

# Divisional Business Plan 2013-14

Directorate Name: Education Learning and Skills  
Division/Business Unit Name: Fair Access

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
Cabinet Portfolio: Mike Whiting
Responsible Corporate Director: Patrick Leeson
Responsible Director: Kevin Shovelton
Head(s) of Service: Scott Bagshaw
Gross Expenditure: £33,708,600
FTE: 31.6



## SECTION A: ROLE/PURPOSE OF FUNCTION

### **PURPOSE OF THE SERVICE**

The Fair Access Unit is responsible for two key areas of work, School Admissions and establishing eligibility for Home to school transport. The unit is charged with ensuring fairness and equity in the allocation of school places and ensuring that Admissions Authorities within Kent meet their legal obligation with regard to school admissions.

Transport to school can be a barrier to some parents and the Transport team ensure the County's transport policy is applied appropriately and in line with legislation relating to home to school transport. The team ensure that all eligible pupils receive appropriate transport to and from school.

### **KEY FUNCTIONS OF TEAMS WITHIN THE UNIT**

#### **Secondary Admissions**

- Co-ordinating testing and marking arrangements for 11,500+ pupils seeking a grammar school places in the county.
- Producing and distributing the Secondary Admissions Booklet.
- Ensuring up to 18,000 pupils going through the transfer each year to any one of the 99 secondary schools in the county can apply to a school of their preference.
- Managing the in year admissions process for secondary age pupils seeking a place in Kent schools including Hard to Place pupils.
- Presenting Community & Voluntary Controlled School defences where parents appeal against admission decisions.
- Monitoring the admissions arrangements for own admission authority secondary schools to ensure compliance with the code.

#### **Primary Admissions**

- Producing and distributing the Primary Admissions Booklet to the 449 Infant, Junior and Primary schools in the county.
- Ensuring the 17,000 pupils can successfully apply for a school of their preference.

- Managing the in year admissions process for primary age pupils seeking a place in Kent schools.
- Presenting school defences where parents appeal against admission decisions.
- Monitoring the admissions arrangements for own admission authority primary schools to ensure compliance with the code.

### **Transport**

- Assessing eligibility of pupils who request home to school transport support (21,000 children currently transported daily).
- Assessing safety of school walking routes where this impacts on transport provision.
- Applying transport policy and assisting in the development of home to school transport initiatives.
- Presenting transport appeals where decisions are contested by parents.
- Producing and publicising all information in relation to home to school transport.
- Working with Members to develop transport policies that meet the needs of Kent pupils in a fair and equitable way.

### **Scheme Coordination and Process Development Team**

- Co-ordinating the entrance to primary and infant schools and transfer to junior and secondary schools by collating paper and online applications and by electronically managing, sorting and allocating school places.
- Producing admissions reports and maintaining the admissions database.
- Quality assuring school returns and pupil ranking data.
- Managing and supporting Online Admissions. Over 90% of the cohort now applies in this way.
- Managing and supporting school admission and geographical information systems.

### **CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES**

The Admissions and Transport team have delegated authority to act on behalf of the LA to administer the legal duties which require Kent LA to act in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2012.

Our aim for 2013/14 is to ensure Kent meet its legal obligations in regard to admissions and transport legislation and where possible support parents to access their preferred education provision. To enable this to happen, our priorities are to:

- Consult on Admissions Arrangements, administer a co-ordinated admissions scheme and publish details for parents

- Monitor and ensure fairness and equity in the admission arrangements of schools in Kent.
- Work with colleagues in Provision Planning to deliver increased numbers of children securing their preferred schools.
- Ensure children and young people out of school secure places without undue delay, employing the Fair Access Protocol.
- Ensure Kent LA meet its legal duties in regard to Home to School Transport.

## SECTION B: CONTRIBUTION TO MTP OBJECTIVES

The Fair Access team, through the delivery of its core functions help to ensure fairness in the admissions system and allow pupils to attend their preferred schools. The administration of the selection process and the assessing of transport eligibility, will be contributing to Bold Steps Priority 3 - **To ensure all Pupils meet their full potential.**

In carrying out the LA's legal duties the Fair Access Team will ensure the most vulnerable children are given priority in oversubscription criteria of schools (other than where legal exceptions apply). We will do this by:

- Monitoring the admissions arrangements set by all Kent schools, ensuring they are lawful and administered in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2012.
- Provide high quality advice and support to parents and clear information easily accessible though the KCC website and local schools.
- Working with schools to develop admissions arrangements that meet the needs of parents children and schools

It is intended that this will contribute to the 2016 Bold Steps for Education Targets:

- Increase online admissions applications from 91% in 2011 to 92% in 2012 with a view to achieving 95% by 2016.
- In light of the rising numbers of children seeking school places by 2016, the LA will seek to maintain current performance of 85% of children securing their first preference school.
- First and second preferences combined will improve to 95% by 2016 from 92% currently

The service will prioritise target groups for support, including children in local authority care. The service will also support district based

working in order to facilitate swift access to schools in localities, contribute to the Single Point of Access process and the development of key strategies, particularly SEN, 14 to 24 Employment Learning and Skills Strategy and the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision.

**SECTION C: PRIORITIES, ACTIONS, PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS, MILESTONES, KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS**

Management Teams are required to regularly review progress against the actions and milestones set out in the tables below. Monthly progress may be appropriate for individual services to review their business plan progress, and quarterly may be appropriate at the Divisional level. Formal reporting of progress by Division to Cabinet Committees is required twice a year, at the mid-year point and after the year-end.

The Corporate Director is authorised to negotiate, settle the terms of, and enter the following agreements/projects:

<b>PRIORITY 1:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:</b> Consult on Admissions Arrangements, administer a coordinated admissions scheme and publish details for parents		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
<b>1</b>	<b>Prepare an admission scheme for consultation ensuring effective related processes are operating.</b>	Scheme Co-ordination and Process Development Manager	September 2013	November 2013
1.1	Prepare a report to secure Cabinet Member approval for a proposed admissions scheme for consultation.	Head of Fair Access	October 2013	November 2013
1.2	Consult all relevant parties for a period of not less than 8 weeks at the appropriate time of year.	Head of Consultation and Engagement	November 2013	January 2014
1.3	Re-tender and commission a test supplier to provide materials for the Process for Entry to Secondary Education.	PESE Manager	February 2013	June 2013
1.4	Seek agreement from all schools to act in accordance with	Head of Fair Access	January 2014	February 2014

	the scheme, resolving any conflicts that may arise as necessary.			
<b>2</b>	<b>Set out admissions arrangements for Kent Community and VC schools.</b>	Head of Fair Access	September 2013	October 2013
2.1	Prepare a report to secure Cabinet Member approval for proposed admissions arrangements to go out for consultation.	Head of Fair Access	October 2013	November 2013
2.2	Consult all relevant parties for a period of not less than 8 weeks at the appropriate time of year.	Head of Consultation and Engagement	November 2013	January 2014
2.3	Prepare a report to KCC Cabinet to feedback responses to the consultation and make recommendations for the arrangements to be determined for Community and VC schools in Kent.	Head of Fair Access	January 2014	February 2014
<b>KEY MILESTONES</b>				<b>DATE</b> (month/year)
A	Consultation documents ready for formal consultation and distributed to all relevant parties			Nov 2013
B	Cabinet determine admissions arrangements in light of consultation feedback.			Mar 2014
C	Details of determined admissions arrangements published in the schools prospectus			Apr 2014
<b>ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?</b>			<b>ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No</b>	
1	Determination of Co-ordinated Scheme		Yes	
2	Determination of Admissions Arrangements for Community and VC Schools		Yes	

<b>PRIORITY 2:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:</b>		
		Monitor to ensure fairness and equity in the admission arrangements of schools in Kent.		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)

1	<b>Engage with schools to provide updates on legislative changes to assist them in developing admissions arrangements in line with changes to the School Admissions Code 2012.</b>	Head of Fair Access	September 2013	November 2013
1.1	Prepare timely e-bulletin messages to engage schools and raise awareness about their admissions duties.	Head of Fair Access	September 2013	October 2013
1.2	Prepare articles in Governor Magazine drawing attention to the legal responsibilities placed on governors in relation to setting admissions arrangements.	Head of Fair Access	July 2013	November 2013
1.3	Conduct Headteacher briefings across the county to raise awareness of process changes and provide examples of best practise.	Head of Fair Access	September 2013	September 2013
2	<b>Review all consultations and determined arrangements presented by own admissions authority schools in Kent.</b>	Head of Fair Access	November 2013	March 2013
2.1	Monitor arrangements as they come into the LA and contact schools where proposals appear unlawful.	Scheme Co-ordination and Process Development Manager	November 2013	March 2013
2.2	Where schools determine unlawful arrangements or have failed to adapt existing arrangements in line with legislation – advise them of the requirement for amendment	Head of Fair Access	March 2013	June 2013
2.3	Schools, failing to amend arrangements in line with their legal requirements must be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.	Head of Fair Access	June 2013	July 2013
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	Fewer schools year on year present arrangements for consultation that appear unlawful than for the same period in 2012/13			March 2014
B	No school will need to have arrangements referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (other than where they disagree with the LA's observations)			July 2013
C	All own admission authority schools provide detailed and legal admissions arrangements for publication by the LA			August 2013
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?			ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No	

1	No	N/A
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<b>PRIORITY 3:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:</b>  Work with colleagues in Provision Planning to deliver increased numbers of children securing their preferred schools.		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
<b>1</b>	<b>Provide Key admissions data at relevant times of the year to assist with planning</b>	Head of Fair Access	December 2013	May 2014
1.1	Provide School Preference data by District to AEO colleagues in order to assess capacity demands.	Head of Fair Access	December 2013	February 2013
1.2	Provide Secondary Round admissions reports from National Offer Day to AEO colleagues and review school admission trends for future planning needs.	Head of Fair Access	March 2013	November 2013
1.3	Provide Primary Round reports from National Offer Day to AEO colleagues and review school admission trends for future planning needs.	Head of Fair Access	April 2013	November 2013
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	Ensure all school applications for each round are inputted and data cleansed in time for reporting			February 2014
B	Collect and process all admissions applications and deliver the coordinated admissions process in order to deliver the school place allocation reports at the end of the admissions round.			May 2013
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?			ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No	
1	Nothing anticipated at this time.		No	

<b>PRIORITY 4 :</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:</b>  Ensure children and young people out of school secure places without
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		undue delay, employing the Fair Access Protocol (FAP).		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
<b>1</b>	<b>Ensure a consistent county wide framework for Fair Access Protocol is communicated to all schools and is adopted by Fair Access panels in each locality.</b>	Head of Service (supported by Fair Access locality chairs)	April 2013	Ongoing
1.1	Monitor Fair Access panels in their decision taking to ensure accordance with the protocols resulting in swift allocation of suitable education provision for hard to place pupils.	Senior Admissions Officers	April 2013	Ongoing
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	All districts will have an agreed protocol that has been developed using the countywide framework.			May 2013
B	Consistent protocols operating effectively in each district resulting prompt placement of pupils out of school.			January 2014
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?			ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No	
1	None anticipated at this time		No	

<b>PRIORITY 5:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Kent LA meet its legal duties in regard to Home to School Transport and manages future demand more effectively.</li> </ul>		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
<b>1</b>	<b>Consult on Post 16 Transport Policy</b>	Head of Fair Access	April 2013	Ongoing

1.1	Consult in retaining existing arrangements designed around the Kent 16+ Travel Card.	Head of Consultation and Engagement	March 2013	April 2013
1.2	Secure member approval for annual Post 16 Transport Policy taking account of consultation feedback.	Head of Fair Access	April 2013	May 2013
1.3	Publish Post 16 Travel Policy	Head of Fair Access	June 2013	Ongoing
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review Home to School Transport Policy to assess impact of the significant changes to eligibility.</b>	Head of Consultation and Engagement	July 2013	July 2013
2.1	Consult stakeholders on Home to School Transport Policy and prepare a report to members on the impact of the changes.	Head of Fair Access	June 2013	July 2013
<b>3.</b>	<b>Trail Online applications for Home to School Transport.</b>	Head of Fair Access	March 2013	May 2013
3.1	Open live access and monitor customer satisfaction with process.	Transport Manager	May 2013	Ongoing
<b>4.</b>	<b>Manage a project to influence behavioural change by parents in favour of independent modes of travel and flexible transport arrangements.</b>	Head of Fair Access/Supported by Head of SEN	April 2013	Ongoing
4.1	Project to generate savings of £750k from SEN Transport Budget securing an overall budget saving of £1.5m by 2016.	Head of Fair Access	April 2013	Ongoing
<b>KEY MILESTONES</b>				<b>DATE</b> (month/year)
A	Secure approval for published policy			May 2013
B	User survey informs the review			TBC
C	Finalise development of online application system following user acceptance testing			May 2013
D	Working practices changed to ensure SEN Officers make broader transport offers to parents when finalising or reviewing SEN statements.			January 2014
<b>ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?</b>			<b>ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No</b>	
1	None anticipated at this time		No	

SECTION D: FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

For the Financial Resources section **Finance** will provide the required information and detail that sets out the main components of your budget by completing the table below.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES								
Divisional Unit	Responsible Manager	Staffing	Non Staffing	Gross Expenditure	Service Income	Net Expenditure	Govt. Grants	Net Cost
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£

HUMAN RESOURCES		
FTE establishment at 31 March 2013	Estimate of FTE establishment at 31 March 2014	Reasons for any variance
31.6	31.6	N/A

SECTION E: RISK & BUSINESS CONTINUITY

RISKS	
RISKS	MITIGATION
Failure to send out school offer information in line with legal requirements.	Close monitoring of systems and other agencies involved in the processing. Ensuring key elements are completed within pre agreed timescales to allow the next stage of the process to progress. Contingency plans that allow for results to be sent both on line and in hard copy.

Schools fail to follow process and admit additional pupils	Schools are advised in advance that failing to follow the agreed process could lead to financial and operational difficulties if as a result they have to admit additional pupils that may have been disadvantaged. Monitoring takes also place.
Issues with Kent test results in parental challenge to the administration of the system.	Training sessions are in place for invigilators conducting the testing. Clear instruction manuals for test administrators. Pro-forma paperwork to be completed. Cross invigilation between schools. 2 persons together when tests are opened and resealed.
There is a risk that loss of IT programs will cause significant disruption to the services provided by this department. Programs that would affect service most would be: Central Pupil Database (Impulse), Web Portal for applications for parent's preferences, and GIS software.	A System Co-Ordination Manager and a System Team have been appointed and located within the service and are able to maintain and monitor the system.

**BUISNESS CONTINUITY**

In terms of Business Continuity, the greatest threat to the Fair Access Team is the risk of losing the necessary data or systems needed to deliver its core functions. As a result of this risk, the Scheme Co-ordination and Process Development Team and Manager were appointed in order to maintain day-to-day monitoring of the systems, and ensuring that liaison is maintained with the system providers CACI. In the event that these systems should fail we are confident that they could be resumed in a relatively short space of time.

**SECTION F: PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITY INDICATORS**

**Table for PERFORMANCE indicators measurable annually by academic year**

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR - ANNUALLY BY ACADEMIC YEAR	Floor Performance Standard	2012 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Target 2013	Target 2014
Increase online admissions applications from	Yr R = 92.82% Yr 3 = 86.84%	<b>92%</b>	<b>67% National measured by</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR - ANNUALLY BY ACADEMIC YEAR	Floor Performance Standard	2012 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Target 2013	Target 2014
91% in 2011 to 92% in 2012 with a view to achieving 95% by 2016.	Year 7 = 90.28% <b>Combined = 91.24%</b>		<b>DfE for Secondary applications in 2012</b>		
In light of the rising number of children seeking school places by 2016, the LA will seek to maintain current performance of 85% of children securing their first preference school.	First Pref Yr R = 85.18% Yr 3 = 96.37% Year 7 = 82.84% <b>Combined = 84.96%</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>The rich and diverse mix of school type in Kent make comparative data illegitimate.</b>	<b>Combined 86%</b>	<b>Combined 87%</b>
First and second preferences combined will improve to 95% by 2016 from 92% currently	First or Second Pref Yr R = 92.21% Year 3 = 98.6% Year 7 = 92.57% <b>Combined = 92.84%</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>The rich and diverse mix of school type in Kent make comparative data illegitimate.</b>	<b>Combined 93%</b>	<b>Combined 94%</b>

Table for ACTIVITY indicators measurable on a quarterly basis by financial year

ACTIVITY INDICATOR	2012/13 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Expected range for activity
			Annual Comparison
Reduce the number of paper applications received for admissions	<b>10% currently paper forms</b>	<b>N/A</b>	7% Paper applications by May 2013
Number of parents approaching the LA for assistance with in year admissions when turned away from 3 or more schools.	Baseline data being gathered	N/A	Changes in legislation affecting in year admissions is due to come into force in September 2013, When baseline data is know targets will be set accordingly.

SECTION G: ACTIVITY REQUIRING SUPPORT FROM OTHER DIVISIONS/SERVICES

(For example Property, ICT, Business Strategy, Human Resources, Finance & Procurement, Planning & Environment, Public Health, Service Improvement, Commercial Services, Governance & Law, Customer Relationships, Communications & Community Engagement or other Divisions/Services)

ACTIVITY DETAILS	EXPECTED IMPACT	EXPECTED DATE
ICT – Finalise development of the online application process for home to school transport / renewal of software licences / Database Administration	Reduction in paper applications	March 2013
HR – Support for recruitment and development of Organisational Development Plan	Full compliment of skilled and able staff.	Ongoing
Customer Services – Support for development of improvements to the customer journey and effective signposting of service users. Contact Centre support with phone and email enquiries.	Improved customer experience, reduction in workload volume, improved channel shift.	Ongoing
Corporate Communications – Support with media enquiries and press releases / publication of public notices and updating of web based information. Support for the formal consultation processes undertaken annually. Support for design and publication of prospectuses and information leaflets	Improved customer experience and leading to more efficient operations	Ongoing
Governance and Law – support with legal advice on transport and admissions related policy challenges and processing of FOI requests.	Less legal challenge and potential for liability claims – open and transparent information sharing.	Ongoing
Community Engagement – Support for Equality Impact Assessments and wider analysis of consultation feedback.	Meeting legal requirements and engaging all key stakeholders.	Ongoing
Environment, Enforcement Highways and Transport - Commissioning of Transport via Service Level Agreement from Transport Integration.	Cost reductions resulting from application of service level agreement.	Ongoing