

REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER, CHILDRENS SERVICES

DATE: 22ND MARCH 2011

SUBJECT: SEFTON IN-YEAR SCHOOL ADMISSIONS SCHEME
2011-12

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** ALL WARDS

REPORT OF: PETER MORGAN
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - CHILDREN, SCHOOLS &
FAMILIES

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** JANE CLARK (0151 934 3487)

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** NO

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To ask the Cabinet Member to approve the determined admission arrangements in relation to the introduction of the new co-ordinated In-Year Admissions Scheme and arrangements within Sefton for 2011-12 academic year.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

The Cabinet Member has delegated powers to approve the Sefton In-Year Admissions Scheme and arrangements 2011-12.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the following determined scheme under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education and Skills Act 2008).

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: Not Appropriate

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Member meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**IMPLICATIONS:**

Budget/Policy Framework: None.

Financial: None.

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £	2013/ 2014 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: None.

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

A consultation exercise was undertaken throughout December 2009 and January 2010 in relation to the composition of the new scheme and arrangements. The exercise involved consultation with:

- All schools in Sefton;
- Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- The Church of England Diocese;
- The Catholic Archdiocesan Schools Department.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People	✓		

LINKS TO ENSURING INTEGRATION:

Not applicable.

IMPACT UPON CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES TARGETS AND PRIORITIES:

CYPP

- 3.1 Parents and carers receive support in helping their children enjoy and achieve.
- 3.4 Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and achieve highly.
- 3.8 Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve.

LAA

- 8 Educational Achievement and Training
- 9 Looked After Children

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

None.

SEFTON IN-YEAR SCHOOL ADMISSIONS SCHEME 2011-12

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the terms of the legislation referred to above, Local Authorities are required to formulate, agree and determine a new In Year Admissions Scheme in order to implement the full co-ordination of all admission applications to schools (in year applications) commencing from September 2011.
- 1.2 In accordance with guidelines issued within the New Schools Admissions Code 2009, the consultation exercise and formulation of the scheme has been undertaken in December 2010 and January 2011.
- 1.3 After this period of consultation, the arrangements have been presented to the Sefton Admissions Forum, who have agreed the scheme on 8 February 2011.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the attached determined In Year Admissions Scheme and arrangements commencing September 2011.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the following determined scheme under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education and Skills Act 2008).

DETERMINED CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 2011 (Admissions outside of the normal admissions rounds)

SECTION 1

Timetable

Applications can only be distributed to parents/carers via the Sefton In-Year Admissions Team.

Approaches to all schools direct from parents **MUST** be forwarded to Sefton In-Year Admissions Team. Schools **MUST** ask parents to apply using the application process as agreed within the scheme.

Each application received by Sefton is date stamped and recorded on to system in strict date received order.

In-Year Admission Team confirm/input application details on to the Admissions database within 3 school days of receipt.
In-Year Admissions Team forward application details to Voluntary Aided Schools and where appropriate other local authorities.

Voluntary Aided schools process application if places available.

If full, VA school to use admissions criteria to add applicant to school waiting (if holding a list) in criteria order.

Decision returned to LA within 3 school days.

Sefton LA will therefore co-ordinate with all schools listed as a preference and offer all applicants their highest preferred school, or inform applicants of right of appeal.

If no preference can be offered the applicant will be offered the nearest alternative school to applicant's home address with places available.

SECTION 2 The Legislation

*In-Year applications (where mandatory requirements are imposed by the code or by statutory provision the code states **must**,)*

The School Admissions Code states:

Co-ordination of all school admissions from 2011-2012 onwards

*For admissions to schools in the academic year 2011-2012 onwards, local authorities **must** formulate schemes for co-ordinating all applications to maintained schools and Academies from parents in their area, whenever received, and for whichever age group, under one scheme.*

*The following paragraphs reflect the law as it applies to in-year applications. While it is for each local authority to decide the scheme that best suits its residents and its schools, they **must** ensure that they:*

*a) comply with law and regulations, including all the procedural requirements (for example, the scheme **must** require a common application form to be completed, allowing at least three preferences, the scheme **must** provide for information sharing with other local authorities, and it **must** ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the local authority sends out not more than one offer to all parents seeking places at its schools); and*

b) do not disadvantage families resident in other local authorities who apply for schools in their area (which would be contrary to the rule established by the Greenwich Judgment 51).

*Co-ordination schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements,, but **must** ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with, and do not undermine, the co-ordination scheme for their area.*

*A summary of how the co-ordination scheme works **must** be included in the local authority's composite prospectus for School Admissions.*

Each School in Sefton has a published admission number for initial admissions to the school . Eg 30 for a Primary intake at reception or eg 190 for admission to High school.

This number applies throughout the school at each age group (unless the admissions number has been adjusted previously in a particular year) and schools should not admit over this number in any age group (except via the legal appeals process or in prior agreement with the LA).

*For In-Year applications a pupil cannot be refused admission to a school unless the admission **number for that year group** has been reached (**Admissions Code Para 1.24**) There are some rare exceptions that are defined within the Admissions Code. These exceptions will be applied by the relevant admissions authority as appropriate.*

Section 3 The Scheme

3.1 Applying for a school place

Sefton Council (The Local Authority) coordinates **all** applications for school places for **all** schools for children resident in Sefton (except for Special Schools and Independent Schools).

Parents with children of statutory school age who move into or within Sefton and require a school place outside of the normal transfer times should apply for a school place using the official application form. The In-Year application form will only be available via the Sefton Schools In-Year Admissions Section. (It will be possible to apply on line at a future date to be confirmed).

Parents/Carers will need to complete the In-Year application form and any additional information, which may be required, before their application can be considered.

In some identifiable cases where specific information has been highlighted on the In-Year application form relating to (eg school history, non-attendance or school to school transfer without a house move) additional information may be required from a previous school in order for the application to be considered fully.

School places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless house moves have been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or the signing of formal lease agreement (Crown/UK Service personnel are exempt).

The Local Authority (LA) will not consider applications for schools whereby the date that the place is required from, is more than 1 month from the date of the application. (e.g. applying in January but not moving or requiring a place until March; we will only consider an application from February).

Children **must** be resident within Sefton before an admissions application can be considered. This means that permanent residency in Sefton must be established. (Crown/UK service personnel are exempt). An appeal for a place where a school is full can still be submitted to the Authority as long as permanent residency in Sefton has been established.

Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts or a rental agreement may be required. The LA reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim to residence.

Parents are required to return the completed application form, with any appropriate supplementary information/evidence to:-

The In-Year Admissions Team, Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 7AE

3.2 In-Year Admissions Application forms

Parents **must** apply to **their own local authority** regardless of the school they are applying for. The application form allows parents to apply for any school (excluding independent schools and special schools), and to give reasons for their preferences.

If parents that do not reside in Sefton apply directly to a school for admission, the school/governing body should inform the applicant to apply via their home local authority who will then coordinate across borders with Sefton.

The application form will ask the parent for the following information:

- Details of the child for whom the application is being made (address, date of birth etc)
- Give details about the person completing the application (name, address, relationship to the child, contact details)
- Name the child's current school
- To express up to three preferences for schools to be admitted
- List their preferences in order
- Indicate if the child has a statement of special educational needs
- Give details of siblings who currently attend the preferred school(s)
- Identify if they are Crown Services Personnel

The Local Authority will aim to issue an offer of a school place within 10 school days of receipt of application if the child is without a school place (subject in some cases to the relevant background/additional information being available).

All preferences listed on the In-Year application form will be considered equally.

3.3 Applications for Community or Voluntary Controlled Schools

The School Admissions Team will ensure that all parents' preferences are logged within the admissions database within 3 school days of receipt of application.

The LA will aim to process all applications for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school within a further 10 school days, applications for a child without a school place (requiring school place immediately e.g. child is not on roll of any school) will be processed as soon as possible and should be completed within 10 school days.

If there are more applications than places available, the In-Year Admissions Team will apply the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

If the LA is unable to meet any of the preferences requested by the parents, a place will be offered at the school nearest to the child's home address that has a place available, unless the child already has a school place within close proximity to their home address. In this case no alternative offer will be made unless requested by the parent.

The Local Authority will inform parents in writing of the outcome of their application.

3.4 Applications for Voluntary Aided Schools

Voluntary Aided Schools are required to advise parents that they need to apply for a school place through the Local Authority.

Voluntary Aided schools should consider all applications without unnecessary delay. The school should admit the child if there is a space available in the year group requested (unless exempt under 3.32 of the School Admissions Code).

The In-Year Admissions Team will ensure that all parents' preferences are logged on the admissions database **within 3 school days of receipt of application.**

The LA School Admissions Team will send details of all applications received, including any additional information that has been gathered, to the relevant Voluntary Aided school, if the school is shown as first preference, or when the LA is unable to offer a higher preference school.

Additional Information may assist the school/governors in making a decision quickly. It is the **school's responsibility** to gather any further or supplementary information relating to each applicant, especially if the school is full and the applicant is to be placed on a waiting list.

If there are more applications than places available, e.g two applicants and one place available, a VA school is required to apply its admissions criteria to each applicant and **advise the local authority within 3 school days if they can offer a place.**

If the school is oversubscribed they can place the pupil on the school's waiting list, (in admissions criteria order, if the school decides to hold one), and refer back to the local authority, who will offer the right of appeal to the applicant.

As each preference will be dealt with equally, it may be that some children, that have requested admission to a VA School, will be allocated places at alternative schools for which they are also eligible and which have been placed higher in the rank order of parental preference.

To maintain public confidence and to ensure transparency, the local authority will periodically in agreement with schools, check school waiting lists to ensure applicants are held in the correct order.

NB Decisions to refuse admission cannot be made by a single individual (Admissions Code Para 1.36) and governors must adhere to this requirement.

The Local Authority will inform parents in writing of the outcome of their application.

Each Voluntary Aided School must let the LA know if they will be holding a waiting list and how the list will be administered and maintained.

Where the School has places available and the LA is satisfied that an admission will not seriously prejudice the efficient use of resources within a school, the LA will write to the school requesting admission of the applicant within a specific timeline.

In these circumstances if admission authorities do not admit an applicant where the school has places available and the application has not been referred through the Sefton Fair Access Protocol, the LA may issue a direction to the school in order for the school to admit the applicant. Any direction to admit issued will be automatically sent to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator and the chair of the school governors.

3.5 Applications for schools in other Local Authorities (LA's)

Parents resident in Sefton who wish to apply for a place at a school maintained by another local authority should apply to the local authority in which they live. The home local authority will then co-ordinate the application and contact the authority which maintains the school to advise of the application. Timescales in this situation may be extended from those above however; the home local authority will endeavour to keep in contact with the family to communicate progress.

The offer of a school place will be made by the home local authority following confirmation from the maintaining local authority that a place is available for the child.

A maintaining local authority should exchange information on applications made directly to them for children resident in Sefton and **must** inform the home local authority if a place is available at one of its schools for the pupil. The home authority will issue the offer of a school place letter.

Children moving house into a different local authority to which they currently live, should consider the local authority that they are moving into as their home authority for the purpose of their application for a school place.

3.6 Children with Statements of Special Education Needs

Children with a current Statement of Special Educational Needs will be referred to their local Special Educational Needs (SEN) team. The SEN team will work with the parents of the child to secure a place at a school where the specific needs of the child can be met.

3.7 Offers of a school Place

The In-Year admissions team will post out a letter to the child's home address to inform them of the outcome of their application and the right to appeal if applicable. Within this letter parents will be required to complete and return an acceptance slip to the local authority for the place offered. This must be within 14 days of the date on the offer letter. **Failure to return the acceptance slip may result in the offer of the place being withdrawn.**

3.8 Rejection of a school place

Parents have 14 days from receipt of the offer letter to inform the LA School Admissions if they do not wish to accept the place.

If no notification is received, the LA will consider the offer as accepted, application completed and place filled. The In-Year Admissions Team will inform schools if a parent rejects the place offered for their child and will check that all applicants have started at the school where a place has been offered.

Section 4 Appeals

4.1 Appeals for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Where a place at a higher preferred school cannot be offered, parents will automatically be given the right of appeal for a place at any schools listed as a higher preference than the school offered.

Where none of the preferred schools listed can be offered, the right of appeal will be given for places at all schools refused.

When the right of appeal is offered, an (AP1) appeal form and appeal leaflet will be posted to the parent with the refusal letter.

While an appeal is ongoing any other places offered will have to be accepted by a parent in order to be held until the decision of the appeal is known

4.2 Waiting Lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

There is currently no legal requirement to hold a waiting list for In-Year applications to schools but the LA will hold In-Year waiting lists for schools. An applicant must request to be added to a schools waiting list to be included. Applicants will not automatically be added.

The waiting list will be held in admissions criteria order and each applicant will only remain on the waiting list until the end of the academic year in which they apply. If an applicant wishes to remain on the waiting list after that time another request must be made for the next academic year.

Where In-Year applications for reception and Year 7 are received too late for consideration within the normal admissions round, these will be included on the relevant waiting lists held for one term.

4.3 Waiting lists for Voluntary Aided Schools

It is the decision of each admission authority whether they hold an In-Year waiting list. If they choose to do so, the school must hold the waiting list in criteria order (Admissions Code 3.19) and publish details of how it is administered and for how long it will be held.

4.4 When vacancies/places become available

Applications will be considered live for the purposes of allocating a place which becomes available for an In-Year admission when:-

- they have an appeal pending for the same year group and school.
- they have applied for an In-Year place in that school and year but have not yet received an offer letter.
- they have listed the school as a preference for In-Year admission but have been refused and are still within the 14 day LA acceptance period for a place at another school.
- they have requested to be put on a waiting list for the school in the same year group and academic year and have responded to **contact within 5 school days**.

If there is more than 1 child in total from any of the categories above, places, which become available will be offered in order of the admission criteria.

4.5 Withdrawing offers of places

An offer of a place can be withdrawn where it has been based on misleading or inaccurate application information. This may also apply after the pupil has started at the school in the case of giving misleading or fraudulent information to obtain a place.

4.6 General Admissions Information for Parents

The 'In-Year Admission to Sefton' booklets will be available in PDF format on the Sefton MBC website – school admissions. They contain the following information:-

- A list of schools by local area
- The published admission number for each school
- Each schools admissions criteria
- Details on where to access further information
- Contact details for the Sefton In-Year Admissions Team

In-Year paper application forms and copies of the 'In-Year Admissions to Sefton Schools leaflets (Primary & Secondary schools) can be obtained on request from:

In-Year Admissions Team, Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 7AE
email: iyadmissions@sefton.gov.uk