

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 19 March 2013	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Southwark Coordinated Admission Schemes for Secondary and Primary Admissions 2014	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Children's Services	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Southwark Council is responsible for the co-ordination of applications for admission to all schools in the borough and is signed up to the pan London agreement to deliver this service. The co-ordinated 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for the Cabinet

1. That Cabinet agree the Secondary and Primary co-ordinated admissions schemes for 2014 admissions attached as appendices 1 and 2 of this report respectively.

Recommendation for the Leader of the Council

2. That the Leader of the Council delegates authority to the cabinet member for Children's Services to agree the Secondary and Primary co-ordinated admissions schemes for 2015 admissions and onwards where there are no changes made from the previous year.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The co-ordination 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 and the School Admissions Code of Practice 2012 ["The Code"]. These arrangements apply to admission authorities of all maintained schools and academies.
4. The local authority is the admissions authority for Southwark community primary schools only, but 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.

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 local authority is also responsible for confirming a single school offer to each child on offer date which is 1 March for Secondary and 16 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 2013 which we were unable to include in the co-ordinated admissions process which began in September 2012. Families would be able to apply directly to the Free School after the 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 at a Free School.
6. Local authorities like all other admission authorities must determine their final admission to the Secretary of State by 15 April 2013 for admissions from September 2014 arrangements even if a consultation has not taken place due to there being 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 2013.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Co-ordinated admissions schemes

7. The Code 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 co-ordinated admissions scheme for 2014 admissions must be in place with details of how this will operate within each local authority.
8. 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 secondary and primary. Any offer of a school place must be made by the home local authority.
9. Co-ordinated admission arrangements provide a fair and efficient school admissions process whilst almost entirely eliminating the risk of 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. Co-ordinated admission schemes for secondary and primary are attached respectively as appendices 1 and 2 of this report.
11. The current co-ordinated 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 2014 academic year and the inclusion of the online application process.

Secondary co-ordinated admissions 2013

12. For entry into September 2013, the local authority received 2,500 on time applications from Southwark residents which is an increase from the previous year. This number will also increase after the offer date when both out of borough applicants and late applications are added to the process.
13. The number of online applications received for September 2013 entry was 2,442 (97.6%), (in comparison, 1,370 (56%) online applications were made last year). This significant increase from the previous year is due to Southwark's online admissions campaign encouraging families to apply for a school place using the internet. Parents and carers are notified of the secondary school offer for their child on 1 March 2013.

Primary coordinated admissions 2013

14. The admissions process for all primary reception class applications is underway for children due to commence reception class in September 2013. A total of 3,397 applications were received from Southwark residents, 3,338 of these were made online (98.2% of the total). Again, this represents a significant increase in online applications, last year 2,122 (61.2%) were received online. Parents and carers will be notified of the primary school they have been offered for their child on 17 April 2013.

In Year admissions

15. Since September 2010, the local authority has been responsible for co-ordinating in year admissions to all primary and secondary schools although there is now no requirement within the current Code to do so. From September 2012 the local authority, in collaboration with Southwark schools, has been engaged with piloting the new In Year admissions scheme as a local co-ordinated arrangement which outlines Southwark's admissions process for families applying for a school place outside the normal round of admissions. The pilot In Year scheme provides that families who are new to the borough must continue to apply via the local authority. Those families wishing to transfer their child from one Southwark school to another must apply directly to the school of their preference. Due to the successful delivery of the pilot In Year scheme to both schools and families, the local authority consulted upon maintaining it as a determined arrangement. The consultation took place between 17 December 2012 and 11 February 2013 and was available for viewing on the school admissions pages of Southwark Council's website. No comments were received.

Co-ordination 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 co-ordinated admission arrangements. The SEN team considered 119 secondary transfer applications this year for pupils with a statement of special educational needs and families were notified on 15 February of the school places they have been offered for September 2013.

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 families 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 English as an Additional Language (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.
18. Southwark residents have also been supported directly by the School Admission officers during the application stage of the admissions process. 'Apply online' sessions were held at participating schools/nurseries across Southwark during the autumn term, which were attended by the School Admission officers and aimed at families requiring additional one to one support. For families without access to a computer or internet at home, Southwark libraries and one stop shops also offered free internet usage with staff on hand to help families. The online application system has dramatically reduced the amount of paperwork the School Admissions team has to process. As a result, they are now able to assist more families directly and advise them on the admissions process in person, thus improving the service as a whole and in particular for those families who may have difficulty navigating the admissions system.

Resource implications

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

20. Cabinet is advised that it may agree the Secondary, Primary and In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for 2014, under Part 3C of the Council's Constitution.
21. Cabinet is advised that the legal framework surrounding the admissions schemes is found under 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 2012.
22. In consideration of the admissions schemes, Cabinet is reminded of the public sector equality duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010. In particular Cabinet will note the services in place to assist families in accessing relevant information and support, as well as assistance with using the online service, as outlined in the Community Impact Statement.

Strategic Director of Finance Corporate Services (FC13/013)

23. The Strategic Director of Finance Corporate Services confirms that all costs will be met from the Dedicated Schools grant. There are no direct financial implications for the council's revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Admissions Code of Practice 2012	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-Ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Pan London Coordinated Admission System. Southwark LA Scheme for Admission to Secondary School in September 2014
Appendix 2	Pan London Coordinated Admission System. Southwark LA Scheme for Admission to Primary School (reception year) in September 2014

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Children's Services	
Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	
Report Author	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
Version	Final	
Dated	7 March 2013	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	7 March 2013	