

<b>Item No.</b> 12.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 18 January 2022	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Southwark coordinated admission schemes for primary, junior, secondary and year 10 2023	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION**

This report sets out the proposed Pan London coordinated admission schemes for primary, junior and secondary schools in Southwark for 2021 admissions. These schemes must be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education for implementation from September 2022 when the admissions application process commences for the September 2023 intake.

The council has a statutory duty to coordinate admissions for Southwark residents on behalf of all maintained schools and academies in the borough. Arrangements for coordination, includes the timetable to be followed and confirms how local authorities will work together to ensure application information is received, processed and transferred between the authorities, the applicant and the schools.

There have been changes to the schemes from the previous year and a full consultation has taken place. In a welcome move to make the admissions process more parent friendly, officers have offered a date with which we will get back to parents who have applied late for their child's school place. Making the process much clearer for parents who for one reason or another had applied late. A full consultation in respect of Southwark's admission arrangements for September 2023 was carried out between 12 November and 14 January 2022, a summary of responses to the consultation is provided at Appendix 5 of this report.

All of the details for agreed schemes for 2023 are now set out in this report. I would like to thank the Education Admissions team for their report and propose that Cabinet agree the coordinated admissions schemes as set out in the attached report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Cabinet agrees the 2023/24 coordinated admission schemes for Primary (Reception), Junior (Year 3), Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) admissions attached as Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 of this report.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The coordination of admission arrangements must adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the School Admissions Code 2014. These arrangements apply to admission authorities of all maintained schools and non-maintained state funded schools.
3. 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. These reports are being presented to Cabinet this year as there are proposed changes made to the coordinated admission schemes for 2023.
4. The Council is the admissions authority for Southwark community primary schools only and also has a statutory responsibility for coordinating school admission applications on behalf of all Southwark residents applying for a place at a primary, junior, secondary and 14-19 UTC transfer at a maintained school/non maintained state funded school in England. This includes admissions at normal points of entry, e.g. to primary reception year including Year 3 transfer and secondary Year 7 including 14-19 UTC year 10 transfer. Arrangements for these coordinated admissions are negotiated and agreed across all 33 London local authorities to form a pan-London admissions scheme.
5. Coordination provides families with a single point of application to schools where up to six preferences may be made on a common application form. The Council is also responsible for confirming a single school offer to each child on offer date, which, for the September 2023 intake, is 1 March 2023 for Secondary including 14-19 UTC transfer and 17 April 2023 for Reception and Junior applications. The exception to this coordinated admissions process would be applications to any new free schools currently being established for September 2023 which are not able to be included in the coordinated admissions process which will begin in September 2022.
6. There are currently no new free schools due to open within Southwark for 2023. Should any new free schools with an opening date of September 2023 be subsequently confirmed, it will be expected to operate a separate application process alongside the Council's co-ordinated primary and

secondary admission schemes. This will enable families to submit an expression of interest directly to the schools in addition to listing up to six preferences via Southwark's Primary (Reception) and Secondary (Year 7) coordinated admission schemes. The Council would then work collaboratively with the free school after national offer day to contact families to determine a single school place i.e. (the offer through co-ordination or at the new school). This method worked successfully for Haberdashers' Aske's Borough Academy which opened in September 2019 and is the most recent free school to open in the borough.

7. Local authorities and all other own admission authorities, must determine their final admission arrangements and coordinated admission schemes (Primary - Reception, Junior, Secondary - Year 7 and 14-19 UTC transfer) by 28 February 2022 for September 2023 admissions and notify the Secretary of State if a coordinated scheme has been secured also by this date.
8. There is a proposed change to the council's coordinated admission schemes (Primary - Reception, Junior, Secondary - Year 7 and 14-19 UTC transfer - Year 10) for September 2023 which is the inclusion of a timetable for managing offers following late applications and additional preferences made after national offer date. The proposed changes will provide families with a clear timetable to support this process and will also improve back office efficiency. In addition to the proposed change, the dates have been changed throughout to reflect the 2023 academic year.
9. A full consultation in respect of Southwark's co-ordinated admission schemes for Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) for September 2023 was carried out this year between 12 November and 14 January 2022. A copy of the consultation is included in the background papers section of this report. One response was received by 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 confirming agreement to each of the proposals set out in the consultation document, a summary of this and, any further responses received by the closing date, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 is provided in Appendix 5 of this report.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

10. The School Admissions Code 2021 sets out requirements for local authorities to provide a system to enable the efficient admission of pupils to schools at normal point of entry (Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 10). A co-ordinated admissions scheme for 2023 admissions must be in place with details of how this will operate within each local authority.
11. Co-ordinated admissions schemes must enable parents in a home local authority to apply to any school in England. The co-ordinated admission schemes must set out how information will be received, processed and transferred between the local authority, the applicants, the schools and neighbouring boroughs for Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10). Any offer of a school place must be

made by the home local authority.

12. Coordinated admission schemes provide a fair and efficient school admissions process whilst almost entirely eliminating the risk of multiple offers being made to individual families.
13. Local authorities across London developed the key principles, including a mix of mandatory and optional clauses for each coordinated scheme to be considered and implemented by each individual local authority. Coordinated admission schemes for Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) which meet the PAN London requirements are attached respectively as appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

### **Policy framework implications**

14. The refresh of the Borough Plan for 2018-22 was approved by the Council Assembly in November 2020 and presents a set of commitments, which will help the Council deliver the vision of "A Fairer Future for All". It is a requirement that reports to Cabinet now explicitly refer to the Borough Plan and how the report and or the actions outlined will help deliver key aspects of the plan. The school admissions process supports families to secure access to school places in line with theme 6 – 'A great start in life'.

### **Community impact statement**

#### **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

15. The coordinated admissions process is designed to produce fair and equitable access to school places for all children. Allocation of places is delivered through the strict application of admissions and oversubscription criteria of each school through a central PAN London computer. All admission authorities must also implement clear admission arrangements that achieve equity and fair access for all pupils in line with the School Admissions Code 2021.
16. Support is provided to families that find it difficult to navigate the admissions system through our school admission officers, school staff and the Southwark Information, Advice and Support (SIAS) Team. This involves a significant amount of training, outreach support and drop in sessions for families throughout the year, all of which have been conducted virtually since the start of the pandemic. SIAS officers also provide support to specific 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. In addition, Southwark residents also have direct access to one to one telephone or video call support from the school admissions team during the application stage of the admissions process – this is on request and through referrals from schools and other agencies.

17. For families without access to a computer or internet at home, Southwark libraries and one stop shops also offered free internet usage. The online application system enables a streamlined service to be delivered so officers are able to provide high quality direct assistance to families and advise on the admissions process in person, therefore improving the service as a whole and in particular for those families who may have difficulty navigating the admissions system.
18. 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 4 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.
19. “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 for consideration. Managing the post offer admissions process with the use of a timetable has the potential to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none.
20. Comprehensive Equality impact assessments relating to the admissions service have been carried out recently, no negative impacts of the new co-ordinated admissions schemes have been identified, so no mitigating actions are required, and no equality objectives will derive from these specific proposals.
21. Officers have had due regard in preparing the co-ordinated admissions schemes 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. The inclusion of a post offer admissions timetable and fair and equitable co-ordinated admissions schemes:
  - 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 the co-ordination of admissions across the borough for people with protected characteristics and those without.

### **Health Impact Statement**

22. There are no specific identified health impacts resulting from any of the proposals or recommendations, so a health impact statement is not necessary for this report.

### **Climate change implications**

23. Following the council assembly meeting on the 14 July 2021, the council has now committed to considering the climate change implications of any decisions made.
24. No direct measures have been taken to reduce or enhance the impact on climate change as part of this school admissions report, as no substantive negative effects have been identified. Additionally as no direct measures have been taken to reduce or enhance the impact on climate change as part of this admissions process, no monitoring will be required.
25. There are no substantive negative effects anticipated as a result of the recommendations and proposals.

### **Resource implications**

26. None

### **Legal implications**

27. Please see the concurrent from the Director of Law and Governance.

### **Financial implications**

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

### **Consultation**

29. A full consultation in respect of Southwark's co-ordinated admission schemes for Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) for September 2023 was carried out this year between 12 November and 14 January 2022. Responses from the consultation are summarised in Appendix 5 of this report.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Governance**

30. The recommendations in this report are included in the matters reserved to full Cabinet in Part 3C of the Council's Constitution.
31. Cabinet is advised that the legal framework surrounding the admissions scheme is set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the School Admissions Code 2021, as stated within the body of the report. Cabinet is advised that the proposed admissions schemes for 2023 comply with the applicable law.
32. Cabinet is asked to note that the Council is not required to consult on proposed admission arrangements so long as they remain unchanged, for the period of up to 7 years from the last consultation. A full consultation in respect of Southwark's co-ordinated admission schemes for Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) for September 2023 was carried out this year.
33. Cabinet is reminded of the public sector equality duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010 when making this decision. This requires that, due regard be given to the 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. That Statement also makes clear that whilst an equality impact assessment has been carried out in relation to the proposed changes, no negative impacts on people with a particular protected characteristic have been identified.

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Governance – CAS21/22**

34. This report seeks approval from Cabinet to the Primary (Reception), Junior, Secondary (Year 7) and 14-19 UTC transfer (Year 10) co-ordinated admission schemes for 2023 admissions attached as appendix 1, appendix 2, appendix 3 and appendix 4 of this report. Paragraph 28 confirms that the costs associated with the admissions process are met from the Dedicated Schools Grant, and that there is no direct financial implication on the council's revenue budgets.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	Legislation Services Team at The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents</a>		
The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012 (England)	Legislation Services Team at The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents</a>		
The School Admissions Code 2021	Department for Education	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
 <p>Southwark Council's admissions consultati</p>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark coordinated admissions scheme - Reception 2023-24
Appendix 2	Southwark coordinated admissions scheme - Junior 2023-24
Appendix 3	Southwark coordinated admissions scheme - Year 7 2023-24
Appendix 4	Southwark coordinated admissions scheme - Year 10 2023-24
Appendix 5 <b>(to follow)</b>	Summary of responses to Southwark Council's admissions consultation 2023/24

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Glenn Garcia, Assistant Director, Education Access and Statutory Services, Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	6 January 2022	
<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>
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		6 January 2022