

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