

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 4 October 2010

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

Membership

Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel
Oyewole (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Althea Smith
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Reverend Nicholas Elder
Colin Elliott
Jane Hole
Sharon Donno

Reserves

Councillor Patrick Diamond
Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Nick Stanton
Councillor Geoffrey Thornton

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Contact Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Annie Shepperd

Chief Executive

Date: 24 September 2010



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 4 October 2010
7.00 pm
Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
1.	APOLOGIES	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any personal interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	MINUTES	1 - 11
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 12 July 2010	
5.	CABINET QUESTIONS WITH CLLR CATHERINE MCDONALD - CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES	12 - 14
6.	ACADEMIES REPORT	15 - 18
7.	SCHOOL ADMISSIONS REPORT	19 - 30
8.	REVIEW OF PARENTING SUPPORT - PART ONE : SCHOOL ADMISSIONS	31 - 32

Item No.	Title	Page No.
9.	REVIEW OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND SPORTS PROVISION FOR SECONDARY AND PRIMARY CHILDREN	33 - 34

10. TRAINING

11. SOUTHWARK YOUTH COUNCIL

12. WORK PROGRAMME

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

Date: 24 September 2010



EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 12 July 2010 at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole
Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Althea Smith
Colin Elliott
Jane Hole
Sharon Donno

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

OFFICER Julie Timbrell , Scrutiny Project Manager
SUPPORT: Jane Baily, Assitant Director 11 -19 and Youth

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cleo Soanes as there was a meeting clash with the Democracy Commission. Councillor Althea Smith gave apologies for lateness.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

- 2.1 There were none.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

- 3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

5. MINUTES

5.0 The Chair asked the independent members of the committee, who were present at the last meeting, if they could agree these. These were agreed as a correct record.

6. WORK PROGRAMMING AND SCOPING

- 6.1 The Chair circulated an article on parenting support which discussed the success of a volunteer programme. This addressed child protection issues through the use of volunteers who mentored struggling parents. (3 June 2010 Local Government Chronicle pg 16 – 17)
- 6.2 It was suggested that sports provision was chosen as a review topic and this be linked to childhood obesity.
- 6.3 There was a query on the School admission criteria and whether it was part of the committee's remit to address this, particularly in relation to academies.
- 6.4 Jane Bailey commented the admissions process for primary school places is locally administered, and no primary schools are academies. The committee might like to consider if the issues are how schools administer their published admission criteria or the Local Authorities wider role in admissions.
- 6.5 Cllr Adele Morris pointed out there is a local Admissions Forum. It was agreed they are best placed to look at particular issues raised by individual schools application and administration of their published admission criteria.
- 6.6 Members commented that it would be worthwhile to understand the new Coalition governments plans for 'new style' Academies, particularly the composition of the governing bodies and the role of parent representatives.
- 6.7 The Chair reported to members that he had recently attended an event put on by parents of children with autism and queried if there was sufficient support for parents with children with disabilities. The committee agreed that looking at parenting support as a theme would be very worthwhile.
- 6.8 The parent governor and head teacher representatives on the committee commented that last spring the previous committee had produced a report on the importance of parental involvement in children's educations. The conclusions emphasised the importance of enabling parents to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to help their children. It was requested this be circulated.
- 6.9 Colin Elliott spoke about the number of dangerous dog attacks. There was some debate on the right place for this and whether it might be better picked up by the scrutiny committee who deals with community safety. It was agreed that some facts and figures would be requested for the next meeting.
- 6.10 There was a query on the Local Authorities role and influence on schools admissions criteria, with specific reference to Kingsdale.

- 6.11 Jane Bailey explained that, while she could not go into details on individual schools, there are principles and rules that all schools must follow. There is an admission Code of Practice and schools also have to adhere to their published admission criteria. Furthermore schools are open to challenge.
- 6.12 A member commented that different schools have different admission criteria. It was noted that schools can vary their criteria as long as it conforms to the Code of Practice.
- 6.13 It was noted that the Admission Forum have oversight of this process. Members requested more information on the role of this body.
- 6.14 Members raised concerns about the complexity and ability of parents to negotiate the schools application process. It was suggested this was picked up under the review on parenting support.
- 6.15 Members noted the difficulties parents had understanding the 'distance to school' criteria. It was also noted that parents frequently do not understand they have some rights to defer places offered in September. This can sometimes be better for nursery school age children.
- 6.16 Members commented that the process is confusing and support is needed. When applying for school places parents have to be realistic about places they put their children down for. Even parents with a lot of information can find the process stressful so it is particularly important to ensure all parents have the right information to make the best choices for their children and minimise the difficulties involved.
- 6.17 A member requested more information on youth commissioning, and it was agreed that this could probably be dealt with under 'Cabinet questions' at the next meeting.

AGREED

It was agreed the committee would conduct the following reviews over the next administrative year:

1. Review of childhood obesity and sports provision for secondary and primary children
2. Review of parenting support:
 - i) First part : School admissions – with focus on reviewing clarity of information available alongside reviewing support networks to help parents negotiate the system
 - ii) Second part: volunteer and peer support, with particular attention paid to support available for parents of disabled children

Scoping documents will be circulated to the committee for the above reviews.

Reports will be requested on:

a) School admissions process and support for parents. This will contain an explanation of the government's guidance on schools admission criteria, the local authority's role in coordinating school admissions and the role of the Admissions Board. An overview of support for parents will also be requested.

b) The governments 'new style' academies. In particular the governing arrangements; composition of governing boards and number of parent representatives alongside an indication of the number of Southwark schools who are considering changing their status.

c) The number of dangerous dogs attacks in Southwark. Suzanne White will be contacted for facts and figures.

It was agreed that last years "Parenting engagement" report will be circulated.

7. TRAINING FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 7.1 The Committee considered safeguarding training form members. It was agreed that a price will be sought and in house trainers will be considered. The committee will then decide what best value is.

CHAIR:

DATED:

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Report of the Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Sub-Committee

March 2010



Contents	Page
Introduction and background	2
Methodology	2
Findings and recommendations	2
Summary of recommendations	4
Appendices	6

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The children's services and education sub-committee decided to conduct a review on parental engagement after receiving a briefing on: Building a 21st Century Schools System, Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future at a meeting in September 2010. A key emphasis in the White Paper is the theme of parental responsibility. Research indicated that a common feature of the lowest performing primary schools was a lack of parental involvement with the education process. There are some outstanding Southwark schools in very challenging neighbourhoods that have worked very hard to engage parents more, and parental engagement may be the biggest lever not yet used in the borough to effect further improvements. The review therefore decided to focus on parental engagement in primary schools.
- 1.2 The review took place from September 2009 to March 2010. It became apparent that parental engagement is a huge topic that the sub-committee had limited capacity to review. The review is therefore restricted to noting good practice in Southwark and in recent research.
- 1.3 The primary aim of this report is to suggest further areas for investigation and investment. It is hoped this will compliment the investment Southwark already has made in parental engagement and the action research project currently being led by external consultant, Dr Jan McKenley. This project will use action research to discover how Southwark can best build parental engagement processes with parents in homes where an effective learning culture may not be evident.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology consisted of:
- Review of research and scrutiny reports from other councils
 - Officer presentation on the theme of 'Parental Engagement'
 - Sub-committee members sharing good practice
 - Visit to parent governor event 'Promoting good parenting; Wednesday, 24 February; led by Commissioner for Parenting and CAMHS and review of 'Incredible Years: Parenting Pathfinder DVD' (see feedback report)

3. Findings and recommendations

- 3.1 The sub-committee noted the importance of family learning and the key role that parents play as informal educators. It was noted that reports and research conducted by Professor Alma Harris and Dr Janet Goodall indicated that:

'Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home (parental engagement) rather than supporting activities in the school (parental involvement). It is their support of learning in the home environment that makes the maximum difference to achievement' (1).

Recommendation:

1. That the council support and encourage parents in their role as informal educators.

- 3.2 Research indicates that children are more disadvantaged by a lack of parental engagement in their learning than by social class (2). The sub-committee considers it important that all parents and families are encouraged to engage with their children's education, particularly the most disadvantaged, and favoured initiatives that communicate to all parents to avoid stigmatising or alienating parents and carers.
- 3.3 The sub-committee heard evidence that the father's role in their child's education is particularly important and there is considerable research demonstrating that a father's involvement is significantly related to positive child outcomes (3). However it was also noted that some children do not have an active father but that other significant males in children's lives can still be engaged. The importance of grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers and others was noted.
- 3.4 Kintore Way Nursery School has successfully engaged male carers in their children's education by setting up regular play themed events. Children are encouraged to send personalised invitations to a significant male in their lives. Around a hundred fathers and carers have got involved and benefited.
- 3.5 Members welcomed this approach and considered that it is vital that initiatives do not undermine fathers but instead promote the importance of their roles and empower both fathers and male carers.

Recommendation:

2. Fathers and male carers of children have a vital role in children's education and this should be promoted and encouraged.

- 3.6 Research evidence and a number of scrutiny reports from London boroughs has demonstrated that transition from Early Years or home into primary school and later from primary school into secondary school is a crucial time. Support at this time is particularly important and can make a significant difference to subsequent attainment. Children from families experiencing multiple stress factors are particularly vulnerable (4, 5 and 6).

Recommendation:

3. That family support is particularly targeted at transition times.

- 3.7 Members heard from the assistant director of children’s services (leadership & learning services) about the latest DEMOS report on parenting as character building (DEMOS is a London-based think tank) (7). This drew attention to growing evidence that what matters most are character capabilities – application, self-regulation and empathy - and that these make a vital contribution to life chances, mobility and opportunity. Confident, skilful parents adopting a ‘tough love’ approach to parenting, balancing warmth with discipline, seem to be the most effective in terms of generating these key character capabilities.
- 3.8 Southwark has a commissioner for parenting and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and the council runs a valuable scheme, ‘Incredible Years – parenting pathfinder’, which teaches and enhances these skills using peer support in a supportive and non judgmental way.

Recommendation:

4. That the council promotes parenting courses that increase and develop parents’ skills.

4. Summary of recommendations

Recommendations:

That the executive undertakes further research into increasing parental engagement, taking on board the sub-committee’s specific recommendations as set out below:

1. That the council and schools support and encourage parents in their role as informal educators.
2. Fathers and male carers of children have a vital role in children’s education and this should be promoted and encouraged.
3. That family support is particularly targeted at transition times.
4. That the council promotes parenting courses that increase and develop parents’ skills.

Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)
Councillor Jelil Ladipo
Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
Councillor Veronica Ward

Councillor Nick Vineall (Vice-chair)
Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Sandra Rhule

Education representatives:

Reverend Nicholas Elder
Colin McKenzie Elliot

Sharon Donno
Jane Hole

References

- 1 Engaging parents in raising achieving; do parents know they matter? A research project commissioned by the specialist schools and academies trust. (2007) Professor Alma Harris and Dr Janet Goodall
(www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RW004.pdf)
- 2 & 3 The impact of parental involvement on children's education. Department for Education and Skills
- 4 Helping families support children's success at school. Published by Save the Children: Professor Alma Harris of the Institute of Education, University of London and Dr Janet Goodall of the Institute of Education, University of Warwick Review of Research Evidence (2009)
([www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/Helping_Families_Review_of_Research_Evidence_\(5\).pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/Helping_Families_Review_of_Research_Evidence_(5).pdf))
- 5 Tower Hamlets scrutiny report on Parental Engagement in Secondary Education (2009)
(www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/1001-1050/1031_overview_and_scrutiny/scrutiny_reviews.aspx)
- 6 Haringey scrutiny review of parental involvement in education (2004)
(www.haringey.gov.uk/scrutiny_review_of_parental_involvement_in_education.pdf)
- 7 Building character, parents are the principle architects of a fairer society. Jen Lexmond & Richard Reeves (2009)
(www.demos.co.uk/files/Building_Character_Web.pdf?1257752612)

Promoting Good Parenting 24th February 2010
Feedback report

The session began with some role-play. We were placed in the role of a parent or teacher dealing with common communication issues that either may face, regarding a child's education and the negative attitudes from both sides that could hinder a child's progress.

The session then offered some valuable insights into the multiple pressurised roles a mother may face on a daily basis, while trying to juggle home life; work; her child's home-work, as well as other day-to-day issues. The pressures became more acute the more children involved and the lack of regular partner support.

This led onto the issue of 'absent fathers' and the barriers that could cause a lack of support from this group, especially where there had been a break-up in a relationship and feelings were still running high. The challenge of what it means to be a good father today was something that was mentioned quite frequently. However, to what extent fathers felt capable of playing a positive role in their child's education was unclear. Nevertheless, where fathers were able to engage the evidence provided suggested that the benefits to both boys and girls in terms of their character and ability to confidently engage with others was good. It found that girls in particular formed meaningful relationships and were less likely to be promiscuous.

It was mentioned that the traditional male and female roles still appear to be in place i.e. the male going out to work and the female responsible for the children and the home, although this attitude is gradually changing.

In broken relationships, women were described as 'gatekeepers' to the father/child relationship, with regard to access and supporting a child's education. This sometimes can prove problematic, especially if domestic struggles are on-going as mentioned earlier. However, the importance of having both parents involvement was encouraged as of greatest benefit for the child. An excellent short video showed one father emphasising the need for him and his estranged partner to put their differences aside, for the benefit of their child.

Statistical evidence presented to us showed that the impact a family has on a child's education gradually decreases in favour of the school, as they progresses through the schooling system. So as the child becomes older it would seem that the relationship and engagement between the school and parents becomes more important for the child. However, given this fact, it was surprising to learn that very few secondary school governors were present at this event or the previous one.

It was encouraging to see the many varied efforts and initiatives aimed at engaging parents with their child's education; particular successes have been made with reaching fathers through breakfast clubs, monthly meetings at local pubs and making the school environment more male friendly.

In conclusion, I felt that this was a very informative and well balanced meeting that took into consideration the importance of all those involved with a child's education, parents, teachers and the wider community, something which is not only timely, but relevant to the topic of parental engagement.

Colin Elliott

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny sub-committee 4 October 2010**Questions for Cllr Catherine McDonald, Cabinet Member**

- 1 In your manifesto you promised to 'guarantee every child a place in a local primary'. How do you define 'local' and will this apply to late applications for admission as well?

Cllr Adele Morris

- 2 What progress have you made so far in devolving 20% of the youth services budget to young people?

Cllr Rosie Shimell

- 3 How many Youth Community Council meetings have you visited? How do you feel these are working in practice?

Cllr Rosie Shimell

- 4 What impact has the Southwark Judgment had on the Children's Services budget? Was the money allocated last year sufficient to support the increased demands on social services?

Cllr David Hubber

- 5 Are there any vacancies in the children's social worker support teams? Please give the recruitment and retention figures for the past six months.

Cllr David Hubber

- 6 What progress has been made to set up the promised Commission on Teenage Pregnancy?

Cllr Adele Morris

- 7 What are the latest figures on teenage conceptions? What new measures will you put in place in addition to those initiated by the previous administration, to reduce the teenage conception figures?

Cllr Adele Morris

- 8 How do you intend to cut youth offending rates in the borough? What is your view of the effectiveness of the Youth offending Team?

Cllr David Hubber

- 9 What ideas do you have to tackle youth gang membership and gang-related crime in the borough?

Cllr David Hubber

- 10 When will every school pupil in Southwark receive free school meals? Will this scheme be piloted in a few schools first and how much will it cost?

Cllr Rosie Shimell

- 11 How many children in Southwark are obese or overweight at Reception stage? What do you believe would have the biggest impact on reducing childhood obesity levels?

Cllr Adele Morris

- 12 How will you increase the use of Surestart centres and services by disadvantaged families?

Cllr Rosie Shimell?

- 13 To what extent do you feel there is scope for increasing the use of volunteer mentors to support parents who are struggling with raising their families in challenging circumstances?

Cllr David Hubber

- 14 You and I recently attended a meeting of Southwark Anti-Homophobic Forum where the main topic was the need to tackle more effectively homophobic bullying in schools. To what extent do you think this is a subject that should receive high priority and have you any ideas about how the council could help to improve the situation?

Cllr David Hubber

- 15 Do you agree that there have been vast improvements in the educational results, particularly GCSEs, in Southwark in the past eight years and how do you envisage this upward trend can be maintained?

Cllr David Hubber

- 16 Could you tell us please what you have done to make the most of the new government's pupil premium?

- 17 Are Southwark schools safe from Building Schools for the Future cuts?

Can you give us an update on the projects that were signed recently?

Cllr Cleo Soanes

- 18 Do you believe that the improvement in educational attainment in Southwark was directly related to increased investment under the Labour Government and are you concerned that cuts in education spending could damage attainment?

Cllr Cleo Soanes

- 19 Do you think that making every council home warm dry and safe will have an impact on educational attainment and opportunities for young people?

Cllr The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole

- 20 There is going to be 25% cut across the Borough. Do you think it is about time we think seriously about the impact the cut will have on the young people?

Cllr The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole

- 21 Do you think we're encouraging the young people to get involve in criminality by not providing sufficient services and facilities for them?

Cllr The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole

- 22 Why are not the Councillors going out to meet/engage the young people in the Borough?

Cllr The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole

- 23 Why are we just working with the Youth Community Council members or established groups, what about the rest in this category?

Cllr The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2010	Meeting Name: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
Report title:		Academies Act 2010	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Jane Bailey, 11-19 Services and Youth	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Academies Act received royal assent 27 July 2010 and includes provision to:
 - allow maintained schools to apply to become academies and permit the Secretary of State to issue an Academy Order requiring the local authority to cease to maintain the school;
 - allow the Secretary of State to require schools that are eligible for intervention to convert into academies;
 - provide for secondary, primary and special schools to become academies;
 - ensure there is no change of religious character as a result of the conversion process;
 - allow schools that apply to become academies to keep any surplus financial balance;
 - require the governing bodies of maintained schools to consult with those persons whom they think appropriate before converting into an academy;
 - ensure that for foundation and voluntary schools, with a foundation, there is consent from that school's foundation (often a diocesan board of education) before the school can apply to become an academy;
 - allow maintained schools that currently select to continue to do so as an academy;
 - deem academy trusts to be charities; and,
 - ensure that a converting school will continue, as an academy, to be able to occupy the land/buildings it had as a maintained school, and that the school's other assets may also transfer to the new academy for the benefit and use of the pupils of that school.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The Department for Education website explains that Academies can benefit from greater freedoms to help innovate and raise standards. These freedoms include:
 - freedom from local authority control
 - ability to set your own pay and conditions for staff
 - freedom from following the National Curriculum
 - ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.
 - Plans are also underway for further freedoms for academies in the way they engage in local partnerships and deliver 14-19 education.
4. The impact on Southwark initially will be on school budgets.

Governance arrangements

5. The existing governing body, foundation or trust will form the academy trust, which will then appoint the governing body.
6. The number and type of governors academies may have is flexible, but must include at least one parent and the principal. Academies are free to choose whether to have for example a local authority governor, staff governor or co-opted governors.
7. For voluntary and foundation schools converting to academy status, the foundation or trust may appoint the majority of governors.
8. There is no requirement for outstanding schools converting to an academy to have an external sponsor, but if there is a sponsor then we would expect the majority of governors to be appointed by the sponsor.

Southwark schools moving to academy status

9. The Charter School became an academy on 6 September 2010.
10. It is understood that Kingsdale Foundation School is considering moving to academy status.

Community impact statement

11. Both institutions will admit pupils into their academy using the same admissions criteria as when they operated as foundation schools. As a consequence we do not expect any group(s) to be adversely affected by this change.

Resource implications (CS0100)

12. There is a financial impact for the Local Authority when schools gain academy status. The current regulations mean that the DfE recoup a proportion of the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant for each school that becomes an academy. This recoupment is to reflect the services that Academies are now responsible for and are no longer provided by the Local Authority. However, many of the costs of these services remain fixed (i.e. these are universal services) and therefore this results in a budget pressure on the services funded from the DSG. The estimated annual DSG recoupment for Charter is £200,000; the Globe Academy totals £70,000. The Local Authority already has in place a strategy to offer relevant services to schools (including Academies) on a trading basis to mitigate the impact of this budget reduction.
13. Further, for those schools that are academies during 2010-11, their responsibilities have increased to include services funded by the core budget i.e. funded via council tax and Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The DfE is currently reviewing the process for academy recoupment from Local Authorities from 2011-12. However, if the current recoupment methodology is applied to services funded from core budget this has potential to result in significant budget pressures. Local Authorities are lobbying the DfE to set out the risks to this approach.
14. Please note, the funding regime for the schools in Southwark that became academies prior to 2008, are on a different funding methodology that does not directly impact on the Local Authority's budgets.
15. For schools that become Academies the principle of academies' funding is that academies should receive the same level of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the local authority as a maintained school. In addition, they receive top-up funding to meet additional responsibilities that are no longer provided for them by the local authority.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Director Children's Services	
Report Author	Jane Bailey, Assistant Director 11-19 Services and Youth	
Version	final	
Dated	17.09.10	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	Yes	Yes

Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team

24 September 2010

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 04 October 2010	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		School Admissions briefing	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Romi Bowen, Strategic Director, Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Members note this report and put forward any questions to Officers as required.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee, 12th July 2010 agreed to receive a report on school admissions with focus on reviewing clarity of information available alongside reviewing support networks to help parents negotiate the system.
3. The report is asked to explain the government's guidance on schools admission criteria, the local authority's role in coordinating school admissions and the role of the Admissions Forum. An overview of support for parents is also requested.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. The current School Admissions Code (the Code) came into force on 10th February 2010 and applies to admissions to all maintained schools. Academy Funding agreements require Academies to adopt practices and arrangements that are consistent or in accordance with the Code and admissions law as it applies to maintained schools.
5. The Code comprises a series of particular mandatory requirements or provisions where it is stated that relevant bodies 'must' comply and sets out prohibited practices or criteria which 'must not' be used. The Code also contains guidelines which relevant bodies 'should' follow. The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for enforcing the mandatory requirements of the Code.
6. The framework for school admission appeals is set out separately in the School Admissions Appeals Code 2009.

7. Admission authorities 'must' ensure that their determined admission arrangements¹ comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. Academies funding agreements require their arrangements to be in accordance, or consistent with the Code.
8. The Code sets out the regulations in place for management and implementation of school admission arrangements which includes:
 - i) Equity and Fair Access to school places and consultation
 - ii) Setting Fair Oversubscription Criteria
 - iii) Coordination schemes for admission applications
 - iv) Referral of objections
 - v) Admissions Forums
 - vi) Choice Adviser service
 - vii) Support for parents and carers
9. i) Equity and Fair Access to school places and consultation
 - 9.1 Each admission authority is responsible for setting clear and equitable admission arrangements which are fully compliant with the Code for their respective schools. Local authorities set admission arrangements for all community schools in its area, governing bodies carry out this role for non community schools. Admission arrangements for Academies are approved by the Secretary of State as part of an Academy's Funding Agreement.
 - 9.2 All admission authorities 'must' consult on the admission arrangements they propose to use by 1 March for admission in September of the following year. Consultation 'must' last for a minimum of eight weeks between 1 November and 1 March and target a range of consultees including parents and carers, other admission authorities, neighbouring local authorities, religious authorities where appropriate. Admission authorities 'must' then determine their admission arrangements by 15th April in the determination year. NB. There is provision for admission authorities to retain admission arrangements for three years without the need for annual consultation if there are no proposed changes.
 - 9.3 Admission arrangements 'must' include: pupil admission numbers; criteria to be used if there are more applications than places available (oversubscription criteria); information about any tests for aptitude/ability; details of how late applications and waiting lists will be handled and explain whether any supplementary information forms are to be used by the school.
 - 9.4 Admission authorities are required to ensure that their admission practices are fair and equitable to all families. Schools 'must not' for example, require parents to attend an open evening or other meeting as a condition for the allocation of a place. The use of interviews (prior to an offer of place being made) in school admission arrangements is unlawful.
 - 9.5 All schools that have enough places available 'must' offer a place to every child who has applied for one without condition or the use of any criteria.

¹ 'Admission arrangements' means the overall procedure, practices, criteria and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places and refers to any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered. (School Admissions Code 2010)

9.6 A timeline setting out the process for application and admission to primary and secondary school in Southwark for the 2011/12 academic year is attached as appendix 1.

10. ii) Setting Fair Oversubscription Criteria

10.1 Oversubscription criteria are used to determine how offers of places will be prioritised in the event of their being more applications to a school than places available. All admission authorities 'must' set fair and clear oversubscription criteria for their school. Looked after children must receive first priority for admission to all schools. Other typical oversubscription criteria will include in a priority order, whether an applicant has a sibling at the school, any social/medical needs, distance between the family home and the school. Faith schools will have specific criteria relating to the religious practice of families.

10.2 While they cannot be guaranteed a place at a particular school for their child, parents 'must' be free to express a preference for the school or schools they want for their children. It is important that families consider how closely they are able to meet oversubscription criteria of each school they apply to as this will determine the priority their application will be given.

10.3 A list of oversubscription criteria for community schools is attached as appendix 2 of this report.

10.4 The Code contains a list of prohibited oversubscription criteria which are deemed to be unfair and 'must not' be used by admission authorities. The list of these prohibited criteria is attached as appendix 3 of this report.

11. iii) Coordination schemes for admission applications

11.1 Local authorities are responsible for coordinating and processing all primary, secondary and in-year admission applications to schools in its area. Southwark processed 3725 primary and 4048 secondary applications for 2010/11 admissions and has received 292 in year applications from 1st September 2010 to date. Each year, schemes to manage the coordination of admissions are included in the admissions consultation process full details of Southwark's primary, secondary and in year coordination schemes can be found at: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200172/school_admissions/1634/co-ordinated_admission_arrangements

11.2 Parents are able to apply for up to six schools of their preferences, these must be listed in priority order and submitted to the local authority either online or on a paper common application form (CAF) by the current closing dates (for 2011 admissions) – 31st October 2010 for secondary school applications and 15th January for primary school applications. Many voluntary aided schools and some academies will also require a supplementary information form to be completed which is used to rank all applicants in priority order against their published admissions criteria. It should be noted that completion of the CAF is the document that makes an application valid, If a CAF has been completed and a supplementary form has not been even though it is required, the application must still be considered. Failure to complete a supplementary form will, in most cases,

reduce the priority against oversubscription criteria that an application form receives.

- 11.3 In addition, to school admissions at normal points of entry and regular in-year applications for families that perhaps have moved into the area during the school year, a separate In Year Fair Access protocol is in place to support the admission of vulnerable children or those who present challenging behaviour and may be harder to place in a school.
12. iv) Referral of objections
- 12.1 Local authorities have a duty to ensure fair access to educational opportunities and have a key role in ensuring that school admission arrangements are lawful and comply with the mandatory provisions in the Code. Any objections 'must' be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.
- 12.2 A local report is submitted to the School Adjudicator each year on how effectively admission arrangements have operated in the area. The report includes details of how many admission appeals were made and how effective the coordination processes have been.
- 12.3 Parents also have the right to raise any objections relating to admission arrangements either through the consultation process – between November and March or, after the determination of arrangements have been made in April. Local authorities 'must' publish a notice shortly after all admission arrangements for schools in their area have been determined, setting out that they are available for inspection. This provides an opportunity for parents' access to view the arrangements and consider whether to make an objection to the Schools Adjudicator.
- 12.4 All objections should be referred to the Schools adjudicator in the determination year by 31st July.
13. v) Admissions Forums
- 13.1 Local authorities have a duty to establish an Admission Forum for its area which comprises membership that reflects the types of schools in the locality. The main focus of the Forum is to consider the fairness of admission arrangements in their local context. Southwark's Admissions Forum has the following ethos: *To consider and promote a fair and effective schools admission system which advances social equity and inclusion, serving the interests of local parents and children collectively.*
- 13.2 Admissions Forums have a statutory role to deliver which includes: consideration of how well current and proposed admission arrangements serve its area; review effectiveness and accessibility of advice and guidance for parents and to monitor the effectiveness of local authority Fair Access Protocols.
14. vi) Choice Adviser Service
- 14.1 Local authorities are required to provide advice and assistance to all parents of children of all ages in their area to help them navigate the school admissions application process. This 'must' be provided through an independent service that is focused on supporting the families who most need support. Southwark delivers this role through a School Preference

Adviser (Choice Adviser), term time only as a member of the Parent Partnership Service which is also an independent service.

14.2 The School Preference Adviser supports parents through the process through: i) one to one and group meetings with parents at schools and community centres to explain admissions processes; ii) telephone and email requests; iii) explaining the admissions appeals process and accompanying parents to admission appeal hearings. For the two week period immediately after primary and secondary school offers are made (in March and April/May each year), the SPA holds a surgery for parents who want further advice and support to pursue options if they have not received a school of their preference at a time when these families are most in need of clear impartial advice on what they can do next. A series of starting school events attracting over 150 parents at a time have also been arranged by the School Preference Adviser.

14.3 This service has become increasingly popular with parents and has proved to be a vital resource to support families that need it. Between September 2009 and July 2010, the following support was given to parents by the School Preference Adviser:

Number of group meetings held	Number of Parents seen	Number of phone calls taken	Number of appeals attended
38	771	106	17

15. vii) Support for parents and carers

15.1 Southwark provides comprehensive information regarding the school admissions process for parents and carers online and through publication of primary and secondary, starting school brochures each year which is a statutory requirement.

15.2 One of the main challenges facing the local authority is to ensure that as many parents as possible understand the admission processes and then, apply by the appropriate closing date. Submission of late applications is particularly problematic for primary school admissions as it is more difficult to raise awareness with families who may not have used formal childcare facilities and totally unaware of the systems in place. Almost 700 late primary school applications were received during last year's admission round, this has been reduced to 452 this year.

15.3 A series of support measures to help parents to apply on time and understand the admission processes involving schools, early years' providers and various departments of the council have been put in place. This is complementary to the work carried out by the School Preference Adviser. A summary of these initiatives is given as appendix 4 of this report.

Policy implications

16. Three year funding through the Area Based Grant (2008-11) was made available to local authorities towards the cost of providing a Choice Adviser service, this is used to fund a School Preference Adviser in Southwark and to contribute towards the cost of providing information and events for parents to support them through the admissions process. This service has proved to be an extremely valuable resource for families navigating the admissions system, particularly to those who may not find it easy to access or understand published information.
17. The Area Based Grant (£49,425) supporting the Preference Advisers was 'protected' from the significant in year budget cuts for 2011-12; however, funding beyond the end of this financial year remains uncertain until the comprehensive spending review in October. Southwark Admission Forum is due to consider support options for parents and carers post August 2011.

Community impact statement

18. Community impact statements are a corporate requirement in all reports to the following meetings: the cabinet, individual decision makers, scrutiny, regulatory committees and community councils.

Resource implications

19. There are no resource implications in this report.

Consultation

20. No consultation has taken place as this report is an information only item.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

21. The Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance has reviewed the paper and advises that there does not appear to be any legal issues with this document

Finance Director (CS0100)

22. The financial implications are as set out in paragraph 17 of this report.

Head of Procurement

23. There are no procurement implications to this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
School Admissions Code 2010	Children's Services, Pupil Access, Tooley St.	Glenn Garcia 52717

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Coordinated Admission Arrangements, primary and secondary schools 2011/12
Appendix 2	Oversubscription criteria for community schools 2011
Appendix 3	Prohibited oversubscription criteria
Appendix 4	Summary of school admission support for parents and carers

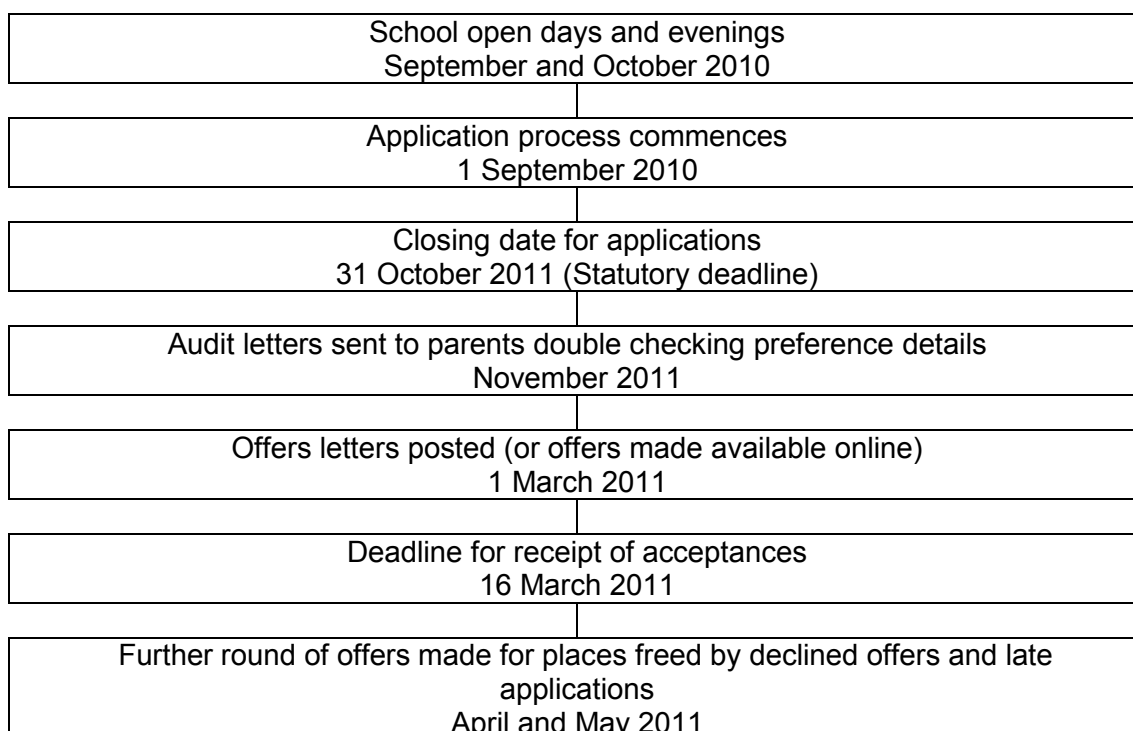
AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director, Children's Services	
Report Author	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
Version	Final	
Dated	23 rd September 2010	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes/No
Finance Director	No	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team		23 rd September 2010

Coordinated Admission Arrangements for Primary Schools 2011/12



Coordinated Admission Arrangements for Secondary Schools 2011



APPENDIX 2**Oversubscription criteria for community schools 2011**

In the event of there being more applications than places available, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

- (i) Children in public care (Looked After Children) [see note (a)];
- (ii) Children who will have brothers or sisters attending the school at their time of entry [see note (b)];
- (iii) Where professional evidence indicates that there are particular psychological, medical or social needs which the LA and Headteacher agree can best be addressed at the school [see note (c)];
- (iv) Children living nearest the school measured by straight line route from home to the main school gate [see note (d)]

Notes

- (a) A child in public care (looked after child) means a person under the age of 18 years who is provided by social services with accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or who is the subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act. Children who are looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements (such as respite) are excluded.
- (b) Brothers and sisters include half brothers and sisters and step brothers and sisters who share the same home. It also includes adopted and foster brothers and sisters who share the same home.
- (c) Evidence of psychological, medical or social needs including the reasons why a particular school would best meet those needs and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. This must be substantiated by written evidence from relevant qualified professionals e.g. a child or educational psychologist, a child psychiatrist, a general practitioner, an orthopaedic consultant or social worker.
- (d) The LA determines the distance using the computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This system measures the distance from each applicant's home to the designated main entrance of the school by the shortest straight line route in metres. A centroid (centre point), supplied by Ordnance Survey (OS), determines the start point of the home address. If a child lives in a block of flats where a communal entrance is used, the centroid for the block and not the individual flat is used for calculation purposes. When dealing with multiple applications from a block of flats to the same community school, lower door numbers will take priority.
- (e) Where a school becomes oversubscribed within a single criterion, places will be offered to children who live nearest the school. If oversubscription still exists, lots will be drawn. The process will be overseen by a person independent of the process.
- (f) The home address is the address where the child resides. Where a child spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental

responsibility, the school will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent and treat that as the home address.

- (g) A child's attendance at a co-located nursery class does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education a separate application must be made for transfer from nursery to primary school.
- (h) Multiple births – if only one place is available at the school and the next child who qualifies for a place is one of multiple birth siblings, we will ask community schools to go over their published admission number to support the family when possible to do so.

Proof of Address

When offered a place at a school, the offer will be conditional until proof of address has been given. Original copies of the following documentation will be required:

- child benefit documentation
- council tax bill
- one other from bank statement, TV licence, credit card or store card statement

Proof of address must be supplied within 15 days of the date of the offer of a place.

Occasionally we have reason to suspect that a family does not live at the address stated. If this is the case, we will carry out an investigation. Should we discover that a parent is making a fraudulent claim the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

Dates of entry

All children within the reception year group will be offered a place in a primary school for September 2011. Parents may request that their child's entry be deferred until later in the same school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age. Where entry is deferred, the school place offered will be held and will not be offered to any other child. Parents however will not be able to defer a child's entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.

Waiting Lists

Parents/carers can apply to have their child placed on the waiting list for any oversubscribed community school in Southwark.

The LA will hold waiting lists for all oversubscribed community schools up until the 31st August. Waiting lists will then be handed over to oversubscribed community schools.

Names will be placed in oversubscription priority order

Any parent/carer has the right to be informed of their ranking on the waiting list and the criteria that applies to them should they request this information.

Capacity of Primary School places

We will constantly review our position in order to identify areas of need. Places will then be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

APPENDIX 3

Prohibited oversubscription criteria

In setting oversubscription criteria admission authorities **must not**:

- a) stipulate any conditions that affect the priority given to an application such as taking account of other preferences for schools made on the same application form or the type of school previously attended by the child unless those schools are named feeder schools in accordance with paragraph 2.72. For example, by saying that priority will be given if all or some other preferences are for a school with particular characteristics (e.g. other schools are of a particular religious denomination) or on the basis that the child attended a particular type of school previously. This includes criteria often described as ‘conditionality’;
- b) give priority to children according to the order of schools named as references by their parents, including ‘first preference first’ arrangements;
- c) give priority to children according to their parents’ willingness to give practical support to the ethos of the school which includes:
 - i. asking parents to commit themselves or their child to taking part in activities outside of normal school hours; and
 - ii. asking parents to support the school financially or in any other practical way. This does not prevent admission authorities from including a factual statement about the school’s ethos in their admission arrangements as set out in paragraphs 2.31 and 2.32.
- d) give priority to children according to the occupational, financial or marital status of parents, subject to paragraph 2.17 below;
- e) give priority to children according to the educational achievement or background of their parents;
- f) take account of reports from previous schools about children’s past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement;
- g) discriminate against or disadvantage children with special educational needs or disabilities. Governors have no discretion over the admission of children with statements of special educational needs;
- h) allocate places to relatives of former pupils of the school. A former pupil includes a sibling who will not be at the school when the younger child starts. This includes those who were attending at the time the younger sibling’s application is made but will have left by the time of admission (see paragraph 2.23).
- i) take account of the behaviour of other members of a child’s family, whether good or bad, including a good or bad attendance record of other children in the same family;
- j) give priority to children whose parents are current or former staff or governors or who have another connection to the school, subject to paragraph 2.18 below;
- k) give priority to children according to their, or their parents’ particular interests, specialist knowledge or hobbies. This does not include taking account of membership of, or participation in, religious activities for faith schools providing this is consistent with this Code and guidance issued by the faith provider body/religious authority;
- l) give priority to children based on the order in which applications were received;
- m) in the case of designated grammar schools that rank all children according to a predetermined pass mark and allocate places to those who score highest, give priority to siblings of current or former pupils;
- n) in the case of schools with boarding places take account of a child’s suitability for boarding (see paragraphs 1.84 to 1.85 and Appendix 6 of this Code); and
- o) use oversubscription criteria that give priority to children according to the alphabetical order of their first name or surname or their date of birth.

Summary of school admission support for parents and carers

The following actions are in place to support parents from September 2010:

- The Family Information Service has been briefed by admissions officers and is able to assist parents with basic enquiries regarding the primary admissions process.
- Parents and carers are being encouraged to submit their admission applications online where possible to do so. Support and training from the admissions team is available for schools staff so they in turn can support families they come into contact with.
- The Parent Partnership team, led by the School Preference Adviser, held a family fun day event in July 2010 at Peckham Park targeted at families with children under 5 to help raise awareness of the primary admissions process approx 150 families attended. Children were entertained by clowns, a bouncy castle, Surrey Docks Farm and face painting. The Parent Partnership Team, Sure Start and various schools were also present on the day to talk to parents and provide them with advice.
- The School Preference Adviser will be meeting and assisting parents throughout the admissions process. Meetings will be held at schools across the borough, Sunshine House and the One Stop Shop ["OSS"] Walworth Rd.
- Support in the campaign to raise admissions awareness will again be requested from Diocesan Boards.
- Training and awareness of admissions deadlines brought to the attention of key officers/teams across the council last year and will be repeated this year.
- Private, Voluntary and Independent ["PVI"] early years managers to be contacted to inform them of the admissions process and deadlines so that are able to raise awareness with parents using their facilities. This was a huge success last year and will be repeated this year.
- Training to be provided to the One Stop Shop and Call Centre staff to deal with admission queries and provide basic on the spot assistance to parents. Boxes to be placed in each OSS so that parents can drop off applications.
- Campaign posters will be distributed and displayed at every early years setting, doctor's surgery and library in Southwark during October.
- News story published in September 2010 on the Southwark website home page regarding the primary and secondary admissions process.
- Article on 'How to apply for a school place' to be placed in the September 2010 edition of Southwark Life and Let's Go publications.
- Full page advert to be placed in the December 2010 edition of Southwark Life and a quarter page news item to be placed in the January 2011 edition.
- Regular Facebook and Twitter reminders to be sent to parents including reminder posted a week prior to the primary admissions deadline.
- One page advert to be placed in Southwark News and a banner to be placed on the Southwark homepage a week prior to the application deadline.
- Admissions team will liaise with schools staff to ensure a primary school application form has been received for all children attending nursery class provision.

Scrutiny review proposal

1 What is the review?

Review of parenting support: Part one of two reviews

School admissions – with focus on reviewing clarity of information available alongside reviewing support networks to help parents negotiate the system

2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?

Make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet to improve communication with and support for parents.

3 When should the review be carried out/completed? I.e. does the review need to take place before/after a certain time?

November 2010

4 What format would suit this review? (e.g. full investigation, q & a with executive member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)

5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?

- Guidance for parents completing the CAF.
- Step by step guides, especially if there are additional criteria such as church school forms.
- Review of admissions for children where special needs are identified after the CAF has been submitted.
- Numbered receipts to make tracking forms which have been misplaced possible.
- Early attention given to the admissions support issue as parents will be completing CAF forms by the end of next term/January 2011.

6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?

A report and presentation has been requested for 4 October meeting from Children's services officers on the following:

School admissions process and support for parents. This will contain an explanation of the government's guidance on schools admission criteria, the local authority's role in coordinating school admissions and the role of the Admissions Board. An overview of support for parents will be given

The committee will seek evidence from other relevant officers, parents representatives, governors, independent members of the committee, and the Admissions Forums

- 7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?**
- 8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?
e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event**

The committee will:

- receive reports from officers
- hold interviews with officers and parents representatives and if possible, any governors in as one-off session
- ask the independent members of the sub-committee to submit any evidence they may have, whether anecdotal or not
- request evidence from the Admissions Forum

Scrutiny review proposal

- 1 What is the review?**
Review of childhood obesity and sports provision for secondary and primary children
- 2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?**

Make recommendations to the Cabinet for improvements to the education of children on healthy eating and the dangers of obesity, and to examine whether sports pro

- 3 When should the review be carried out/completed? I.e. does the review need to take place before/after a certain time?**
Early 2011
- 4 What format would suit this review? (e.g. full investigation, q & a with executive member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)**

A one-off session with the Cabinet member for Leisure and Sports, plus education officers and NHS representatives, such as the public health physicians should be sufficient, although further sessions may be necessary.

Alongside this evidence will be requested from parents' representatives, NHS & Council officers.

Consideration will be given to inviting submissions and comment via Southwark websites and through other Southwark social media opportunities

- 5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?**
 - What programmes of study are followed by primary and secondary pupils on nutrition, cooking, healthy lifestyles? Are they adequate?
 - How are pupils consulted with regard to sport and exercise? Is there sufficient variety and accessibility for different interests?
 - What facilities are available to young people and their parents if they acknowledge there is a weight problem and want help?
 - Are we making best use of London Olympics?
- 6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?**

7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?

Examples of best practice from other local and health authorities will be considered.

**8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?
e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event**

- A meeting hearing evidence from the Cabinet member for Leisure and Sports, plus education officers and NHS representatives, public health physicians & parents' representatives.
- Request for written evidence from some, or all, of the above.
- Considering reports on best practice.
- Possible use of social media and Southwark websites to gather the views of residents & community.

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