

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 5TH JULY, 2012**

Present:- Councillors Barron and Beaumont, Mrs. C. Cockayne, Mrs. I. Hartley, Mr. E. Kelsey, Mr. G. Lancashire and Mr. B. Sampson (Community Representatives)

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Havenhand, Mrs. P. Powell and Mr. P. Robins (Community Representatives), Ms. C. Thorpe (Diocese of Hallam) and Mrs. H. Morris (Diocese of Sheffield).

28. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Agreed:- That Mrs. I. Hartley be appointed as Chair of this meeting.

(Mrs. I. Hartley in the Chair)

The Clerk advised the Forum that Mrs. H. Morris was to retire in July and who formally thanked the Forum for its work on behalf of all schools in Rotherham and wished all members all the best for the future.

Mrs. Morris' successor was to Mr. Huw Thomas from the 1st September, 2012.

The Chair asked that Mrs. Morris be formally written to and that she be thanked for the hard work and support she had provided to the Forum.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15TH MARCH, 2012

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum held on 15th March, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

30. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Reference was made to Minute No. 24 (School Admission Appeals – Statistics) where it was noted that over fifty-three primary schools had been oversubscribed throughout the borough and steps had been taken to minimise the impact in some areas.

With regards to Minute No. 26 (Update on School Organisation) it was noted that final approval had been given by the Cabinet Member yesterday to implement the expansion to increase places at Flanderwell Primary and to amalgamate Maltby Hall Infant and Lilly Hall Junior Schools.

It was also confirmed that as of the 1st July, 2012, St. Bernard's Catholic High School had been granted academy status.

31. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, provided an update on the progress of the Terms of Conditions and Constitution of the Local Admissions Forum, which would be reviewed over the summer period and presented back to the Autumn meeting for approval.

32. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S REPORT TO THE SCHOOL ADJUDICATOR

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, circulated a copy of the Local Authority Report to the Schools Adjudicator for all those present and referred the Forum to the content within.

Discussion ensued on the problems that had arisen as a result of the class size legislation to Key Stage 1 children. It was pointed out that the Local Authority were looking at future projections and future housing infrastructure to ensure there was sufficient school capacity in the areas that it was needed.

Agreed:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

33. ADMISSION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL : - 2013/14 BOOKLET

Marina Jordan, Principal Officer for Admissions and Appeals, referred to the Admission to Secondary School booklet for 2013/14 which was published on the website from the 1st July, 2013.

It was noted that the booklet was not sent out to each parent, unless this was requested.

Further information was provided on the 2012/13 applications to secondary school which allowed for final applications to be submitted up to 30th November, 2011 with the national offer day being 1st March, 2012.

Only three out of the sixteen secondary schools across the borough were over subscribed.

34. ADMISSION CONSULTATIONS - 2014/15

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, provided an update on the consultations for admission for 2014/15 which were to be circulated to all Governing Bodies for inclusion on agendas for the Autumn term meetings.

35. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE

Marina Jordan, Principal Officer for Admissions and Appeals, provided an update on the number of appeals received for various schools across the borough and outlined the areas of particular demand.

A further update would be provided on more accurate numbers would be provided to the next meeting.

36. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, gave an update on the current position with regard to school organisation and confirmed that a meeting had taken place on the 17th May, 2012, with Cabinet and the Strategic Leadership Team on how best to respond to the demand for school places across the borough arising from the high birth rate for the KS1 entrants for September, 2012.

This was the first time that services had come together collectively to look at the issues facing the borough. It had been noted by the meeting that parents seeking a primary school place for their child(ren) had in the main been given their first choice of school and the difficulty had arisen when seeking preference for schools which were not in the catchment area of where a child lived.

(Mrs. I. Hartley had to leave this point and Mr. G. Lancashire assumed the Chair)

It was, therefore, proposed that further meetings take place to consider birth rate statistics, housing developments and planning sites with a view to pulling a long term plan together.

A further meeting with the Cabinet and the Strategic Leadership Team was scheduled for Thursday, 19th July, 2012, to consider proposals on meeting need and to ensure that the position was not replicated in the future.

The Forum were informed that there had only been a couple of schools where children in the catchment area had not been given their catchment school, these being Flanderwell and Rawmarsh Ashwood.

Discussion ensued on the gaps in demand, whether parental preference for more popular schools had had a bearing and if appropriate Section 106 monies had been used for education whether the demand would not have been so great where housing had expanded in some areas.

Clarification was provided on the current policy for children who had been allocated schools out of catchment and the opportunities that could be afforded parents to apply for support with transport.

Further information was also provided on the expansions of places in certain areas. These included:-

- Bramley Grange – increase from a published admission number of 40 to 45 with effect from 2013/14 onwards.
- Catcliffe Primary – increase from a published admission number of 25 to 30 formally from 2014/15, but with increases during 2013/14.
- Bramley Sunnyside Infant and Junior - increase from a published admission number of 80 to 90 formally from 2014/15, but with increases during 2013/14.
- Kilmhurst Primary - increase from a published admission number of 28 to 30.
- Treeton C. of E. - increase from a published admission number of 37 to 45 increasing the F2 cohort with a modular build – formally from 2013/14.
- Flanderwell - increase from a published admission number of 30 to 45 from this September and formally from 2013/14 with school expansion.

- Aston Hall Junior and Infant – pre-consultation stage to increase from 30 to 45, but with a temporary classroom for Foundation Stage 2 in September, 2012.
- Maltby Hall Junior and Infant – amalgamation approved with places being taken from September, 2013/14.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the demand on places was particularly great in the Whiston, Central Rotherham, Wath, Rawmarsh, Kimberworth, Swinton Wickersley, Flanderwell and Bramley areas, there were sufficient spaces across the borough for all Foundation Stage 2 children.

The Forum recognised the importance of looking forward to ensure that there were the places to meet demand into the future. There needed to be further work with Early Years to ensure that parents were fully aware that attendance at a Foundation Unit did not guarantee a place in Reception/Foundation Stage 2 at certain schools as this had compounded demand.

The Chair who was also an Appeals Panelist wished to formally place on record thanks and appreciation to the staff involved in the admissions/appeals process in the Departments of Legal and Democratic Services and Children and Young People's Services, who had had to deal with a significant increase in work, undertaken without complaint, under very stressful circumstances.

Agreed:- That the relevant Departments be thanked accordingly.

37. PROPOSED DATES AND TIMES OF 2012/13 MEETINGS

Agreed:- That the proposed dates/times of future meetings be confirmed as:-

Thursday, 8th November, 2012

Thursday, 14th March, 2013

Thursday, 4th July, 2013

All meetings would commence at 10.00 a.m. and be held in the Town Hall.