

**THE EXECUTIVE****15 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

<b>PROGRESS TOWARDS CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND RELATED ADMISSION MATTERS</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>																				
<p><i>This report outlines the work under way in the Education, Arts and Libraries Department towards co-ordinated admission to schools in Barking and Dagenham;</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Council has been working with Voluntary Aided Schools to develop an application process common to all schools in the Borough. At the same time, a Working Party of Headteachers and officers has been reviewing the existing Admissions Criteria. The resultant proposals for changes to the Admissions processes have been summarised and combined into a consultation document, which is enclosed.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the report;</li> <li>2. Agree to the proposed implementation strategy</li> <li>3. Agree the Consultation document and process.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Reason</u></b></p> <p>The Education Act (2002) requires co-ordination of Admissions procedures across the Council's schools by September 2004. The Admissions Best Value Review, confirmed in the Barking and Dagenham Local Education Authority's OFSTED Inspection Report, recommended a review of the Admissions Criteria and the Casual Admissions processes. The proposals are intended to make the process of joining a Barking and Dagenham school more transparent, equitable and efficient.</p>																					
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1. Admissions to LEA schools are governed through the Education Act 2002 and subject to the Admissions Code of Practice published in 2003.
- 1.2. LEAs are required to draw up schemes to co-ordinate admissions from September 2004 to schools across all admissions authorities within the LEA's designated area and to co-ordinate with all neighbouring LEAs in time for the admission of the September 2005 Year 7 cohort.

## **2. The Proposed Implementation Strategy**

- 2.1 We are proposing to take a phased approach to the co-ordination process:
  - For the September 2004 intake, admissions will be co-ordinated between Borough maintained schools;
  - For the September 2005 intake, the co-ordination will include neighbouring Boroughs.
- 2.2 We have incorporated the work undertaken in the Education Department around the need to reduce the number of pupils out of school and the length of time that pupils are out of school into the new Admissions Scheme.
- 2.3 We have acknowledged the need to revise existing Admissions criteria and we have set up a working party involving headteachers with the remit of drawing up:
  - “... a revised set of admissions criteria which
  - meets the current pattern of provision and need in the Borough and
  - leads to transparent, equitable and co-ordinated procedures for September 2004 intake”
- 2.4. The consultation process for these proposals involves neighbouring Admissions Authorities, Barking and Dagenham schools and Governing bodies, neighbouring schools and their governing bodies and parents and communities within Barking and Dagenham.
- 2.5. We are proposing two strands to the consultation documentation:
  - a consultation document, designed for Admission Authorities, schools and governing bodies;
  - fliers and press releases to inform parents and local communities.
- 2.6. The draft consultation document is appended to this report.
- 2.7. The Admissions Forum has been involved in the development of the criteria and the consultation document and commends the current draft to the Executive.

- 2.8. We are also proposing to hold two public meetings for parents and other interested parties, and the topic will be part of the agenda at the meeting for Chairs and Vice-chairs of governing bodies.
- 2.9. The timescale is very tight, as we have to ensure that the new criteria and procedures are included in the annual parents' booklets on joining Barking and Dagenham schools. The Secondary Booklet is published in July. However, we believe that the consultation process will be helped by the way we have involved others in the preparatory work - the joint work undertaken with church schools on the common application forms, the involvement of head teachers on the working party and the work of the Admissions Forum. We also propose to make use of Council publications to spread information on the changes and the public meetings - and the proposed press releases and proposed public meetings.

**Background Papers:**

- Report to Admissions FORUM, February 12<sup>th</sup>, March 18<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2003
- Report to Scrutiny Management Board March 19<sup>th</sup> 2003
- Admissions: Code of Practice (2002) DfES
- Education Act (2002)