

Committee	Dated:
Community and Children's Services Grand Committee	8 th June 2022
Subject: School Admissions Update	Main report is Public <u>Appendix A is Non-Public</u> <u>Appendix B is Non-Public</u>
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Contributing to a flourishing society Support a thriving economy Shape understanding environments.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
What is the source of Funding?	The Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Yes
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Theresa Shortland, Head of Service – Education and Early Years	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the allocation of primary and secondary school places to City of London pupils for the academic year 2022/23.

The City of London has complied with the statutory duty to co-ordinate school applications as part of the cross-borough, Pan-London Admissions Scheme process.

All children whose parents applied on time for a school place for entry in September 2022 received a place on national offer day.

The report also includes a section on the administration and allocation of school places to the Afghan children who arrived in the City of London in early September 2021.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the points raised in the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available within the area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to attend school. There is only one maintained primary school in the area – The Aldgate School. City of London residents also apply for school places at schools in neighbouring boroughs.
2. The School Admissions Code (the Code) has been issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998). This Code came into force on 19 December 2014.
3. The Code applies to admissions for all maintained schools in England. It sets out how school applications are processed. It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with this Code. Where a school is the admission authority, this responsibility falls to the governing body or Academy Trust for that school.
4. Regulations 26 to 32 and Schedule 2 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012 require local authorities to co-ordinate school applications and ensure that cross-borough processes are compatible with each other. The City of London is part of the Pan-London Admissions Scheme process, where all 33 London local authorities and Surrey County Council have reciprocal admissions processes.
5. The governing body is the admissions authority for The Aldgate School. This means that the governors set the admissions policy for the school and make the decisions about which pupils are allocated places and admitted to the school. The pupil admission places for The Aldgate School is 30 for each year group.

Current Position

City of London Afghan Families

6. In early September 2021, the City of London welcomed more than 600 Afghan people (including 300 children and young people) into two bridging hotels to support the Home Office's Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme. Staff within the Education and Early Years Service were immediately mobilised and efforts began to provide a playroom in one of the hotels to host a number of play sessions and play equipment available to the children whilst settling into their new and unfamiliar environment.

7. During this time, the Education and Early Years Service began to identify the children of statutory school age. Simultaneously, the virtual school established the City Learning Centre in Bonhill Street to accommodate all the children from years 1 to 11 and to provide access to education, including basic Maths and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. The centre was operational from 27 September for one month until the start of the October 2021 half term. All Reception age children were accommodated at the hotel in the playroom
8. It was acknowledged early on that the learning centre wasn't a long-term and sustainable solution, and it was agreed that the best place for children to receive an education was in a school setting. As a result, the Education and Early Years' Service led on discussions with a number of bordering local authorities and the City of London Academies Trust to identify suitable and available places for children from Reception age through to Year 11.
9. The Service allocated school places for more than 200 children of statutory school age. Reaching out to our neighbours for support resulted in all these children being offered a school place at one of 16 schools (four secondary and 12 primary) by the school census date of 7 October 2021 (please see reference to Appendix B – a list of schools where our Afghan children attend). Following the half-term break, during the week of 1 November 2021, all the children started at their new schools.
10. The Education and Early Years' Service then led on the coordination of secondary school applications for all of the Afghan children currently in Year 6. This was later followed with identical support for children transitioning from early years into primary education. The Education and Early Years Service successfully supported a total of 27 primary and secondary applications, which resulted in 100% of primary applications receiving a first preference offer (14 children). For the secondary school cohort 79% secondary received 1st preference (11 children), 7% received 4th preference (1 child), 14% received an allocated place (2 children).
11. Following the successful allocation of school places for the Afghan children, the Education and Early Years Service continued to work collaboratively to support families by providing funding for school uniforms, organising backpacks for the secondary school pupils and laptops, as well as organising travel training using the 'Safe Routes to School' guidance.
12. The Education and Early Years Service continues to work directly with the schools the Afghan children attend and has made payments to these schools from the Afghan Education Grant. The service also continues to work with families to ensure that children are actively attending school and have access to education. This includes collecting school attendance information so that any persistence absence is addressed.
13. We are also responsible for ensuring that any Afghan children with an identified special educational need or disability are supported and receive any specialist support. For children who move out of the City of London into permanent accommodation, all the safeguarding procedures are followed and children missing education (CME) teams in the local authorities where these children are moving to

are contacted and instructed to find school places if required (i.e. if the family is moving too far away to access the child's current school).

Primary School Places

14. The deadline for applications for a primary school place for entry in September 2022 was 15 January 2022. Offers for school places were confirmed on 19 April 2022.
15. When parents make their application for a primary school place, they can apply to a maximum of six schools in order of preference. They only receive one offer, which is based on their order of preference and is the highest preference offer that can be allocated. Table 1 illustrates the primary school place offers for City of London pupils offered on 19 April 2022.

Table 1. Primary school place offers for City of London pupils, 19 April 2022			
SCHOOL	Total number of children offered a place at each school	Place offered – 1st preference offer	Place offered – other preference offer
Christopher Hatton Primary School	1	0	1 (second)
City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI)	9	8	1 (second)
English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School	1	1	0
Moreland Primary School	1	1	0
Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre	3	3	0
Randal Cremer Primary School	1	1	0
Redriff Primary School	2	1	0
Sebright School	1	1	0
St Clement Danes CofE Primary School	1	1	0
The Aldgate School	14	14	0
Total	34	31	2

16. There were 34 applications received by the closing date (15 January 2022) for primary school places in the City of London. In April 2022, primary school pupils were allocated places. Of City of London pupils, 94% (32 children) received their first preference, 6% (2 children) received their second preference, therefore, all children were allocated a school place. In comparison, in 2021, 28 applications were received, 89% (25 children) of primary-aged pupils got their first preference and 11% (3 children) received other preferences.
17. The increase in numbers making applications for school places in 2022 is due to the arrival of the Afghan refugee children in September 2021. At the time of the January deadline there were 13 children of primary school age in Year 6 living in the bridging

hotels. Without the Afghan population the City of London would have received 21 school applications, the lowest number of primary school applications since the primary co-ordination process began in 2010.

18. There has been a steady increase in the number of children being offered places at The Aldgate School and COLPAI since COLPAI opened in 2017 (see Table 2). Both schools are rated Outstanding by Ofsted, and both are part of The City of London family of schools.
19. Last year 86% of children living in the City were offered places at the Aldgate school or COLPAI; this year it has dropped to 65%, which is mainly due to the increase in the number of Afghan children applying to a school attended by their older siblings following their arrival to the City of London in September 2021.

Table 2: Officers at Aldgate and COLPAI		
Year	Offers at The Aldgate School	Offers at COLPAI
2017	6	6
2018	10	8
2019	6	9
2020	11	12
2021	10	14
2022	14	9

20. In 2022, The Aldgate School was oversubscribed. The school received 81 school applications for places. The governing body met during February 2022 to process all applications and allocate places at the school for entry in September 2022 in line with their oversubscription criteria. Both The Aldgate School and COLPAI received significantly more first-preference applications than places available.

Secondary School Places

21. The deadline for applications for a secondary school place for entry in September 2022 was 31 October 2021. Offers for secondary school places were confirmed on 1 March 2022.
22. When parents make their application for a secondary school place, they can apply to a maximum of six schools and mark them in order of preference. They receive only one offer, which is based on their order of preference and is the highest preference offer that can be allocated. Table 3 illustrates the secondary school place offers for City of London pupils on 1 March 2022.

Table 3: Secondary school place offers for City of London pupils, 1 March 2022			
SCHOOL	Total number of children offered a place at each school	Place offered – 1st preference offer	Place offered – (other preference offer)
Beacon High School	8	4	4 (allocated)

Bishop Challoner Catholic Collegiate Girls School	1	0	1 (second)
Central Foundation Boys' School	6	5	1 (second)
City of London Academy - Islington	3	2	1 (second)
City of London Academy Highbury Grove	1	1	0
Hackney New School	6	6	0
Mulberry School for Girls	1	1	0
Sacred Heart High School	1	1	0
Saint Thomas More Language College	1	1	0
Stepney All Saints School	1	1	0
St George's Catholic School	1	1	0
Saint Thomas More Language College	1	0	1 (second)
The London Oratory School	1	1	0
The St Marylebone CE School	1	1	0
Wapping High School	1	0	1 (fourth)
Total	34	25	9

23. There were 34 applications received for secondary school places in the City of London by the closing date of 31 October 2021. On 1st March 2022, 74% (25 children) of City of London secondary-aged pupils got their first preference and 15% (5 children) received other preferences; 12% (4 Children) received an allocated offer. In 2021 There were 23 applications received for secondary school places; 74% (17 children) of those secondary-aged pupils received their first preference, 22% (5 children) received other preferences and 4% received an allocated offer, which equated to one child.

24. The increase in numbers making applications for school places in 2022 is due to the arrival of the Afghan refugee children in September 2021. 14 children of secondary school age are currently living in the bridging hotels and it is a remarkable achievement that the percentage of first preferences has been maintained this year. Beacon High and Waterside Academy were the top choices for our Afghan families, which is not surprising as these are the schools that the majority of pupils were allocated to in October 2021. Central Foundation Boys School was the top choice for City resident applicants.

25. Of the four children who were allocated places, two applicants had listed unrealistic schools. Two were Afghan children who applied to the City of London Academy Southwark. After discussions with the City of London Academy Southwark the school has agreed to offer these two children school places upon confirmation of interest,

without the need to go to appeal. If these two pupils had been accepted through the usual route our first preferences would be 80%.

Secondary Admission Appeals

26. Due to the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distance rules, temporary regulations (The School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2020) and accompanying guidance were introduced in April 2020 giving admission authorities, local authorities and admission appeal panels more flexibility when dealing with appeals. The temporary regulations were due to expire on 31 January 2021, but extended to 30 September 2021, then further extended until September 2022.

27. The main changes to this extension of regulations include the following:

- a. Appeals can continue should one of the three appeals panel members withdraw from the hearing.
- b. Appeal hearings can be heard by telephone or video conference
- c. Appeals can be decided on the basis of written submissions only
- d. The statutory timescales have been amended.

The temporary regulations and guidance *only* apply where it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the School Admission Appeals Code for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19.

City resident children

18. As of 31 March 2022, we have identified 394 City of London resident children of statutory school age (Appendix A). We know of 76 schools that City of London pupils currently attend. A summary of the data held on the schools attended by City of London resident children indicates that:

- 134 of these children attend schools within the City of London local area. This includes the independent schools.
- 191 of these children attend schools in the immediate neighbouring boroughs (Camden, Hackney, Islington, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Westminster).
- 23 City of London children attend schools in an additional nine London boroughs and four home counties.
- Fewer than five children are being electively home educated.
- There are 19 children with Education, Health and Care Plans.

19. London Councils produces '*Do the Maths*' an annual report that details the pressures facing the school places planning system in London. It can be difficult to forecast the levels of cross-border pupil mobility as they fluctuate for a number of reasons. The most recent report from 2020 (*Do the Maths 2020*) can be accessed on the London Councils website: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/children-and-young-people/education-and-school-places/do-maths-2020>)

20. As the City of London has one maintained primary school in the local area, a shortfall of places for primary school is not a current concern. The Aldgate School remains

very popular and oversubscribed for school admissions. The demand for secondary places has also not had any current impact on City pupils. The choice of secondary schools is largely within neighbouring areas, and an increase in those interested in City-sponsored schools has increased. City-sponsored schools continue to offer priority places to City resident children.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

28. Strategic implications – Corporate outcome: Contribute to a flourishing society by ensuring that people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
29. Resource implications – There is an Admissions and Attendance Manager who oversees the operational admissions function within the local authority. The School Admissions Services is a commissioned service, which is currently being delivered by Islington Borough Council.
30. Financial implications – There is a cost associated with the school admissions service and access to the Pan-London Admissions Scheme.
31. Legal implications – There is a statutory duty to ensure that the City of London co-ordinates all school applications at standard transition points.
32. Risk implications – The City of London has sufficient school places for Primary aged children. There has been a reduction in school places across London in recent years but this has not been an issue for City of London families. Children continue to apply to a wide range of schools primarily in neighbouring areas but also further afield.
33. Equalities implications – All children have the right to a school place. If a child is not offered a school place, then our service will allocate a place at a school within reasonable distance.
34. Climate implications – n/a
35. Security implications – n/a

Conclusion

36. The City of London has complied with the statutory duty to co-ordinate school applications as part of the cross-borough, Pan-London Admissions Scheme process. All children and young people who applied for a school place for entry in September 2022 have been offered school places, and therefore the City of London has fulfilled its statutory duty.

Appendices (Non-Public)

- Appendix A – Schools List – April 2022
- Appendix B – Schools List (Afghan Children) May 2022

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