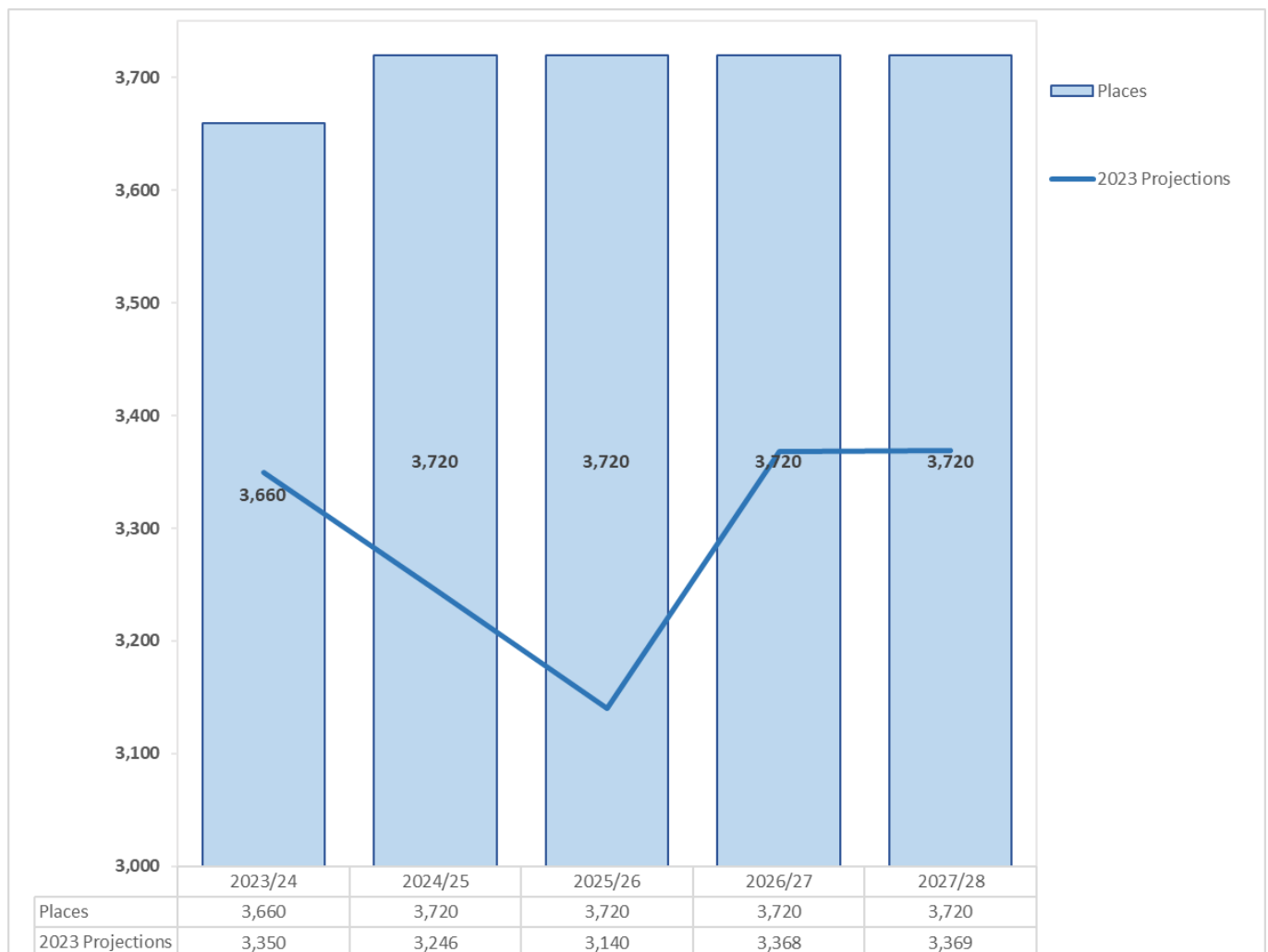
## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In accordance with legislation and the Schools Admission Code 2021, each Local Authority (LA) is required to draw up a scheme (or schemes) for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all mainstream, maintained schools (community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academies) within their area.
- 2.2 Each Admission Authority is required to determine admission arrangements every year. The City of Wolverhampton Council's (CWC) responsibility in this regard is for the Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Wolverhampton. For academies the academy trust(s) are the admitting authority not CWC, however some academies follow CWC admission arrangements.
- 2.3 The School Admissions Code (2021) instructs that when drawing up admission arrangements, admission authorities must set a Published Admission Number (PAN) for each 'relevant age group', i.e., the number of school places that the admission authority must offer. Admission authorities must consult where they propose a decrease to the PAN.
- 2.4 Code compliant School Admissions Arrangements (SAA) help contribute to the Council Plan as an overarching link to Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential as the start of a child's educational journey begins with the school application process.

## **3.0 Proposed change to admission arrangements**

- 3.1 Lanesfield Primary School is a Community School, and it is proposed that the PAN for Reception September 2025 onwards be reduced by 15 places (i.e., from 45 to 30). There will be no change to existing cohorts in the school that will remain at a PAN of 45. The PAN of 30 from September 2025 onwards is on the premise of a reduction in pupil demand and in accordance with the CWC Education Place Planning document in relation to a PAN of 45.
- 3.2 Vertical Grouping (or the employment of mixed age classes) is commonly employed in primary schools with intakes of 45 and can work successfully in schools. However, the use of this structure can increase the complexity of planning and delivering the curriculum.

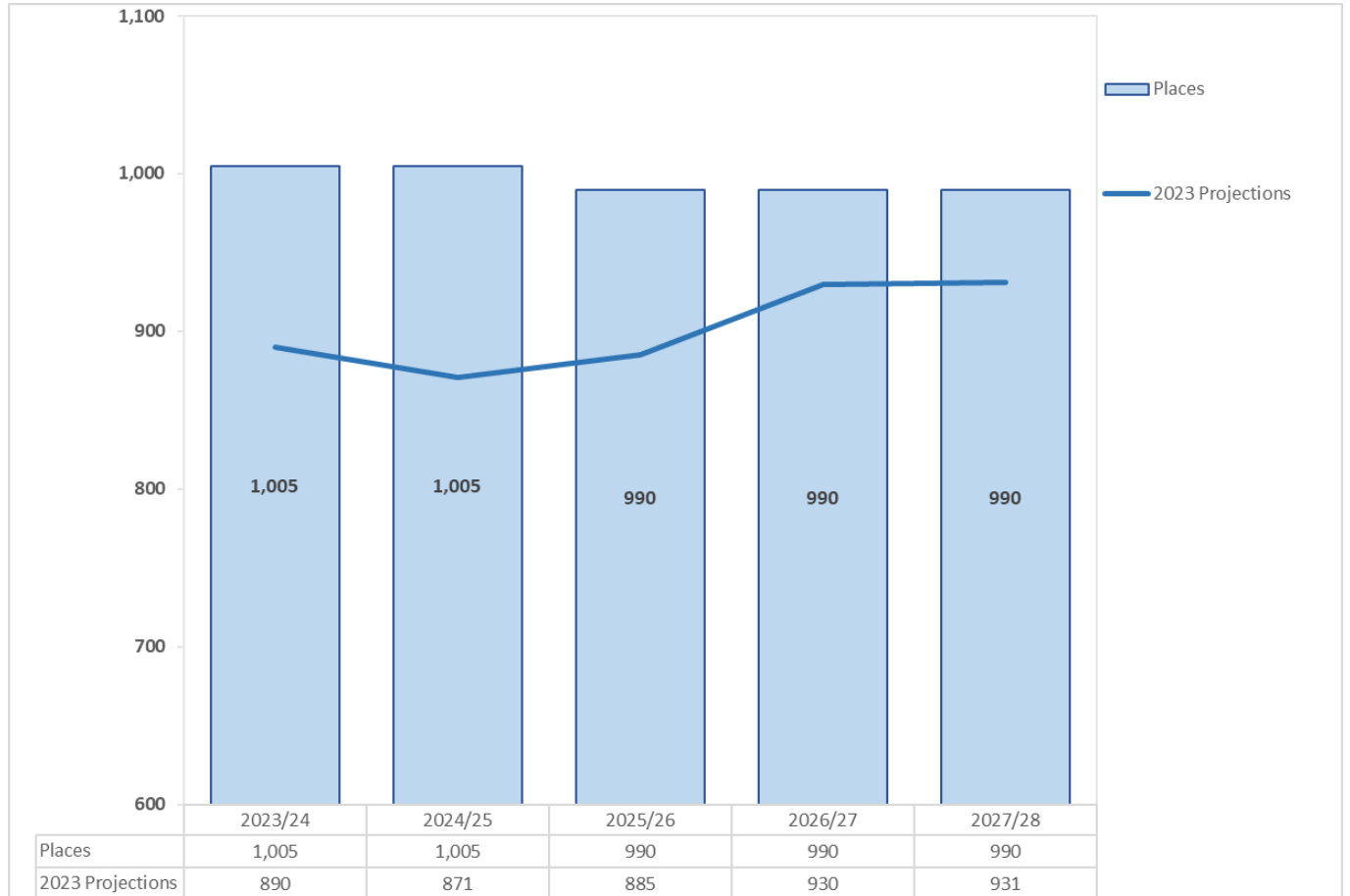
- 3.3 When an opportunity or need arises (based on demand) consultation will be undertaken to consider increasing or reducing admission limits in schools with an existing PAN of 45.
- 3.4 CWC produce pupil projections on an annual basis, using an externally validated and verified methodology. Pupil projections take into account birth data, pupil yield from housing developments, parental preference analysis, cross border movement and migration. The projections for Academic Year 2022-23 indicated 99.7% accuracy for Reception.
- 3.5 Figure 1 provides citywide primary pupil projections for academic years 2023-24 to 2027-28 and indicates the number of planned places, based on the most recent pupil projections (Summer 2023).
- 3.6 Although demand for Reception fluctuates in the short to medium term, there are sufficient places to meet demand at a citywide level.
- 3.7 **Figure 1: Citywide Primary Pupil Projections (2023)**



Source: CWC Projections (School Organisation Team)

3.8 For the purposes of primary school place planning in Wolverhampton, the City is divided into four planning areas; this enables a more precise identification of local circumstances and a clearer definition of local needs. Lanesfield Primary School is situation in Primary Planning Area 3.

3.9 **Figure 2: Planning Area 3 Primary Pupil Projections (2023)**



**Source: CWC Projections (School Organisation Team)**

3.10 Figure 2 illustrates that there is anticipated to be sufficient provision in the Planning Area to meet need, even with the proposed reduction of 15 places at Lanesfield Primary School from 2025.

3.11 A level of surplus is essential to offer increased opportunity for parental preference to be reflected in allocations, to allow for fluctuations in demand and to offer flexibility to cater for in year admissions. Too few surplus places can result in reduced opportunity for parental preference, increased travel times, and increased class sizes. However, too many surplus places can lead to the inefficient use of resources.

3.12 There is a balance to be found between sufficient school places, supporting schools with low pupil numbers, and meeting parental preference.

3.13 By reducing the PAN at Lanesfield Primary School, this will help ensure there is not an oversupply of school places and will assist in reducing the complexity of planning and delivering the curriculum.

#### **4.0 Current Admission Arrangements**

4.1 All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, and the PAN for each 'relevant age group', i.e., the number of school places that the admission authority must offer. Admission authorities must consult where they propose a decrease to the PAN.

4.2 The current SAA adheres to the code; however, it is proposed that the PAN for Lanesfield Primary School for Reception September 2025 onwards be reduced by 15 places (i.e., from 45 to 30).

4.3 CWC has consulted stakeholders in accordance with the requirements stipulated in The School Admissions Code 2021 regarding the PAN reduction for Lanesfield Primary School. Please see section 5 for the outcome of consultation.

4.4 The LAs within the West Midlands and beyond operate an inter-Local Authority scheme for primary and secondary admissions. There are no proposals to change the schemes in this regard.

#### **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 Strategic Executive Board approved the commencement of a seven-week external consultation on 10 October 2023.

5.2 External consultation commenced on 16 October 2023 and ended on 01 December 2023.

5.3 The School Admissions Code has been adhered to by consulting with statutory consultees and other interested parties, which included:

- Over 200 Headteachers, Principals, Governors and education stakeholders of Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary, Pupil Referral Units, Special Schools and maintained nurseries in Wolverhampton
- Diocesan Authorities
- Multi Academy Trusts and Academy Trust CEO's
- All Councillors
- Parents via school newsletters, communications, websites and information in school.

5.4 Stakeholders could respond directly to the consultation by sending their views in by email or by post.

5.5 No responses were received with regards to the proposed reduction in PAN for Lanesfield Primary School.

5.6 A response was received from Sandwell Borough Council on a procedural matter relating to the transfer of children from Infant School to the corresponding Junior School.

5.7 In response to the comment received, CWC's SAA was updated to ensure the corresponding Infant to Junior feeder schools are named in the document.

## **6.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

6.1 An alternative option would be to approve the admissions arrangements without the proposed reduction in PAN for Lanesfield Primary School. This would result in an oversupply of school places and continued complexity of planning and delivering the curriculum.

## **7.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

7.1 Due to the outcome of consultation, it is recommended that the reduction in PAN of 15 places at Lanesfield Primary School be included in the CWC SAA for maintained & voluntary controlled schools for 2025-26. No responses or concerns were received in respect of this proposal.

7.2 Approval of the admission arrangements without the proposed change may result in an oversupply of school places, leading to inefficient use of resources and increased complexity of planning and delivering the curriculum.

7.3 It is also recommended that the proposed CWC School Admission Arrangements for 2025-26 be approved as proposed as all comments have been considered and addressed.

## **8.0 Financial implications**

8.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations of this report. The activities detailed within the report will be met from existing budgets within Education.  
[PG/26122024/D]

## **9.0 Legal implications**

9.1 The CWC School Admission Arrangements are consulted on every seven years in line with current statutory requirements. The next consultation (should there be no proposed changes by CWC or in statutory requirements in the meantime) will be due in 2032-33, which would be conducted in 2030.

9.2 School admission arrangements are heavily regulated by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education and Skills Act 2008. Regulations also apply and the CWC is required to comply with the School Admissions Code in relation to admission arrangements.

- 9.3 The Schemes for co-ordinated admissions and the admission arrangements for Wolverhampton community schools, voluntary controlled schools, free schools and academies comply with the current relevant legislation.  
[SZ/26012024/P]

## **10.0 Equalities implications**

- 10.1 The current SAA and the proposed SAA must be compliant with the School Admissions Code (2021) that adheres to and references the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.2 There are no changes to the SAA in terms of how children are allocated to VC and Community schools. The only change is the reduction in the number of places available at Lanesfield Primary School; however, this will not disadvantage families as there are sufficient school places in the local area.
- 10.3 An equality analysis template was completed and shared with EDI to incorporate the rationale for the proposed reduction of PAN for Lanesfield Primary School and to capture the consultation and relevant legislative matters. A copy of the Equality Analysis can be found at Appendix 2.

## **11.0 All other implications**

- 11.1 The City of Wolverhampton school admission arrangements allow for a child with an Education Health and Care Plan which names the school to be admitted.
- 11.2 The oversubscription criterion includes children and young people in care and children and young people previously in care as the highest criterion. This includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 11.3 The criterion allows for medical and social claims for a preferred school to be considered.

## **12.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 12.1 [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- 12.2 [School Admissions Regulations 2012](#)

## **13.0 Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix 1: School Admission Arrangements 2025-2026
- 13.2 Appendix 2: Equality Analysis