

Item No. 16.	Classification: Open	Date: 9 February 2016	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Admission Arrangements for Community Primary Schools - September 2017	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Southwark Council is responsible for the admission arrangements of 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 work well and the criteria used are similar to those of our neighbouring boroughs, Lewisham and Lambeth. For these reasons the arrangements remain similar to previous years. However, there is a proposed change to Southwark's admission arrangements for 2017 relating to the measurement of distance at Ivydale Primary School which is to become a four form entry across a split school site from September 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet agrees the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements ("the Arrangements") for September 2017 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Council is the admission authority for community primary schools within Southwark. It must, before the beginning of each school year, determine the admission arrangements for those schools which are to apply for that year.
3. The School Admissions Code 2014 ("the Code"), which applies to all maintained schools, academies and free schools came into force on 19 December 2014. When determining admission arrangements, admission authorities are required to act in accordance with all mandatory provisions contained in the Code.
4. Admission arrangements must also adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the SSFA 1998"), the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
5. At the Cabinet meeting on 19 March 2013, the Leader of the Council delegated authority to the cabinet member for children's services to agree the Secondary and Primary Admissions Schemes for 2015 admissions and onwards where there were no changes made from the previous year. This report is being brought to Cabinet for determination because changes are proposed to the Arrangements, as outlined in paragraph 8 of this report.

6. The Regulations and paragraph 1.42 of the Code require all admission authorities to consult when proposing to change their admission arrangements. Where admissions arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult. However, admissions authorities must as a minimum consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if there are no changes to their existing arrangements. In 2009 the Department for Education required all admission authorities in England to consult on their 2010 admission arrangements, irrespective of whether any changes were proposed. All admission authorities must therefore consult on their arrangements this year if they have not done so since 2009. The Council has written to all admission authorities in Southwark with a reminder of this.
7. Consultation on admission arrangements must run for a period of at least six weeks and be completed by 31 January in the year preceding the year the change is to be effected (i.e. 31 January 2016 for September 2017 admissions).
8. The Council's consultation on the Arrangements took place between 17 November 2015 and 31 December 2015.
9. The Arrangements remain similar to the previous year's arrangements and are similar to the arrangements of neighbouring authorities. The proposed change which prompted the consultation relates to the expansion of Ivydale Primary School, which will become a four form entry school based on two sites from September 2017 (subject to completion of building work). The consultation set out a proposal relating to the distance criteria, to measure distance using a straight line from each applicant's home address to the main gates of both school sites. The shorter of the two distances would then be used. The purpose of this proposal is to promote fairness, equity and to be inclusive towards families.
10. The consultation was available for viewing on the school admissions pages of the Council's website and circulated to all maintained primary and secondary schools within Southwark, neighbouring local authorities and both the Anglican and Roman Catholic diocesan boards. A notice was also published in Southwark News to publicise the consultation. No responses were received.
11. Final admission arrangements for September 2017 admissions must be determined by 28 February 2016. The Arrangements will be confirmed to the Secretary of State by 28 February 2016.
12. Full details of the Arrangements, along with those of all other admission authorities in the borough, will be included in the Starting Primary booklet for September 2017. Many families will use this booklet as a main source of information when selecting a primary school and will be able to download the booklet from the school admissions web page or view a hard copy at any Southwark school, nursery, library or one stop shop.
13. The full admission arrangements, including supplementary information forms and any proposed changes for all Southwark admission authorities consulting on their 2017/18 arrangements have been checked by officers to ensure compliance with the Code. Formal written comments were provided in respect of any issues of non compliance or, where a proposed change could adversely impact on the community. All comments provided must be considered before determination of arrangements. Any serious breach of compliance may be referred to the Office of

the Schools' Adjudicator if not remedied through discussion with the admission authority directly.

14. A list of the published admission numbers for all Southwark primary schools for the September 2017 intake is attached at Appendix 2.

Coordinated primary admissions for September 2016

15. The coordinated primary school admissions process is underway across London for children to be admitted to Reception class in September 2016. Families make a single application to their home borough for up to six schools of their preference through the co-ordinated process. On National Offer day they will receive a single offer of a primary school place.
16. Parents and carers are able to express up to six school preferences on their application forms and will be offered the highest preference possible through the pan-London system. Offer letters will be sent to parents and carers on 18 April 2016.
17. A total of 3395 on-time primary school applications have been received for September 2016 admission, a decrease of 141 applications. During the process admissions officers worked collaboratively with Southwark schools and nurseries to provide 'Apply online' information sessions for families. During the sessions parents and carers had the opportunity to complete their online application with admissions officers at hand to assist with any queries they may have.
18. 4,025 reception places will be available across the borough in order to meet demand in September 2016. This includes the opening of Galleywall Primary School - a new free school promoted by the City of London Academy in the SE16 area which will create 60 places. A list of the Published Admission Numbers for Southwark's primary and secondary schools for September 2017 intake can be viewed at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Community impact statement

19. The Arrangements, together with the Council's participation in the co-ordinated admissions scheme 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 in Southwark through a central (pan-London) computerized system.
20. Additional support is provided to families that find it difficult to navigate the admissions system through the Admission Officers and the Southwark Information, Advice and Support Team. This involves a significant amount of outreach support and drop in sessions throughout the year at surgeries, schools and libraries, in order to engage EAL communities with the use of interpreters as well as parents / parents of children, who may have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. There is also a weekly drop in to provide support on admissions issues at a Southwark one stop shop.
21. The Public Sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard when carrying out their activities to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good

relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. The council's Approach to Equality ("the approach") commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.

22. We have had due regard, in consultation, and will have due regard when carrying out the proposed activities, for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. Provision of new school places and fair and equitable admissions policies:
- a) "advances the cause of the elimination of discrimination" by removing potential discrimination based on the protected characteristics
 - b) "advances equality of opportunity" by ensuring that all groups, irrespective of background, have equal access to school places
 - c) "fosters good relations" by implementing a demonstrably fair and equitable policy for school admissions across the borough for people with protected characteristics and those without.
23. "Protected characteristics" are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful - the characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. In this case, the characteristics covering gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation are unlikely to be issues we need to consider in the expansion of the schools in question. A detailed examination of all of these characteristics was carried out in a comprehensive EIA of the process, which is available on request, and which concluded "No negative impacts of the new arrangements or additional school capacity, or the proposed changes to Ivydale Primary School's admissions arrangements have been identified, so no mitigating actions are required, and no equality objectives will derive from these specific proposals."

Finance implications FI/1106/MS

24. All costs associated with the admissions process are chargeable to the Schools Budget and, are, therefore, met from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). There are no direct financial implications for the council's revenue budgets.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

25. Cabinet is advised that it is enabled to agree the recommendation under matters reserved to full Cabinet in Part 3C of the Council's Constitution.
26. Cabinet is advised that school admissions arrangements are governed by the SSFA 1998, together with the Regulations and Code, as stated within the body of the report. Cabinet is advised that the proposed Arrangements and the consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed change comply with the applicable law.
27. Cabinet is reminded of the public sector equality duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010 when making this decision. This requires that, when exercising any of the council's functions, due regard be given to the need to need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations

between people with protected characteristics and those with none. In particular Cabinet will note the adjustments in place to enable full access to support and information for all communities in Southwark, outlined in the Community Impact Statement.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

28. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance confirms that all costs will be met from the Dedicated Schools grant. There are no direct financial implications for the council’s revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998		Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
Link: www.legislation.gov.uk		
The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012		Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
Link: www.legislation.gov.uk		
The School Admissions Code 2014		Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2017 (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Southwark Primary Schools – Published Admission Number for September 2017 intake (circulated separately)
Appendix 3	Southwark Secondary Schools – Published Admissions Number for September 2017 intake (circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Cabinet Member for Children's and Schools	
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	
Report Author	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
Version	Final	
Dated	26 January 2016	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		26 January 2016