

For General Release

REPORT TO:	Full Council 23 February 2015 Cabinet 17 February 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	6
SUBJECT:	2016/17 Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director – People
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Learning
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: Statutory duty to provide pupil places.	
AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON & WHY ARE WE DOING THIS: It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to determine the 2016/17 Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools by 15 April 2015.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT None.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: The admission arrangements are part of the policy framework and are therefore reserved to full Council for decision.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to agree:

- 1.1 following the statutory consultation to determine the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community, and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2016/17 academic year as contained in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 Note that no responses have been received from the consultation on 2016/17 Admission Arrangements for Community, and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- 1.3 Agree to the continued use of the Pan London co-ordination arrangements for the 2016/17 academic year as set out in – Appendix 2a (Primary) and Appendix 2b (Secondary) to this report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Admission Authorities, including Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that admission arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code. This includes consulting on proposed changes to admission arrangements annually and at least every 7 years where there have been no changes. In addition, Admission Authorities are required to determine their admission arrangements on an annual basis. The admission arrangements include the admission criteria (oversubscription criteria) - the priority order used to decide who to admit to a school if there are more applications than available school places. A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014 which introduced a number of freedoms and new requirements as well as provided clarifications to existing provisions of the Code.
- 2.2 The Council is the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Croydon schools as set out in Appendix 3 to this report and is therefore responsible for determining the Admission Arrangements for these schools. Admissions Arrangements must be determined annually for the next education year. In February 2014, the Cabinet Committee agreed the 2015/16 admission criteria for Community, and Voluntary Controlled Primary schools; and arrangements for Pan London co-ordinated admissions.
- 2.3 For the 2016/17 academic year, Admission Authorities are required to consult on their admission arrangements for a minimum of 8 weeks between 01 November 2014 and 01 March 2015, with arrangements determined by 15 April 2015. The Council consulted on its 2016/17 admissions arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools - Appendix 1 - from 08 December 2014 to 02 February 2015. The proposed arrangements are the same as those which applied for the 2015/16 education year, except where revisions to the Admissions Code 2014 have altered statutory requirements. This means that the 2015/16 admission arrangements will be used to admit pupils who will be applying to start school in September 2016 and for in-year applications up to July 2017. The consultation was carried out in order to be compliant with the requirement to consult at least every 7 years. The Council has not received any responses to the consultation .
- 2.4 Cabinet is recommended to determine the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community, and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2016/17 academic year, attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.5 The Governing Body or Academy Trust is the admission authority for Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies. All secondary schools within Croydon are their own admissions authorities and determine their own admission arrangements and criteria. These Admission Authorities have been reminded to consult on any changes to their proposed admission arrangements for the 2016/17 academic year.
- 2.6 The Governing Bodies of all schools are required to admit all children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) names the school.
- 2.7 Croydon has participated in a Pan London arrangement for the Co-ordinated Admissions rounds for both primary and secondary applications for several

years. This arrangement allows all boroughs to exchange data and facilitate choice for parents by offering places across borough boundaries within the same parameters and timetable. The Cabinet is recommended to approve the arrangement for the 2016/17 academic year, attached at Appendix 2a (Primary) and Appendix 2b (Secondary), to allow this participation to continue.

3. DETAIL

3.1 Statutory requirement

Admission authorities, including local authorities are responsible for ensuring that their admission arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code and all relevant regulations and legislations. This includes: determining admission arrangements on an annual basis; consulting on proposed changes to admission arrangements, and where there are no proposed changes, admission arrangements must be consulted on at least every 7 years.

3.2 Revised School Admissions Code

A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools (excluding maintained special schools) and academies are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. The new code introduces a number of freedoms and new requirements. It now allows admission authorities to give priority for children eligible for the various categories of pupil premium; extends the priority for admission to all previously looked after children and clarifies requirements on the admission of children outside their normal age group. A revised timetable for complying with a determination of a schools adjudicator has also been introduced.

3.3 The proposed 2016/17 Admissions Arrangements do not give priority to children eligible for pupil premium as this would risk affecting the mix of families and diversity of school populations in some parts of Croydon. The arrangements incorporate further clarification regarding parents entitlement for their child/ren to be admitted to school outside of their normal year group. The Council had already provided clear wording in relation to priority for all previously looked after children.

3.4 The proposed 2016/17 arrangements also provide further clarification regarding medical priority, infant to junior transfer arrangements and the mechanism for checking for potentially fraudulent applications. These arrangements also propose to only send outcome letters to parents who receive an offer of a place at their 2nd-6th preference school.

3.5 Prospectus

The Council has complied with the requirement in the Code to publish a composite prospectus online - with hard copies available for those who do not have access to the internet. The prospectus contains the admission arrangements and information about how to obtain supplementary information forms where applicable for the state-funded schools in Croydon to which parents can apply. However, the Admissions Service has also trained a wide range of staff including library staff, early year professionals and school staff to support parents with on-line applications. 99% of applications for the 2015/16

academic year within the secondary co-ordinated round were made on-line and 100% of primary applications were made on-line.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Through the January 2015 Cabinet report on “Investing in the future of our young people: School places and admissions”, it was noted that the Council was consulting on the 2016/17 Admission Arrangements for Community, and Voluntary Controlled primary schools. The consultation on the proposed admission arrangements took place from 08 December 2014 to 02 February 2015. The Council received no responses to the consultation.
- 4.2 The Council conducted the consultation on the proposed 2016/17 admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in line with the School Admissions Code, with an 8 weeks consultation period where stakeholders including local schools, adjoining Local Authorities and Diocesan Authorities were able to respond to the consultation by completing a questionnaire, writing to the Council via post or email. Details of the consultation were published on the Council’s website and circulated to schools via the weekly Schools Bulletin.
- 4.3 The Council’s proposed admission arrangements for the 2016/17 academic year comply with the requirements of the School Admission Code which includes making sure that the practices and criteria that are used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective.
- 4.4 Pan London Co-ordinated Admissions Arrangements
Croydon has participated in a Pan London arrangement for the Co-ordinated Admissions rounds for both the primary and secondary applications for several years. This arrangement allows all boroughs to exchange data and facilitate choice for parents by offering places across borough boundaries within the same parameters and timetable. Participation in this co-ordinated exchange requires each borough to agree identical arrangements and these are provided in Appendix 2a (Primary) and Appendix 2b (Secondary).

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The effect of the decision

There are no direct financial implications arising from the decision being made in this report.

5.2 Risks

Failure to comply with the admissions regulations could result in costly legal implications which could have an impact on the Council’s revenue budget.

(Approved by Lisa Taylor, Head of Finance and Deputy S15 Officer)

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The Solicitor to the Council comments that as a schools admission authority, the Council must adhere to the statutory Admissions Code (revised December 2014) and relevant legislation such as the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 to ensure that admission arrangements are legally compliant. Information in the report and appendices demonstrates how the local authority has so complied.

The Admissions Code states that all admission authorities must determine (i.e. formally agree) admission arrangements every year. Even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. Admissions authorities must determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2016 by 15 April 2015.

Any objection must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator by 30 June 2015 and any decision of the Adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and the admission arrangements amended accordingly.

(Approved by Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Head of Social Care and Education Law on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Director of Democratic and Legal Services).

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

(Approved by: Deborah Calliste on behalf of the Director of Human Resources)

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 A full equality impact assessment is in process for Admissions and School places to be completed by 2 April 2015.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 The councils proposed arrangements prioritise the allocation of places based on distance from the school. This encourages walking and cycling.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 None

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 11.1 to ensure the Councils arrangements are determined by 1 March 2015.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 None.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: none

Appendices attached:

Appendix 1 – 1016/17 Admissions Criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Appendix 2a – Pan-London Scheme for coordination of admission to Reception in maintained schools and academies in 2016/17.

Appendix 2b – Pan-London Scheme for coordination of admissions to Y7 in maintained schools and academies in 2016/17

Appendix 3 – table of schools and PAN.