

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 March 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Southwark Coordinated Admission schemes for Secondary and Primary Admissions 2013	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Catherine McDonald, Children's Services	

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

Southwark Council is responsible for coordination of applications for admission to all schools in the borough and is signed up to the pan London agreement to deliver this service. The coordinated admissions schemes have been developed to ensure a fair and transparent system to allocate school places at normal point of entry – Reception class and Year 7.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet agrees the Secondary and Primary coordinated admissions schemes for 2013 admissions attached as Appendices 1 and 2 of this report respectively.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. 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 and the School Admissions Code of Practice 2012. These arrangements apply to admission authorities of all maintained schools and academies.
3. The local authority is the admissions authority for Southwark community primary schools and is also responsible for coordinating school admission applications on behalf of all Southwark residents applying for a place at a secondary or primary maintained school/academy in England. This includes admissions at normal point of entry e.g. to primary reception year and secondary Year 7. Arrangements for these coordinated admissions are negotiated and agreed across all 33 London local authorities to form a pan London admissions scheme.
4. 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 local authority is also responsible for confirming a single school offer to each child on offer date which is 1 March for Secondary and 18 April for Primary applications this year. The exception to this coordinated admissions process would be applications to any Free Schools currently being established for September 2012 which were unable to be included in the coordinated admissions process which began in September 2011. Families would be able to apply directly to the Free school after offer date and therefore, become eligible to receive a second offer. Should this situation arise, a separate process will be established between the

local authority and the new school to coordinate the change of offers for families rejecting their offer through coordination and taking up a place Free school place.

5. Admission applications to secondary schools have been successfully coordinated by the local authority for several years. The first year of coordinated admissions for primary schools took place last year for September 2011 admissions.
6. Local authorities like all other admission authorities must determine their final admission to the Secretary of State by April 15 2012 for admissions from September 2013 arrangements even if they have not been consulted on as there has been no change to the arrangements. Local authorities have a duty to publish a public notice in a local newspaper confirming these arrangements and also, where they can be viewed, this will take place in May 2012.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. The School Admissions Codes of Practice 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 and Year 7). A coordinated admissions scheme for 2013 admissions must be in place with details of how this will operate within each local authority
8. Coordinated admissions schemes must enable parents in a home local authority to apply to any school in England and therefore, must set out how information will be received, processed and transferred between the LA, applicants, schools and neighbouring boroughs for secondary primary and in-year admissions. Any offer of a school place must be made by the local authority.
9. Coordinated admission arrangements provide a fair and efficient school admissions process and are able to almost entirely eliminate multiple offers being made to individual families.
10. Local authority officers across London have developed the key principles including a mix of mandatory and optional clauses for each for co-ordinated scheme to be considered and implemented by individual local authorities. Coordinated admission schemes for secondary and primary are attached respectively as Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.
11. The current coordinated admission schemes for secondary and primary admissions have worked well and enabled successful management of school admissions. No changes have been made to these arrangements other than dates throughout the documents to reflect the 2013 academic year and definition changes prescribed in the Code.

Secondary coordinated admissions 2012

12. A total of 2,892 applications were made to Southwark secondary schools for September 2011, including late applications and 423 from out borough residents. This year, for September 2012 admission, we've received 2,441 on time applications from Southwark residents, this number will increase after offer date when out borough applicants are added and late applications are added to the process. Parents and carers are notified of the secondary school offer for their child in a letter that is sent out on 1 March each year.

Primary coordinated admissions 2012

13. The admissions process for all primary reception class applications is underway for entry in September 2012. 3,466 applications were received (on time, Southwark residents only) 2,122 were made on line (61.2% of the total). Parents and carers will be notified of the primary school they have been offered for their child on 18 April 2012.

In-year admissions

14. The local authority has been responsible for coordinating in year admissions to all primary and secondary schools since September 2010. This has been a significant challenge for the LA and schools, largely due to the volume of applications received – 2,312 in year applications were submitted to the LA between 1 September 2011 and 8 February 2012. From September 2013/14 there is no longer a requirement for local authorities to coordinate in year applications. A working group comprising officers and Headteachers has been formed to develop an alternative in year process for Southwark. This will be easier for parents to navigate, be fair, transparent able to keep track of children whilst they are seeking a school place for safeguarding purposes. The new system will be widely publicised for parents/carers once determined and piloted during 2012 in preparation for 2013.

Coordination of Applications for Looked After Children

15. Looked after children remain the highest priority on the admissions criteria for all Southwark Schools in line with the School Admissions Code of Practice. The definition was expanded in the Regulations to include those children who are looked after at the time of their application but who are adopted, made subject to residence or special guardianship orders, before they take up their school place. This definition will apply to 2013-2014 admissions. In January of each year, officers meet to identify applications received for looked after children and track the progress of these applications throughout the primary and secondary coordinated processes. This year, six applications for admission to Southwark secondary schools were received for Looked After Children (in and out borough children). All have been allocated a place at the school of their first preference. By prioritising places for looked after children the local authority is able to provide important support to children in its care and contribute towards their educational achievement.

Coordination of school admission applications for Pupils with Statements of SEN

16. Applications for a secondary school place for pupils with a Statement of special educational needs are processed completely separately from the main coordinated admission arrangements. The SEN team considered 107 secondary transfer applications this year for pupils with a Statement of special educational, families were notified on 15 February of the school places they have been offered for September 2012.

Community impact statement

17. The Co-ordinated 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. Even greater emphasis is now placed on admissions authorities to achieve equity and fair access for all pupils through their admission arrangements through the Code. Additional support is made available to parents who may need support in understanding the application process and selecting schools of their preference through a School Preference Adviser and Parent Partnership service. This involves a significant amount of outreach support and drop in sessions throughout the year at schools and libraries, some for specific EAL communities with interpreters plus weekly drop in at a Southwark one stop shop. Support is also made available on a one to one basis on request and through referrals from schools and other agencies.

Resource implications

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

19. Cabinet is asked to agree the Secondary, Primary and In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for 2013.
20. The strategic director of communities, law & governance is of the opinion that the document is compatible with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2012 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-Ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and with the Local Authority's Admissions Authority duties.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Admissions Code of Practice 2012	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH DfE website	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH DfE website	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-Ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH DfE website	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions for September 2013 (Secondary)
Appendix 2	Southwark Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to reception for September 2013 (Primary)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Catherine McDonald, Children's Services	
Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
Report Author	Glen Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
Version	Final	
Dated	8 March 2012	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	8 March 2012	