

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 3 March 2021	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
<b>Report title:</b>		Admission arrangements for community primary schools - September 2022	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools agrees the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements ("the Arrangements") for September 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark Council ("the Council") is the admission authority for community primary schools within Southwark and must determine the admission arrangements for those schools by 28 February each year, for application in the following academic year.
3. The School Admissions Code 2014 ("the Code"), which applies to all maintained schools, academies and free schools came into force on 19 December 2014. When determining admission arrangements, admission authorities are required to act in accordance with all mandatory provisions contained in the Code.
4. Admission arrangements must also adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the SSFA 1998"), the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
5. 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 admission arrangements for community primary schools for 2015 admissions and onwards where there were no changes made from the previous year. This report is being brought to the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Adult Care for determination because there are no changes proposed to the Arrangements for September 2022.

6. The Regulations and paragraph 1.42 of the Code require all admission authorities to consult when proposing to change their admission arrangements. Where admissions arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult. A consultation was not carried out this year.
7. Admission authorities must as a minimum consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if there are no changes to their existing arrangements. Consultation on admission arrangements must run for a period of at least six weeks and be completed by 31 January in the year preceding the year the change is to be effected (i.e. 31 January 2021 for September 2022 admissions). The Council has written to all admission authorities in Southwark with a reminder of this for their school.
8. The Arrangements for community primary schools have remained unchanged for the past three years since the Council last consulted on its Arrangements for September 2019. A consultation was not carried out this year. The Arrangements are similar to those of our neighbouring boroughs Lambeth and Lewisham. They have worked well in Southwark to support the admissions process and provide fair access to places for children.
9. The Admission Arrangements for September 2022 admissions, must be determined by 28 February 2021, even though there are no changes proposed and no consultation has taken place. Once the Arrangements are determined, all appropriate bodies are notified of this and a copy of the Arrangements are also published on the Council's website before 15 March 2021.
10. Full details of the Arrangements, along with those of all other admission authorities in the borough, will be included in the Starting Primary booklet for September 2022. Many families will use this booklet as a main source of information when selecting a primary school and will be able to download the booklet from the school admissions web page or view a hard copy upon request.
11. The full admission arrangements, including supplementary information forms and any proposed changes for all Southwark admission authorities consulting on their 2022/23 arrangements have been checked by officers to ensure compliance with the Code. Formal written comments were provided in respect of any issues of non-compliance or, where a proposed change could adversely impact on the community or be amended to improve clarity. All comments provided must be considered before determination of arrangements. Any serious breach of compliance is able to be referred to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator by the local authority or other key stakeholders if not remedied through discussion with the admission authority directly.

12. A list of the published admission numbers for all Southwark primary schools for the September 2022 intake is attached at Appendix 2.
13. Should any changes to either 2021 or 2022 determined admission arrangements be required by an admission authority in Southwark, this would now be subject to a request for an in year variation to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

14. N/A

### **Policy implications**

15. 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 school places in line with theme 6 – '*A great start in life*'.

### **Community impact statement**

16. The 2022/23 Arrangements, together with the Council's participation in the coordinated admissions scheme for primary admissions is designed to produce fair and equitable access to school places for all children. Allocation of places is delivered through strict application of admissions and oversubscription criteria of each school in Southwark through a central (pan-London) computerised system.
17. 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.
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

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 capacity of primary provision to meet demand have the potential to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. An EQIA assessment has been carried out, no negative impacts of the new arrangements have been identified, so no mitigating actions are required, and no equality objectives will derive from these specific proposals.
20. We have had due regard in preparing the arrangements 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. Provision of new school places and fair and equitable admissions policies:
  - 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 school admissions across the borough for people with protected characteristics and those without.*

### **Resource implications**

21. None

### **Legal implications**

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

### **Financial implications**

23. The responsibilities for funding and the sources for that funding pertinent to this report are clearly set out in the relevant funding and grant regulations. All the funding for schools comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and does not impact on the core funding.

## **Consultation**

24. N/A

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

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

25. The Cabinet Member is enabled to agree the recommendation by virtue of the delegation by the Leader of the Council agreed at the Cabinet meeting dated 19 March 2013 as recorded in Part 3D of the council's constitution.
26. The Cabinet Member is advised that school admissions arrangements are governed by the SSFA 1998, together with the Regulations and Code, as stated within the body of the report. The Cabinet Member is advised that the proposed Arrangements for 2022 comply with the applicable law.
27. The Cabinet Member 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. The most recent consultation was carried out between November 2017 and December 2017 for the 2019 arrangements, and these proposed Arrangements remain unchanged since then. Nonetheless, the Council must determine future admission arrangements on an annual basis, even if there has been no consultation.
28. The Cabinet Member 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 the Cabinet Member 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**

29. This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools to the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. Paragraph 21 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.

### **Other officers**

30. N/A

## 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 0207 525 2717
<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) (England) Regulations 2012	Legislation Services Team at The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
<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 2014	Department for Education	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements - September 2022
Appendix 2	Southwark Primary Schools – Published Admission Number for September 2022 intake
Appendix 3	Southwark Secondary Schools – Published Admissions Number for September 2022 intake

## AUDIT TRAIL

<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>	22 February 2021	
<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	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	2 March 2021	