

Item 6.3 - Determination of School Admission Arrangements for 2021/22	
Questions	Response
<p>1. How are TH parents living on the Boroughs boundaries informed about school choices in neighbouring Boroughs?</p>	<p>The Council’s website, school admissions booklet and its online application system provides families with access to information about schools in Tower Hamlets, neighbouring boroughs and across London.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets is also part of the Pan London School Admissions System that enables families to apply for schools in any of the 33 London boroughs through a single online portal. Applications and decisions are then co-ordinated across the 33 London boroughs. This removes the potential for multiple offers and ensures that as many children as possible secure a place at a preferred school at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<p>2. How do we work with neighbouring Boroughs on school place planning like this?</p>	<p>The Council works very closely with its neighbours and other boroughs across London on school place planning. It has joined together with other London boroughs to commission its pupil (school roll) projections through the GLA, providing access to data on all pupils in London. This enables the modelling of population movements across borough boundaries and ensures more accurate information for planning purposes.</p> <p>The Council is also a member of the School Roll Projections Liaison Group, which brings London LAs together, to gather intelligence, share ideas and develop practice on dealing with the various school place planning and development challenges.</p>

3. Some parents point out that those living on the edge of catchment areas are disadvantaged by a low priority ranking for schools that may be close but over a catchment boundary. Other boroughs do not have catchment areas and instead rely on the closest school principle across the entire borough, which disadvantages fewer parents. Has any consideration been given to this approach in Tower Hamlets?

The Council previously operated the 'nearest school' system prior to moving to 'catchment areas' in 2013.

The catchment area system was introduced in recognition of the fact that, with its changing demographic, primary school provision in Tower Hamlets was not uniform or adequately matched to the demand across the borough. The aim was to achieve the following objectives:

- Create a pattern in pupil admissions that ensures a more even distribution across the available borough's school place provision;
- Use geographical boundaries/obstacles as area boundaries to allow for safe walking journeys;
- Reduce the necessity for families who do not get a place at their preferred schools to have to attend a school more than the statutory distance (two miles) from their home.

Since its introduction the catchment area system has proven very successful. Tower Hamlets has amongst the best outcomes for children applying to schools in London. This is detailed in paras. 3.11 – 3.12 of the cabinet report.