

<b>Item No.</b> 21.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 22 March 2011	<b>Meeting name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Admission arrangements for community primary schools, nursery schools and classes - September 2012	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Catherine McDonald, Children's Services	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR CATHERINE McDONALD, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

1. The local authority is responsible for admission arrangements for all community primary schools in the borough. We have a duty to ensure these arrangements are fair, clear and equitable to enable families to access the schools of preference for their children. Southwark's arrangements worked successfully last year and the criteria used are identical to that of our neighbouring boroughs, Lewisham and Lambeth. There are no changes proposed to the admission arrangements for 2012/13.
2. The Governing Bodies of four community primary schools (Townsend, Hollydale, Peckham Park and Keyworth) put forward proposals in this year's consultation process to amend their admission number and remove their current half form entry which is in line with the Council's strategic plans for primary school provision and will support improved educational outcomes for children. However, due to the current pressure on primary school places in the south of the borough, it is proposed that places are retained at their current level of Hollydale (45) and Peckham Park (75) to meet local demand.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

3. That Cabinet agrees the primary community schools, nursery schools and nursery classes admissions criteria for 2012 attached as Appendix 1 and agrees to the publication of a statutory notice to reflect the proposed reduction in Planned Admission Number at Townsend as detailed in paragraph 12 below.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

4. The Council is the admission authority for community primary schools, nursery schools and nursery classes within the London Borough of Southwark.
5. Nursery schools and classes have admission arrangements which are completely separate from the coordinated admission arrangements in place for primary schools. Applications for places at nursery schools and classes are made to each school, assessed against the agreed admissions criteria and allocated directly to parents and carers for their children.
6. The current School Admissions Code of Practice (the Code) came into force on 10 February 2010, it applies to all maintained schools and academies.

Admission authorities are required to act in accordance with all mandatory provisions contained in the Code.

7. Admission arrangements must also adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008.
8. Admission authorities are required to consult each year on their admission arrangements (unless there have been no major changes made in which case, arrangements are able to remain in place for three years). Consultation must run for a period of at least eight weeks and be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> March in the year preceding the year the change is to be effected (e.g. in March 2011 for admissions in 2012). Final admission arrangements must be confirmed to the Secretary of State by 15 April 2011 for September 2012 admissions.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Admission Arrangements**

9. Oversubscription criteria for schools must be clear, fair and objective. The Code provides guidance on what are and are not acceptable criteria to use in setting admission arrangements and prescribes which are mandatory or recommended as good practice.
10. Children in public care (Looked After Children) must be given top priority in their over-subscription criteria. This is one of the means by which Elected Members can fulfil their responsibilities as Corporate Parents, and ensure compliance with the statutory Guidance on the Education of Young People in Public Care. The Code makes it very clear that this group of children is especially disadvantaged, with low average levels of attainment' not least as a result of 'frequent changes of school because their care placements change.
11. Wide consultation on Southwark's primary community schools oversubscription criteria and admissions arrangements took place between 17 December 2010 and 11 February 2011. Once determined, these arrangements will be published in the Starting Primary booklet for September 2012 along with details of the admissions criteria for all Southwark primary schools which is a statutory requirement. Many parents/carers will use this publication as a main source of information when selecting a nursery school, nursery class or primary school.
12. The following changes to Southwark's admission arrangements were proposed and included in the consultation:
  - I) There were no changes made to the 2012 oversubscription criteria for Southwark community primary schools, nursery schools and classes from last year other than a change to dates throughout to reflect the 2012 academic year.
  - II) Four community primary school proposed changes to their admission number for 2012 and were included in the admissions consultation process as follows: Hollydale and Townsend to reduce from 45 to 30 places, Peckham Park to reduce from 75 to 60 places and Keyworth, to extend from 45 to 60 places. These primary schools, all with a half form entry experienced operational difficulties associated with operating half form entry year groups.

13. Following the consultation, it is proposed that Peckham Park and Hollydale remain at 75 and 45 places respectively. Both of these schools serve the centre and south of the borough where there is still a projected pressure for places with forecast shortfalls that it is planned will be met by the provision of bulge classes at primary schools in the area. In addition the Harris Academy Peckham is looking at developing a two form entry primary school within their existing buildings, which should go some way to meeting the anticipated pressure in the centre of the borough. However, this proposal is still at the development stage and the sponsors will need time to prepare the accommodation and establish the school as a provider of primary places before it would be appropriate to consider reducing other primary school admission numbers in the area.
14. The proposal for Townsend to reduce to 30 places and for Keyworth to increase is supported. Townsend serves the north of the borough and its reduced admission number will be offset by the increase in Keyworth, which is in a neighbouring planning area. Keyworth has recently refurbished its Dining Centre, completely renewed the infant and junior toilets and redecorated extensively throughout the school. The Governing Body is seeking to extend its provision by 15 places to enable additional children to make use of these facilities, and this can be met within existing buildings.
15. A statutory process is now required to reflect the reduction in places at Townsend. In Keyworth's case, no statutory process is required as the proposal does not involve provision of additional capacity.

### **Coordinated primary admissions**

16. The first year of coordinated primary school admissions across London is underway for children to be admitted in September 2011. This process replaces Southwark's local admissions scheme and will help to manage the allocation of places across London. Families now make a single application to their home borough for any school of their preference in England seamlessly through the co-ordinated process and will receive a single offer of a primary school place.
17. A total of 3,229 on-time primary school applications have been received. Of this number, 1,913 (59%) applications were made online. Parents and carers were able to express up to six school preferences on their application forms. Offer letters will be sent to parents and carers on 4 April 2011.

### **Community impact statement**

18. The co-ordinated process for primary admissions is designed to produce fair and equitable access to school places for all children. Allocation of places is delivered through strict application of admissions and oversubscription criteria of each school across Southwark through a central computer.

### **Resource implications**

19. All costs associated with the admissions process are chargeable to the Schools Budget and, are, therefore, met from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Strategic Director of Communities Law & Governance**

20. Cabinet is asked to agree the Admissions Criteria for 2012 for Primary Community and Nursery schools and Nursery Classes.
21. Cabinet is advised that all school admissions arrangements are governed by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and associated Regulations and the School Admissions Code of Practice as stated within the body of the document.
22. Having reviewed the document, the Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance is of the opinion that the proposed Criteria meet the Local Authority's statutory obligations in relation to the relevant legislation.
23. Cabinet is advised that any reduction in Planned Admission Number which falls below the schools net capacity assessment (as in the case of the proposal mentioned in paragraph 12), must be clearly published to parents.

### **REASONS FOR URGENCY**

24. The next meeting of the cabinet is scheduled for 19 April 2011. Final admission arrangements must be confirmed to the Secretary of State by 15 April 2011 for September 2012 admissions. Admission arrangements, including the proposed changes detailed in this report will need to be published for parents and carers before 1st September 2011 to enable families to make their preferences and apply for primary school places for their children for September 2012 admissions. Southwark's agreed admissions criteria for 2012, including details of the published admission number for each school must be submitted to the Secretary of State by 15th April 2011. If this is not done, Southwark's admission arrangements for Community primary schools in 2011 will remain in place for 2012. Stakeholders have been consulted on the proposed arrangements and are expecting the changes to be in place.

### **REASONS FOR LATENESS**

24. It was not possible to carry out internal consultation and obtain the necessary clearance for the report to be circulated 5 clear working days in advance of the meeting.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	160 Tooley Street, SE1 2TZ DfE website	Glenn Garcia
The Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations	160 Tooley Street, SE1 2TZ DfE website	Glenn Garcia
The School Admissions Code of Practice 2010	160 Tooley Street, SE1 2TZ DfE website	Glenn Garcia

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Community Primary Schools, Nursery Schools and Classes Admission Arrangements for September 2012

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Catherine McDonald, Children's Services	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	16 March 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	None required
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services</b>	16 March 2011	