



HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2006
5.30 PM**

**PANEL AGENDA (ADVISORY AND CONSULTATIVE)
COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 1 representative from 3 Groups)

Chairman: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors:

**Mrs Janet Cowan
Dinesh Solanki**

Community School Representatives:

**Governor
(Vacancy)**

**Primary
Sue Jones**

**Secondary
Allan Jones**

Jewish School Representative:

Mrs D Palman

Roman Catholic School Representative:

Mr M Murphy (VC)

Church of England School Representative:

Mrs S Hinton

Church of England Diocese Representative:

Mrs K Uttley

Catholic Schools Diocese Representative:

Mr Billiet

Primary Elected Parent Governor Representative:

Mr H Epie

Secondary Elected Parent Governor Representative:

Mr R Sutcliffe

Harrow Council for Racial Equality Representative:

Prem Pawar

Early Years Development Partnership Representative:

Ms H Tucker

Children's Services Representative

(Vacancy)

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal Services Department**

**Contact: Sara Mirza, Committee Administrator
Tel: 020 8424 1323 E-mail: sara.mirza@harrow.gov.uk**

HARROW COUNCIL

HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM

WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2006

AGENDA - PART I

1. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Forum;
- (b) all other Members present in any part of the room or chamber.

3. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

To consider whether any of the items listed on the agenda should be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds that it is thought likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that there would be disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence or of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Enc. 4. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 4)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters arising form the Minutes:**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Enc. 6. **Harrow Admissions Forum Terms of Reference:** (Pages 5 - 6)

To note the terms of reference of the Harrow Admissions Forum.

7. **Public Questions:**
To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Advisory/Consultative Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
8. **Petitions:**
To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Advisory/Consultative Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
9. **Deputations:**
To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Advisory/Consultative Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
- Enc. 10. **Single Intake to Reception - Pilot 2005/2008:** (Pages 7 - 12)
Report of the Director of Strategic Services.
- Enc. 11. **E-applications:** (Pages 13 - 16)
Report of the Director of Strategic Services.
- Enc. 12. **Medical Claims:** (Pages 17 - 20)
Report of the Director of Strategic Services.
- Enc. 13. **Rising 5 Timetable:** (Pages 21 - 26)
Report of the Director of Strategic Services.
- Enc. 14. **Admission Arrangements 2008-9:** (Pages 27 - 32)
Report of the Director of Strategic services.
15. **Date of Next Meeting:**
To be agreed by the Forum.

(Note: At the last meeting of the Forum, a provisional date of 10 October 2006 was set as the date of the next meeting).

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

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HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM**6 MARCH 2006**

Chair:	* Councillor Bill Stephenson		
Councillors:	* Janet Cowan * Ray		
Community School Representatives:	<u>Governor</u> (Vacancy)	<u>Primary</u> * Sue Jones	<u>Secondary</u> * Allan Jones
Jewish School Representative:	* Mrs D Palman		
Roman Catholic School Representative:	* Mike Murphy		
Church of England School Representative:	Mrs S Hinton		
Church of England Diocese Representative:	† Mrs K Uttley		
Catholic Schools Diocese Representative:	* Mr Billiet		
Primary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	† Mr H Epie		
Secondary Elected Parent Governor Representative:	Mr R Sutcliffe		
Harrow Council for Racial Equality Representative:	Prem Pawar		
Early Years Development Partnership Representative:	* Helena Tucker		
Children's Services Representative:	(Vacancy)		

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Feedback from Consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2007/8 Academic Year**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First), detailing the feedback from consultation on admission arrangements for the 2007/8 academic year.

The officer advised that comments received from schools had highlighted the value of the sibling link but mixed comments had been received from parents. Some had strongly disagreed with the sibling link. A general theme occurring in comments received from parents and schools had been uncertainty about the effect of the introduction of sixth forms on the sibling link. The Forum was also advised that the government had drafted a Code of Practice but that its introduction had been deferred.

In response to a query concerning the post-16 link and whether students were technically members of their school or members of the Harrow Collegiate system, the Chair stated that there was no significant practical difference between which body students belonged to, and that from 2007 students would be members of the school. The Chair also stated that the school would be responsible for the overall admissions procedure, regardless of whether there was a franchise.

A member of the Forum commented that some families might consider it discriminatory if post-16 children were at a school and a younger child was not allowed there. An officer advised that the majority of authorities stated that both children should be attending the school to qualify for the sibling priority as this was regarded as less discriminatory. However, in relation to sixth forms the matter was less clear due to the

timescale for sixth form admissions, which could mean that when allocating places at the school it may not be known whether the older sibling had been offered a sixth form place.

A member of the Forum commented that the response received from parents indicated that most of them supported the proposed change to the sibling link. The Chair suggested deferring a decision on the sibling link in relation to the post-16 scenario until further information was available.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)

That (1) the sibling link be changed so that children would have to be attending the school at the same time to qualify for the sibling priority;

(2) the Planned Admissions Number for Little Stanmore First & Middle School be reduced from 45 to 30;

(3) the single intake to Reception pilot be extended for a further year; and

(4) a proposal regarding the introduction of post 16 on the sibling link be deferred.

[REASON: Authorities are required to determine their admissions arrangements for 2006/07 by 15 April 2006.]

(See also Minute 79).

PART II - MINUTES

72. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

73. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

74. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

75. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

76. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the following matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting be noted:

(i) **Resolution 68(1) – Admission Arrangements for the 2007-08 Academic Year (Sharing Council Data Sources)**

The Forum was advised that no definite reply had been received regarding the issue of sharing Council data sources, and that this issue was widespread and not restricted to Harrow. The Forum was advised there was a basic view that data could not be shared at that level due to legal restraints.

(ii) **Resolution 68(2) – Admission Arrangements for the 2007-08 Academic Year (Early Years Partnership Group)**

An officer informed the Forum that a letter had been sent to the Early Years Partnership. A paragraph highlighting the position on the issue of prioritisation when moving from a nursery class to reception within that primary school had been included in the letter.

77. **Feedback from Consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2007/8 Academic Year:**

(See Recommendation 1 above).

78. **Allocation and Co-ordination of Offer of Places for 2006/7 Academic Year:**
The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First), which detailed the outcome of the allocation of places for the 2006/2007 academic year. An officer tabled information on transfer at 11-plus at the meeting. The Forum was advised that the data provided did not include figures for independent schools.
- The officer advised the Forum that there were more children in both the Reception and 12-plus transfer groups than last year. The Forum was referred to Appendix 3 (i) of the report, which detailed information on transfer at 12-plus and provided information on numbers of linked school applicants not offered places. The Chair observed that the percentage of successful First Rank applicants had decreased, which indicated that parents had a clear understanding of how the equal preference system worked.
- A member of the Forum observed that no information had been provided on transfer at 11-plus to Catholic schools and the officer advised that this information would be added to the report in future years.
- A member indicated that it would be useful for the Forum to receive up-to-date data on the number of in-year applications considered by the Admissions Panel. The officer indicated that this could be provided for each Forum meeting.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the outcome of the allocation of places for the 2006/2007 academic year be noted; and
- (2) a report providing information on in-year applications referred to the Admissions Panel be made available to members of the Forum once a term, with the report including data on the previous year as well as the current one.
79. **Single Intake to Reception - Pilot 2005/2008:**
Further to discussion earlier in the meeting on admission arrangements (Recommendation 1 above refers), the Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First) which detailed the single intake to reception pilot scheme 2005/2008. An officer advised that it might be possible to make evaluation forms, which were to be sent to schools, playgroups, parents and carers, available in an electronic format.
- A member of the Forum commented that there was under-subscription in a number of nurseries, despite children being admitted at an increasingly young age. The officer advised that a contributory factor could be that some parents were choosing to place their children in playgroups instead.
- RESOLVED:** That the format and content of the evaluation of the single intake pilot be agreed.
80. **E-applications:**
The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First), which detailed the arrangements to be put in place to ensure that Harrow met the e-Government agenda in relation to online applications for school places. An officer advised that a single London Portal had been decided upon, as this would be easier for parents to use. She advised that parents would be able to search for schools according to certain specifications, for example, they would be able to search for single sex schools and schools within a certain radius of their home. The officer also advised that she would be meeting with the Chair and Project Manager of the London e-Admissions Focus Group to discuss issues particular to Harrow, in terms of 12-plus transfer.
- A member of the Forum enquired whether statistics were available on whether parents would be more likely to provide inaccurate information if they applied for a school online. Officers advised that no such statistics were currently available. In response to a query regarding the potential effects of an online system on less well-off parents and on ethnic minorities, the officer advised that schools and libraries might be able to provide support to parents although there were resource implications. A member of the Forum commented that there could also be implications for parents with special needs.
- A member of the Forum commented that the potential difficulties raised by members of the Forum were not a reason to delay progressing with e-applications, rather, viable measures to assist those who may have difficulty with e-applications should be considered.
- The officer advised that there was the possibility that in the future appeals would also be done online.

RESOLVED: That (1) the arrangements to be put in place to ensure that Harrow meets the e-Government agenda in relation to on-line applications for school places be noted; and

(2) officers be requested to consider how the Authority could help parents with e-applications.

81. **Voluntary Aided (VA) School Admission Arrangements 2006/7:**

The Forum discussed a report of the Director of Strategy (People First), which detailed 2006/7 admission arrangements for Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.

An officer advised that children identified as having Special Education Needs (SEN) should be given priority in the admissions arrangements. A Jewish school representative commented that Moriah Jewish Day School had not been aware of the requirement.

In response to a question from a member of the Forum, an officer confirmed that looked after children should be given priority in the admission arrangements.

RESOLVED: That (1) the admission arrangements for Harrow VA schools be noted; and

(2) officers be requested to send advice relating to SEN applicants to both the Jewish school representative and the Church of England school representative.

82. **Feedback On Guides To Primary And Secondary Schools in Harrow 2006:**

The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First), which detailed feedback from parents on Harrow's 2006 Guides to Primary and Secondary Schools in Harrow.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

83. **Dates of Future Meetings:**

RESOLVED: That (1) a provisional date of 10 October 2006 be set for the next meeting of the Forum, with the date to be confirmed after the Council elections; and

(2) a further meeting take place in early March 2007.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.37 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chair

HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM – TERMS OF REFERENCE

To exercise the functions set out in Section 85A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended) in relation to:

Local school admission arrangements including proposed admission arrangements

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Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	Single Intake to Reception – Pilot 2005/2008
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

For information

To note the information sent to schools advising them of the timetable for the evaluation of the single intake pilot

Reason for report

A three-year pilot scheme to admit children in one intake in September started in September 2005. As part of the pilot it was agreed that a review of the scheme be undertaken after a full academic year.

Benefits

A review after one year will enable the impact of single intake to be assessed and to consider any adjustments that may need to be made to the scheme.

Cost of Proposals

None

Risks

Not undertaking a review after one year of the pilot scheme will mean there is no evaluation of the impact of single intake and no opportunity to amend the scheme if this is required.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Parents, schools and pre-school groups will not have an opportunity to comment on the advantages/disadvantages of a single intake to Reception.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

At its meeting on 6 March 2006, the Admissions Forum agreed a timetable (see Appendix 1) for the evaluation of the single intake pilot. The first activity agreed was to send a letter to schools and playgroups advising that evaluation of single intake will take place during the Autumn term and asking them to consider how they will involve parents in the process.

A copy of the letter sent to schools and pre-school groups is attached (see Appendix 2) for information.

Options considered

N/A

Consultation

N/A

Financial Implications

The single intake to reception has no financial implications for schools or the LA, as schools are currently funded for pupils for the whole year.

Legal Implications

Under s89 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1989 every admission Authority must determine the admission arrangements, which are to apply for a particular school year. Before determination the Authority must consult with the relevant bodies as prescribed by Statute.

Equalities Impact

A single entry point to reception means all children can benefit from a full year in Reception class. It also assists schools in beginning to address the under achievement of spring and summer born children highlighted in NFER studies undertaken the late 1990s. It assures equality of opportunity for all children and parents, with summer born children enjoying the same rights as those born earlier.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Timetable for evaluation of single intake to reception

Appendix 2 : Letter to schools and pre-school groups

Background papers

Report to Harrow Admissions Forum 6 March 2006 – Single Intake Evaluation
Cabinet Report 14 April 2006 – Determination of Admission Arrangements for
the 2006/7 academic year

APPENDIX 1

TIMETABLE FOR EVALUATION OF SINGLE INTAKE TO RECEPTION

DATE	ACTION
June 2006	Letter to schools and playgroups advising that evaluation of single intake will take place during the Autumn term and asking them to consider how they will involve parents in the process.
4th September 2006	Evaluation forms and covering letter to schools / playgroups Information and evaluation form on Harrow website
September edition	Article and evaluation form printed in Harrow People Magazine
27 October 2006	Closing date for receipt of evaluation forms
October/November 2006	Analysis of evaluation forms
Early November 2006	Meeting of HAF to assess outcome of evaluation and make recommendations for consultation on single intake in relation to Admission Arrangements for September 2008.
November 2006 to February 2007	Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2008.
March 2007	Meeting of HAF to review outcomes of consultation and agree recommendations to Cabinet
April 2007	Report to Cabinet to agree Admission Arrangements for the 2008 academic year to meet statutory deadline (ie 15 April 2007).

APPENDIX 2

26 June 2006

To Headteachers of community
First and First & Middle Schools
and Nursery and Pre-School Playgroup Leaders

Dear Colleague

SINGLE INTAKE TO RECEPTION

You will recall that Harrow is currently in Year 1 of a three-year pilot to admit children in a single intake into Reception. As part of the pilot it was agreed to undertake an evaluation of the impact of single intake after a full academic year.

I am just writing to advise you that evaluation forms will be sent to you in September. There will be two forms, one for you to give your views and another for you to give to parents in order to get their views. The Harrow Admissions Forum has asked me to contact you at this stage in order to give you time to consider how best to engage parents in this evaluation to ensure as many as possible are able to give their views.

The evaluation forms will be sent to you early in September. An article informing parents about the evaluation will also appear in the Harrow People Magazine and details will be on Harrow's website. Consultation will close on 27 October 2006 and, following analysis of the evaluation forms, a report will be presented to the Harrow Admissions Forum at its meeting in November. The Harrow Admissions Forum will then decide whether to recommend to adopt a single intake for admission to Harrow community schools and their recommendation will form part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements in the Autumn.

If there is any further information you require, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Hitchens
Manager, Place Planning & Admissions Service

Tel: 020 8424 1398
Fax: 020 8427 0810

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Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	E-applications
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

FOR INFORMATION

To note the arrangements put in place to ensure that Harrow meets the e-Government agenda in relation to on-line applications for school places.

Reason for report

To inform Members of the Harrow Admission Forum of progress on the e-admissions project.

Benefits

Collaborating with other London Local Authorities (LAs) will provide an easier route for parents to apply on line and will help meet the first year take up target of 5-10% on-line applications.

Cost of Proposals

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is funding the initial year of the London e-admissions project. Funding for subsequent years will need to be identified from the Dedicated Schools Grant as this funds the Council's Admission costs.

The cost of customising the Portal to take account of Harrow's different age of transfer is in the region of £7,000 and has been shared between Harrow and the Pan-London Project

Risks

Not participating in the Pan-London project would mean that Harrow residents would not be able to access the same level of information and support on e-applications as residents of other London authorities.

Implications if recommendations rejected

N/A

Section 2: Report

Brief History

The facility for parents to apply on-line for school places is part of the e-Government agenda. Harrow is part of a Pan-London Project that involves all London authorities and which will provide a single portal through the Your London website to enable parents to apply on-line for school places.

As identified in the report to the Forum in March this year, work was required to take account of Harrow's different age of transfer. This has now been completed and parents wishing to apply for Harrow's community high schools can do so on line.

Harrow and Hillingdon authorities have earlier closing dates for admission to Reception than other London councils and have agreed to start the process earlier than originally intended. This will enable any issues identified to be actioned before the system goes live across London. Parents wishing to apply for Harrow or Hillingdon primary schools will be able to access the on-line service from 1 August 2006. Parents wishing to apply for primary schools in other London authorities and for secondary schools the on-line service will be available from 1 September 2006.

Consultation

N/A

Financial Implications

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is funding the initial year of the London e-admissions project. Funding for subsequent years will need to be identified from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Based on PAN-London co-ordination, the costs are likely to be in the region of £3,000-£4,000 per annum. The Government has already announced that the increase in Dedicated Schools Grant for 2007/2008 will be 6.4% per pupil.

Funding for the work related to 12+ transfer will be met from within the Admissions Service budget for IT developments.

Legal Implications

E-admissions are part of the priorities set out by the ODPM, it is also in keeping with the provisions in the code of guidance on admissions, any on-line admission arrangements will need to be implemented with regard to the Data Protection Act 1984

Equalities Impact

Being part of the Pan-London e-Admissions project means that Harrow parents will have access to the same information and opportunities as parents in other parts of London

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Background papers

Report to Harrow Admissions Forum – 6 March 2006 – E-Applications

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Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	Medical claims
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

For decision

To review the medical criterion for community primary and secondary schools, to make recommendations as appropriate and to agree a process for considering medical claims under any revised criterion.

Reason for report

A parent had made an application for Judicial Review on the basis that her appeal for a place in Reception was not allowed on medical grounds.

Benefits

Clarification of the medical criterion will mean that the authority is less vulnerable to challenge.

Cost of Proposals

None

Risks

Not undertaking a review could leave the authority vulnerable to challenge.

Implications if recommendations rejected

There will be uncertainty about processing applications on medical grounds.

Section 2: Report

Brief history

A parent was refused a place at her preferred school. No medical claim was made at the time of application. Subsequently, as part of an appeal, the parent provided information in support of a medical claim. However, the claim did not meet the current medical criterion, ie:

Medical reasons relevant to pupil

Children with special medical reasons for seeking a place at the chosen school. Such requests will only be considered for the school nearest the child's home. Applications made on medical grounds must be accompanied by supporting evidence from a Consultant at the time of application. This letter must provide information about the child's medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the school nearest to home. In assessing these applications appropriate advice will be sought, for example, from the Community Health Service, the Psychology Service and headteachers.

Medical reasons relevant to parent(s)

Parent(s) with special medical reasons for seeking a place for their child at the school closest to the home address. Such applications will only be considered for the parent(s) with whom the child lives and must be accompanied by supporting evidence from a Consultant at the time of application. This letter must provide information about the parent's medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the school nearest to the home address. In assessing these applications we will seek appropriate advice, for example, from the Community Health Service.

At the time of allocation the parent was not offered her first ranked school as this filled from pupils with a stronger claim under the admission rules. Subsequently, the parent supplied a letter from a Consultant about the child's medical condition. When the home to school measurement was checked the parent's preferred school was not the nearest one to the home address. The parent was informed that the claim did not meet the medical criterion. The parent decided to exercise her right of appeal

At the appeal hear, the Independent Appeal Panel considered all the information provided by the parent, both written and oral, but did not allow the appeal.

The parent has now made an application for Judicial Review on the grounds that:

“The admissions criteria by which places were allocated were framed interpreted and applied by Harrow Council and the Appeal Panel in such a way that (the parent’s) application for a place at (school name) was unsuccessful and (the parent’s) appeal against that decision was rejected by the Appeal Panel”.

The application for Judicial Review was made under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Human Rights Act.

Options considered

Advice from Harrow Legal Services is that we should consider changing the current medical criterion as follows:

Such requests will **generally** only be considered for the school nearest the child's home.

Inserting the word generally gives flexibility to consider whether the school applied for is the most appropriate for the child. Because this change to the Admission Rules requires a level of interpretation not called for under the current criterion, it is proposed that a small group is established to consider medical claims, supported by a Consultant’s letter, for schools other than that closest to the child’s home address. The Admissions Forum is asked to consider appropriate representation for such a group.

Consultation

Any proposed change to the admissions rules will form part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements which will take place in Autumn 2006 / Spring 2007.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

The present policy leaves the council open to challenge by way of Judicial Review, as the policy is clearly intended to prevent parents from improperly using medical grounds to secure admission to oversubscribed schools. Any policy that is overly rigid in its application has the potential for judicial review, as the Local Authority may be considered to have fettered its discretion to consider individual circumstances. By insertion of the word *generally*, admission officers and Independent Appeal Panels may consider whether the nearest school is the most appropriate for the needs of the child.

Equalities Impact

Harrow's oversubscription criteria have been developed in line with guidance in the School Admissions Code of Practice in order to be objective, clear, fair and compatible with admissions and equal opportunities legislation.

The proposed change responds to the needs of service users from Harrow's diverse communities.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Background papers

Cabinet Report 14 April 2006 - Determination of Admission Arrangements for the 2006/2007 academic year

Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	Rising 5 timetable
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision: (yes or no)	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To review the timetable for allocation of places to Reception and make recommendations accordingly.

Reason for report

To consider bringing Harrow's Rising 5 allocation more in line with other London authorities.

Benefits

- Parents will learn of school place offered at the same time as other London authorities
- A later closing date will mean more parents can make an on-time application
- Schools will benefit as a later allocation will mean there will be less change and they will have a clearer indication of which children will start in September.

Cost of Proposals

None

Risks

By offering places earlier than other London authorities Harrow schools are vulnerable as change is more likely, with parents initially accepting the place offered and then declining at a later date when other authorities make their offers.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Harrow's allocation process will be out of line with the remainder of London authorities.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

Prior to the 2005/06 academic year, the closing date for receipt of Rising 5 applications was the first week in March. With effect from the 2005/2006 academic year the closing date was brought forward four months to the first week in November. The reason for this was to avoid a clash in work priorities when co-ordination of admissions for secondary schools was introduced. Additionally, schools felt it would be helpful to have details of the children starting in September as early as possible. Also knowing how many children to expect earlier would help in planning their staffing for September.

From the 2006 academic year, local authorities have been required to co-ordinate admissions to primary schools in their area and to make only one offer of a place. Parents can, however, apply for schools in more than one authority and can therefore receive more than one offer of a place in a primary school. The London Inter-Authority Admissions Group (LIAAG), which is made up of representatives from all 33 London authorities, has asked all its members to discuss within their Admission Forum aligning the key dates for primary admissions across London. At the moment there are significant variations in both closing and offer dates (see Appendix 1), which are a source of potential confusion for parents.

In addition, the very early closing date for receipt of applications is having a significant impact on families who move into Harrow in late Autumn and the Spring. For the 2006/7 academic year, 398 late applications were received after the initial offer date of 18 January 2006. This equates to 14.8% of the number of applications received by the offer date. A later closing date will ensure the maximum possible numbers of applications are treated as on-time and families that move are not disadvantaged. Because late applications are dealt with after all those received by the closing date have been dealt with, there is less chance of getting a place in a preferred school if an application is late.

The sibling rule as from the academic year 2007/8 gives priority to children with a brother or sister attending the school at the same time. Setting the offer date for intake to Reception after the National Offer Day for secondary schools (ie 1 March) will have the advantage of clarifying whether or not some children qualify for the sibling link. This will apply to those parents who have an older child and apply for a place in a secondary school that transfers at 11+. A later offer date for Reception will ensure that the siblings of children who have been offered and accepted a place in a secondary school do not qualify for the sibling link, as the older child will no longer be attending the school when the younger sibling starts.

Options considered

If the Admissions Forum agrees to review the closing and offer dates for Reception then the following options are possible:

- The date that booklets and application forms are sent to schools in early June can remain unchanged. This ensures that schools can give an application pack to parents at the earliest opportunity.
- In agreement with schools, the closing date for applications could be delayed until 31 January with offer letters being sent in late March / early April depending on when Easter falls each year.

Consultation

All community and voluntary aided primary schools will be consulted on any recommendation to change the closing date for Rising 5 applications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

This report recommends that the admission timetable for rising fives be brought into line in Harrow with other authorities so as to prevent parent's accepting a place at a Harrow school and then rejecting it once the results of their application for another to another admission authority is accepted. The code of guidance on admissions at paragraph 2.3 recommends that Local Admission authorities consult with each other and co-ordinate their admission arrangements. The changes suggested would give effect to the recommendations within the code of guidance.

Equalities Impact

The proposed change will ensure the maximum possible numbers of applications are treated as on time, and that those who move are not disadvantaged. The proposed change will respond to the needs of service users from Harrow's diverse communities.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : London authorities – closing and offer dates

APPENDIX 1 - - LONDON CLOSING / OFFER DATES

LEA 2007 Dates	Start Date	Closing Date	Offer Date	
Barking and Dagenham	02/11/2006	15/12/2006	23/03/2007	
Barnet	03/11/2006	12/01/2007	06/04/2007	*dates may be reviewed
Bexley	01/11/2006	31/01/2007	01/05/2007	
Brent	01/09/2006	09/02/2007	18/05/2007	*start date is subject to change
Bromley	01/11/2006	01/02/2007	23/03/2007	
Camden	01/09/2006	02/02/2007	07/05/2007	
Croydon	01/09/2006	20/12/2006	31/03/2007	
Ealing	18/09/2006	08/12/2006	16/04/2007	
Enfield	01/10/2006	31/01/2007	03/04/2007	
Greenwich	01/11/2006	31/02/2007	02/05/2007	
Hackney	01/09/2006	02/02/2007	04/05/2007	
Hammersmith & Fulham	14/11/2006	13/01/2007	24/03/2007	*dates are subject to change
Haringey	01/09/2006	10/11/2006	16/03/2007	
Harrow	03/11/2006	15/12/2006	13/01/2007	
Havering	04/09/2006	15/12/2006	23/03/2007	
Hillingdon	01/08/2006	29/09/2006	26/01/2007	* parents can apply from 01/09/2006
Hounslow	08/12/2006	07/02/2007	19/05/2007	* Dates are subject to change
Islington				
Kensington & Chelsea	01/09/2006	05/03/2007	22/05/2007	
Kingston	04/09/2006	26/01/2007	19/04/2007	
Lambeth		01/02/2007	20/04/2007	
Lewisham	01/11/2006	01/02/2007	01/05/2007	*Yet to be finalised
Merton	01/09/2006	26/02/2007	16/04/2007	*Yet to be finalised
Newham	01/10/2006	27/01/2007	01/05/2007	
Redbridge	01/11/2006	31/01/2007	01/05/2007	
Richmond	01/09/2006	11/12/2006	19/03/2007	
Southwark	01/09/2006	12/01/2007	27/04/2007	
Sutton	04/09/2006	01/12/2006	03/04/2007	
Tower Hamlets				
Waltham Forest	12/09/2006	01/12/2006	20/03/2007	
Wandsworth	15/09/2006	26/01/2007	16/03/2007	
Westminster	05/09/2006	28/02/2007	08/05/2007	*advised that should be same as last year

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Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	Admission Arrangements 2008-9
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

For decision

To review and agree changes to the Admission Arrangements for the 2008-9 academic year.

Reason for report

The Admissions Forum has a role to consider the effectiveness of local admission arrangements and to assess how well they serve the interests of local parents and children.

Benefits

The Forum can ensure the admission arrangements best meet the needs of Harrow families.

Cost of Proposals

None

Risks

Not reviewing admission arrangements to ensure they serve the needs of the local community could leave the authority vulnerable to challenge.

Implications if recommendations rejected

N/A

Section 2: Report

Brief history

The Harrow Admissions Forum has a role to consider current admission arrangements and to assess how well they served the interest of local parents and children.

Options considered

Areas the Forum may wish to review:

1. Priority for Looked After Children

To bring Harrow fully in line with the Code of Practice on Admissions, it is recommended that Looked After Children be given top priority in the admission rules.

2. Medical claims

To change the medical criterion so that parents can make a medical claim for a school that is not the closest to their home address, provided this is the most appropriate school and the claim is supported by evidence from a Consultant. (See report earlier on the agenda).

3. Proposed reduction to Planned Admission Number for Cedars and Grange Schools.

In order to reduce surplus capacity in the Primary sector, to consider reducing the planned intake for Cedars and Grange School from 90 to 60.

4. Co-ordinated admissions - offers from the waiting list

Forum Members are also asked to consider whether those parents who ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list for another school, after a school place has been allocated, are indicating they prefer this school to the school already allocated. If at a later date a place is offered from the waiting list, this new offer will supersede any previous offer, which will then be withdrawn under the co-ordinated admission arrangements.

5. Sibling link

To clarify that the sibling link only applies to children “who will be attending the school at the same time”. For example, if a family has been offered and accepted a place for an older child at a school that transfers at 11+, then the young child does not qualify for the sibling link as the older child will no longer be attending.

A theme that arose from the consultation on admission arrangements last year was about the introduction of Sixth Forms and the impact of these on the sibling link. The Forum decided not to recommend any change to the sibling criterion at present, but to review this in light of the development of sixth form provision in Harrow. Because funding decisions have still to be made by the Learning & Skills Council it is likely that sixth form arrangements will still be under the auspices of the Colleges for 2008.

Consultation

Any proposed change to the admissions rules will form part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements which will take place in Autumn 2006 / Spring 2007.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

The Education Act 2002 requires each LEA to establish an Admissions Forum, under the Education (Admission Forums) (England) regulations 2002, Section 1 (a) requires the Admissions Forum to consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interest of children and parents within the area of the local authority. The matters set out in the above report are all within the remit of the admission forum.

The Admissions Forum is required to consider how well the proposed changes serve the interest of parents and children within the area, and to arrive at an agreed consensus about the proposals. Once the admission authority has reached a consensus on the matters, the admission authority is required to promulgate its advice, which should then be published by the LEA and made available on the admission section of the LEA website and sent to all admission authorities within the area.

The legal implications of each of the proposed changes, is considered below.

(i) Looked after children

Guidance on the Educational attainment of looked after children is issued under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, (*Every Child Matters*) this guidance is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which means that the guidance must be followed unless there are exceptional reasons which justify departure. At 19.3 of the guidance, a duty is placed on local authority to ensure that looked after children have access to a suitable range of care and educational placement options, which maximises the Education opportunities and experiences available to them. The changes proposed to give looked after children priority is in keeping with the guidance.

(ii) Medical Claims

The legal implications of this, is considered further in the separate report.

(iii) Proposed reduction to Planned Admission Number for Cedars and Grange Schools

The school admission authority may consider these proposals, which will then need to be the subject of consultation.

(iv) Co-ordinated admissions

The proposals to co-ordinate the admission arrangement to bring them in line with other neighbouring authorities is within the remit of the broad remit of the admission authority.

(v) Offers from the waiting list

There are no specific legal implications from this proposal, save that the Admission Forum should be satisfied that the changes are clearly set out in any publication on the admission arrangements to be applied by the admission authority.

(vi) Sibling link

No specific separate legal implications arise as a result of this proposed change as the sibling link is a criterion, which may be applied by the LEA, in the event of over-subscription to a particular school, it is for the Forum to consider the proposal, in light of the duties of the Forum referred to above

Equalities Impact

Harrow's oversubscription criteria have been developed in line with guidance in the School Admissions Code of Practice in order to be objective, clear, fair and compatible with admissions and equal opportunities legislation.

The proposed change responds to the needs of service users from Harrow's diverse communities.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Background papers

Cabinet Report 14 April 2006 - Determination of Admission Arrangements for the 2006/2007 academic year

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