

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2013-2014
DATE OF DECISION:	12 MARCH 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Council is required to approve its admission policies and arrangements for the academic year starting September 2013 and arrangements for co-ordination of in year applications from 1 September 2012 (including PANs) by 15 April 2012 to meet the statutory requirement. Agreement by this date allows for the admissions process for September 2013 to begin for all schools in September 2012. This report therefore describes the legal and procedural background to the admissions arrangements, including:

- admissions policy for Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form pupils to community and voluntary controlled schools, see appendix 1;
- the outcomes of the annual consultation with school governing bodies and the relevant Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, see appendix 2;
- the co-ordinated scheme for year R entry to infant/primary schools see appendix 3;
- the co-ordinated schemes for entry to junior school, see appendix 4;
- the co-ordinated scheme for primary to secondary transfer, see appendix 5;
- published admission numbers (PANS) for community and voluntary controlled schools, see appendix 6;
- the coordinated scheme for in year transfers 2012/13, see appendix 7.

RECOMMENDATIONS: It is recommended that:

- (i) the responses from the consultation with Southampton Admissions Forum, schools, other relevant admission authorities, and the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses be noted;
- (ii) the admissions policies and the published admission numbers (PANs) for community and voluntary controlled schools, including Bitterne Park selection by aptitude and 6th form arrangements; the schemes for co-ordinating primary and secondary admissions for the academic year 2013-14; and the scheme for co-ordinating in year admissions from September 2012 as set out in Appendices 1- 7 be approved;
- (iii) the Executive Director for Children's Services and Learning be authorised to take any action necessary to give effect to the above proposals and to make any changes necessary to the Admissions Policies where required to give effect to any Acts, Regulations or revised Admissions or Admissions Appeals Codes or binding Schools Adjudicator. Court or Ombudsman decisions whensoever's arising.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to determine the admission criteria on an annual basis and ensure all rising 5's have an allocated education place.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

2. It is a statutory requirement that school admissions authorities determine the admission policy each year to approve the allocation of school places to Southampton pupils and to pupils applying for a place in a Southampton school from outside the city. The city council is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within Southampton and is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these schools. Regulations require all admissions authorities, i.e. Local Authorities, governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools, to determine their admission arrangements for the school year 2013-14 by 15 April 2012 and to have notified the fact to other admission authorities within 14 days of this date at the latest.
3. The principles of Southampton's admissions policies are well established. They seek to fulfil the requirement that they be 'fair, clear and objective' (School Admissions Code, 2012). The proposed policies seek to make this process as transparent as possible. In particular, they enable the local authority, schools, and parents:
 - (a) to protect the rights of vulnerable children;
 - (b) to meet significant medical and psychological needs of individual children;
 - (c) to develop, strengthen and support immediate family ties;
 - (d) to develop and strengthen links between designated feeder school(s); and
 - (e) to have access to clear, objective, and fair criteria that avoid ambiguity in the interpretation of the policy.
4. If the Local authority wants to make changes, consultation must take place. Consultation must be with schools, other admissions authorities, the local dioceses, the admissions forum and the public.

This year, the local authorities have consulted on making two changes to the admission arrangements. The two changes are:

 - To amend the wording of the criterion for children in care to reflect the required extension of the definition required by the new School Admissions Code. The new criterion extends the definition of a looked after child to include children who were looked after immediately before being made the subject of an adoption order, special guardianship order or a residence order.
 - To make 16 April 2013 the offer date for year R and Infant to Junior School Transfer for 2013-14 academic year

The rationales for these changes are:

- To bring our criteria into line with a requirement of the School Admissions Code; and

- To coordinate with Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council for 2013 entry and to adopt a year early the date set as a National Primary Offer date for 2014 entry.
5. Consultations with schools and admission authorities (Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Education Authorities, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and schools that are foundation, voluntary aided and Academies) started on 3 January 2012 and ends on 29 February 2012.
 6. The Local Authority works with Southampton's Admissions Forum and as such the co-ordinated scheme, proposed changes to the admissions policies from the arrangements for 2013 were discussed at the Forum meeting in January 2012.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. The only alternative option considered was to not determine local admission arrangements. This has been rejected on the basis that it would result in the imposition of admissions arrangements upon local schools by the Secretary of State for Education.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

8. There are no additional revenue costs to the general fund arising directly from the approval of the admissions policies for the academic year 2012-2013.

Property/Other

9. Property Services have no comments on these proposals.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory Power to undertake the proposals in the report:

10. Admissions Authorities are legally required to undertake a consultation on admissions policies for 2013-14 in order to determine their admission arrangements, including PANs, under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 if there are changes from the previous years arrangements. They need only consult every 7 years thereafter unless they propose changes be made to them.
11. In accordance with the above, the deadline for determining admission arrangements is 15 April 2012. Following determination (the date of the relevant Cabinet meeting) the local authority has 14 days to notify all schools in writing of the outcome of its decision. Schools' governing bodies then have six weeks to object to their respective PANs (but no other aspect of the admissions policy).
12. Notice of the change must be published in a local newspaper setting out appeal arrangements.
13. Where the Council approves a PAN which is below the indicated admission number set by the net capacity assessment, it is required to publish an appropriate notice in a local newspaper. This notice must include an explanation of why a lower number has been set and that any parent

affected by the setting of the PAN has a right of objection to the Schools Adjudicator.

Other Legal Implications:

14. The Education Acts, Regulations made pursuant to them and the School Admissions Code (February 2012) require local authorities to formulate co-ordinated admissions schemes for dealing with applications to infant, primary, junior and secondary schools at the relevant age of transfer. Such schemes should also include admissions to schools where the local authority is not the admission authority e.g. voluntary aided schools, Foundation School and Academies. The schemes must ensure that every parent receives an offer of one, and only one, school place on the same day. A national offer date of 1 March has been set for secondary admissions and local authorities are required to implement a single offer date for primary sector admissions as well. The Regulations specify closing dates for applications for entry into Year R and for entry into secondary school. These dates are 15 January in the offer year for applications for year R and 31 October in the offer year for applications for secondary school.
15. In drawing up co-ordinated schemes, the local authority must consult with other relevant admission authorities, i.e. the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools, trust and foundation school, Academies, and Hampshire County Council. The schemes appended to this report provide the detail of the admission arrangements for September 2013 and coordination of in year applications from September 2012.
16. The Code also requires consultation with schools on their proposed Published Admission Numbers (PANs) which legally comprise part of the formal admissions policies. The PANs are calculated in accordance with the net capacity assessments for each school and adjusted, if required, to take account of forecast numbers and predicted school place requirements.
17. The annual consultation process must also include any proposals to change catchment areas and links between infant, junior and secondary schools. There are no such proposals being made this year as part of the admissions policy consultation.
18. All parents have the right to express a preference for the school that they wish their children to attend. There is a parallel duty placed on local authorities to meet that preference, subject to a further legal requirement not to 'prejudice efficient education or the efficient use of resources' and by statutory limits on infant class sizes.
19. In practice, this means that schools cannot refuse admission to any applicant up to the limit of its PAN (again, subject to a number of very limited legal exceptions). It also means that when the number of applications a school receives is greater than the number of places available there has to be a mechanism in place to enable the school to prioritise those applications. This, essentially, is the function of the admissions policy.
20. It is a statutory requirement that the local authority must have consulted on its proposed admission arrangements, and have made a determination on them, by 1 March and 15 April respectively in the year prior to the new admission arrangements coming into effect. Other admission authorities in

Southampton's area, i.e. the governors of voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, trust schools and Academies must also have consulted on, and determined, their admission arrangements by the same dates.

21. It is also a statutory requirement that, within 14 days of the admission arrangements being determined, admission authorities notify consultees (i.e. other admission authorities and all community/controlled schools) of their determined admission arrangements.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

22. The recommended admissions arrangements proposed in the report are consistent with the Southampton City Council Plan 2011-2014.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	Admission policy for Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form pupils to community and voluntary controlled schools 2013-14
2.	The outcomes of the annual consultation with school governing bodies and the relevant Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses
3.	Co-ordinated scheme for year R entry to infant/primary schools 2013-14
4.	Co-ordinated admissions scheme for entry to Junior Schools 2013-14
5.	Co-ordinated admissions scheme for entry to Secondary Schools 2013-14
6.	Proposed published admissions numbers for all community and voluntary controlled schools 2013-14
7.	Co-ordinated admissions scheme for In Year Admissions 2012

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject/recommendations in the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.		
2.		

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	ALL
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