

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2012**

Present:- Councillors Beaumont and Barron along with Mrs. C. Cockayne (Community Representative), Mrs. I. G. Hartley (Community Schools), Mr. C. E. Kelsey (Community Schools), Mr. G. Lancashire (Community Representative), Mr. P. Robins (Community Representative) and Mr. B. N. Sampson (Community Representative).

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

38. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

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

(Mrs. I. Hartley in the Chair)

39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5TH JULY, 2012

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum held on 5th July, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

40. MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Consideration was given to the current membership of the Local Admissions Forum and the number of vacancies.

It was suggested that every effort should be made to fill all the vacancies and arrangements should be made to this effect. However, it was noted that a Mrs. M. Gambles, a former Head Teacher and a current School Appeals Panelist, had volunteered to fill one of the community vacancies.

Agreed:- (1) That arrangements be made to seek nominations for the vacant positions on the Local Admissions Forum once the Terms of Reference have been agreed.

(2) That Mrs. M. Gambles be appointed as a Community Representative.

41. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, introduced an example terms of reference and procedure for Leeds Admissions Forum and asked for views on the content with a view to adopting a similar document in Rotherham.

Reference was made specifically to:-

- The second paragraph and the advice offered by the Forum.
- Advice and recommendations serving the interests of Looked After Children.
- The effectiveness of the In Year Fair Access Protocol.

- Involvement of Academies in any advice.
- Removal of any references to "Choice Advice".
- Monitoring the admission of children outside the normal admission round and the fair distribution of places.
- Need for the Forum to agree the Local Authority's Report to the School Adjudicator.
- Continuation of the quorum as being one third of the membership.

It was suggested that the Leeds Terms of Reference and Procedure be revised in respect of the needs in Rotherham and that the document be resubmitted to the next meeting for final approval, but that it be circulated by email to Forum members prior to the meeting.

In terms of the interests of numbers of looked after children and statistics, it was suggested that this be included as a agenda item at the next meeting and that if any particular concerns/comments arose a special meeting be arranged to look specifically at any issues.

Discussion ensued on the problems associated with increased housing provision and children with challenging behaviour and their placement/non-placement in schools in Rotherham and the need for this to be reviewed and the relevant protocols revised. It was noted that borough wide there were enough spaces for children to be accommodated in education, but the places available were not always in the areas where they were required.

Agreed:- [1] That the Terms of Reference and Procedure for the Local Admissions Forum be revised and submitted to the next meeting for approval, but circulated prior to the meeting by email to Forum Members.

[2] That statistics in relation to looked after children be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

42. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION FOR ENTRY IN THE 2014/15 ACADEMIC YEAR

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, introduced the report relating to the consultation on admission arrangements for the admission year 2014/15 and the relevant area for consultation in 2014/15, which had been circulated to all schools for consideration of the admissions criteria and the admission number of the school and whether this was appropriate. The deadline for responses was the 7th December, 2012.

A number of revisions had since been made to the published admission numbers of some schools and these were set out in detail as part of the report.

Reference was made to the net capacity of Wath Comprehensive and the current figure of 1740. The School Organisation Team would undertake further investigation to confirm whether this figure was correct.

Agreed:- That the information be received and any issues raised after the deadline brought to the attention of the Local Admissions Forum.

43. ADMISSION TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS - 2013/14 BOOKLET UPDATE

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, referred to the Admission to School Booklets for both primary and secondary schools. The information contained in the booklet was freely available on the Local Authority website along with details on how to make an online application. Parents could request a hard copy of the booklet and any request would be acceded to.

The arrangements regarding the receipt of applications for initial entry into primary and secondary were highlighted as:-

Secondary:-

Closing date for applications submitted online – 1st November, 2012.
Closing date for applications submitted by post – 30th November, 2012.
Offer Day – 1st March, 2013.

Primary:-

Closing date for applications submitted online – 3rd December, 2012.
Closing date for applications submitted by post – 15th January, 2013.
Offer Day – 16th April, 2013.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

44. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE AND SCHOOL ADMISSIONS APPEAL CODE

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, referred to the School Admissions Code dated February 2012 which was being used in the admission to school for 2013/14 and the previous Schools Admissions Code which applied to current in year admission arrangements and 2012/13 admission arrangements. The Admissions Appeals Code 2012 was in force for all arrangements.

There was some confusion being experienced by some Academies, but clarification was being provided on the relevant Codes and timescales.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

45. PRESENTATION - UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, gave a presentation which provided an update on admissions, the schedule of primary school organisation proposals, appeals and on new arrivals.

The presentation drew attention to:-

- The number of applications for admission processed annually.

- The number of transfer requests.
- September, 2012 and Reception/Foundation Stage 2 allocations.
- Approved changes to school organisation.
- Approval to raise Published Admission Numbers.
- Consultations planned during the academic year 2012/13.
- The impact of the new housing development at Waverley.
- Available capital funding.
- Use of modular buildings.
- Examples of data projections.
- Forward planning.
- Appeals and two year comparisons.
- Numbers of new arrivals.
- Issues and lessons learned.

Discussion ensued on the assumptions by parents by attending a Foundation Unit at F1/Nursery, their child will automatically progress in Reception/Foundation Stage 2, cross border admissions requests, the expansion of some schools in Rotherham to accommodate the current Reception/Foundation Stage 2 cohort and the need to be proactive for 2013/14 admissions.

A copy of letters/notices that would be presented to schools, early years units and children's centres and to parents for admission into primary for the 2013/14 academic year were circulated to those present. These letters/notices sought to try and resolve some of the concerns raised this year around parental preference, catchment schools, priority allocations as a result of attendance at a school nursery/Foundation Stage 1 Unit and the oversubscription criteria.

It was noted that sufficient school places to meet parental preferences for this year's FS2 cohort had been a significant challenge and the pressure on the relevant departments of the Council having to deal with admissions/appeals was immense.

Agreed:- That Helen Barre be thanked for her very informative presentation and the information be noted.

46. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting take place on Thursday, 14th March, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. at the Town Hall.