

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 23 March 2010	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Executive
<b>Report title:</b>		Southwark Secondary, Primary and In Year Admission Schemes 2011	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Executive agrees the Secondary, Primary and In Year coordinated admissions schemes for 2011 attached as Appendices 1, 2 and 3. These changes:
  - Reduce the complexity of the local scheme making it more accessible to parents and carers and thereby leading to fewer appeals;
  - Meet all requirements of the required statutory frameworks; and,
  - Bring admission arrangements across local boroughs in-line with one another.

## BACKGROUND ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

2. Until 2010, schools were responsible for administering any application to them outside of the annual admissions round. This type of admission is termed an 'in-year admission.' In practice, this often left parents having to contact several schools to secure a place: it also meant that there was a lack of transparency in the admissions process as there was inevitably a lag between places being taken up and the Local Authority being aware of this fact. Finally, by Local Authorities assuming responsibility for this work, it offers significant savings across the wider education system due to the economies of scale brought by centralisation.
3. An amended School Admissions Code of Practice (the Code) came into force on February 10, 2010, it applies to all maintained schools and academies. Admission authorities are required to act in accordance with all mandatory provisions contained in the Code.
4. Admission arrangements must adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, The Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 (as amended), the Education (Co-ordinated Admissions Arrangements) (Secondary Schools) Regulations 2002 and the School Admissions Code of Practice 2010.
5. The local authority is responsible for coordinating school applications and admissions for all pupils applying to Southwark secondary maintained schools and academies as part of a pan London process agreed with other London local authorities. In-year (formerly casual) admissions to all maintained secondary schools are also managed locally by the local authority.
6. School admissions to all primary maintained schools in Southwark have been coordinated and managed by the local authority for the last 4 years under an agreed local arrangement. Individual schools currently manage the in-year admission of children directly it is not a function carried out by the local authority.

7. With effect from September 2010, local authorities are required to manage all admissions to both primary and secondary maintained schools this includes all in year admissions. Each scheme must also be coordinated across boroughs so there is a single agreed system in place with cooperation in terms of dates, timescales and policy to enable all admissions to be managed effectively. Residents will be required to complete a common application form (CAF) and must be allowed to apply to a minimum of three schools of preference anywhere in England and in any year group through their home local authority.
8. Local authorities like all other admission authorities must determine their final arrangements by April 15 2010 for 2011 normal point of entry admissions but also for primary in-year admissions from September 2010. Local authorities have a duty to confirm admission arrangements for all admission authorities with the Secretary of State and to publish a notice in a local newspaper confirming details of all admission arrangements for their area.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION ON COORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEME**

9. 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, Year 3 and Year 7) and also, for all in-year admissions to maintained schools, primary and secondary. A coordinated admissions scheme for 2011 admissions must be in place with details of how this will operate within each local authority.
10. 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.
11. Coordinated admission arrangements provide a fairer and more efficient school admissions process, and will almost entirely eliminate multiple offers being made to individual families.
12. 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, primary and in-year are attached respectively as appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this report for ease of reference, the three parts form Southwark's single coordinated admissions scheme for 2011 admissions.
13. Consultation on Southwark's co-ordinated schemes took place between 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and was sent to Governing bodies, Headteachers, community organisations and neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders.
14. Comments were received from the RC Diocesan board in respect in-year coordinated admissions and the role of governing bodies in the scheme. These points have been incorporated into the scheme and an in-year admissions process procedure. No other comments were received from the consultation.

## **In Year admissions**

15. In year admissions for secondary schools has been carried out by the local authority for some considerable time and this will extend to all maintained primary schools from September 2010. Decisions on whether or not a place can be offered to an applicant will be made by the relevant admissions authority (i.e. the local authority for community schools and the governing body for all other schools), but offers of a place must only be made by the local authority. The School Admissions Code of Practice requires all applicants to be offered or refused a place within 20 days of making an application. A tight application process and cooperation between schools and the local authority will be required in order to meet achieve these timescales for all applications.
16. Southwark Admissions Forum requested that a working group which included appropriate schools representatives and officers be established to develop an operational procedure document that will support co-ordinated in-year admissions scheme and for views and any additional feedback from schools to be made available to Executive. A copy of the draft procedure currently being consulted on with schools and academies is attached as appendix 4 of this report.

## **In Year Fair Access protocol**

17. As required by the Code, an In Year Fair Access protocol has been established and agreed by the Admissions Forum and the Southwark Association of Secondary Heads. It provides a process and agreement for the fair placement of children who are hard to place amongst all secondary schools in the local authority. Academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools are included in the protocol, a version of which has been running in the borough for some time reflecting the commitment of local schools to minimise exclusions and ensure all children have an appropriate place. The pattern of placements is to be monitored and reported to the Admission Forum and Southwark Association of secondary Headteachers on a regular basis.

## **The Coordination of Applications for Looked After Children**

18. Looked after children remain the highest priority on the admissions criteria for all Southwark Schools in line with the School Admissions Code of Practice. 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 co-ordinated processes. This year, seven applications for admission to secondary schools were received for Looked After Children in Southwark, all have been allocated a place at the school of highest 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.

## **The Coordination of Applications for Pupils with Statements of SEN**

19. 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. By the deadline date of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010 the SEN Division considered secondary transfer applications for 126 pupils with statements.
20. Additional DCSF funding is given to the local authority to provide a Choice Adviser Service for parents/carers in the borough who may require additional help to select and apply to their preferred schools. An officer based within the Parent Partnership team has been appointed to carry out this role and offer outreach, group and individual support to parents/carers. Interpreter support for parents/carers who have

difficulty communicating in English is made available at our One Stop Shops. This service is explained the Starting Secondary booklet in seven community languages identified as the most commonly spoken in Southwark. Support is made available to parents/carers at primary schools for children who are transferring to Year 7 and a face to face advice surgery facility is provided each year (after secondary and primary school admission offers are made) for any families who were not able to be offered one of their school preferences for their child.

### **Community Impact Statement**

21. 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 who offers information and advice through outreach work delivered at schools and community centres. Support is also made available on a one to one basis on request and through referrals from schools and other agencies.

### **Resource Implications**

27. 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**

28. The Executive is asked to agree the Secondary, Primary and In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for 2011.
29. The document has been reviewed and no legal issues arise from it. Notwithstanding that fact, the Executive is advised to ensure that it is satisfied that the comments received from the RC Diocesan have been properly addressed prior to agreeing the document.
30. The Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance is of the opinion that the document is legally compliant with the Local Authority's Admissions Authority duties.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Admissions Code of Practice 2010	Tooley St. HQ DCSF website	Glenn Garcia
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	Tooley St. HQ DCSF website	Glenn Garcia
The Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 (as amended)	Tooley St. HQ DCSF website	Glenn Garcia
The Education (Coordinated Admission Arrangements) (secondary schools) Regulations 2002	Tooley St. HQ DCSF website	Glenn Garcia

## APPENDICES

Number	Title
Appendix 1	Pan London Coordinated Admission System. Southwark LA Scheme for Admission to Secondary School in September 2011
Appendix 2	Pan London Coordinated Admission System. Southwark LA Scheme for Admission to Primary School in September 2011
Appendix 3	Pan London Coordinated Admission System. Southwark LA Scheme for In-Year Admissions Secondary School from September 2010
Appendix 4	Southwark in-year admissions – procedure (draft)

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	None required
<b>Executive Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services</b>	15.03.2010	