

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2013**

Present:- Councillor Barron and Beaumont, Mrs. C. Cockayne (Community Representative), Mrs. M. Gambles (Community Representative), Mrs. I. G. Hartley (Community Schools), Mr. C. E. Kelsey (Community Schools), Mr. G. Lancashire (Voluntary Aided School), Mr. P. Robins (Community Representative) and Mr. T. Shahid (Community Representative).

Apologies for absence were received from Ms. C. Thorpe (Diocese of Hallam), Mrs. P. Powell (Community Representative) and Mr. B. Sampson.

47. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN.

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

(Mrs. I. Hartley in the Chair)

48. NEW MEMBER

The Chair welcomed Marilyn Gambles to her first meeting for the Forum.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8TH NOVEMBER, 2012

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum held on 8th November, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

Arising from Minute No. 42 (School Admissions Consultation for Entry in the 2013/14 Academic Year) it was noted that the Building Manager had visited Wath Comprehensive during February half term to take new measurements. The net capacity figure now stands at 1,788.

Arising from Minute No. 44 (School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeal Code), it was noted that draft letters, to the Primary and Early Years as a reminder as to how the FS1 and FS2 process worked, had been circulated at the last meeting. The letters and Frequently Asked Questions had been sent to Infant departments and early years settings and the feedback from Admissions Officers is that this activity had been very positive and had raised awareness.

50. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADMISSIONS FORUM

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

Mr. Lancashire provided a letter from the diocese of Sheffield stating that the Sheffield Diocesan Board of Education had appointed him to

represent Anglican voluntary controlled schools as well as voluntary aided schools.

Agreed:- (1) That the current membership be noted.

(2) That advice be sought as to whether Mr. Lancashire could represent both voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools.

51. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

In accordance with Minute No. 41 of the 8th November, 2012, the amended Terms of Reference were submitted for consideration which incorporated the suggestions made previously.

Discussion ensued on the Terms of Reference with the following issues raised:-

- Point 5(a) (Chair and Vice Chair need not be a member of the Forum) should be deleted
- Membership as at 2013 – needs to be updated

Reference was made to the fact that there was no appointment representing the Academies. It was reported that once the Terms of Reference had been approved, they would be invited to nominate a representative.

Agreed:- (1) That, subject to the above deletion and updating of membership, the Terms of Reference be approved and circulated to potential representatives of the vacant categories.

(2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting on the proposed content of the annual report.

52. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT FOR THE 2014/2015 ACADEMIC YEAR

Consideration was given to a report presented by Helen Barre, Service Manager, School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment Service, concerning the admission arrangements (i.e.: criteria and admission number) which would apply for school admission in the 2014/2015 academic year. The report summarised the issues which had arisen during the annual consultation exercise with and between schools, other local authorities and via the Borough Council's Internet website. It was noted that all admission authorities were required to determine their arrangements by 15th April, 2013.

Discussion ensued with the following issues highlighted/clarified:-

- New Admissions Code came fully into effect from September, 2013, and included “previously looked after children” in the order of priority
- 1 school had wanted to include that FS1 children would automatically transfer into FS2. An explanation had been given as to why this was not feasible
- Children who lived in the catchment area who also had an older sibling on roll – quite often at appeals it was the case of a younger sibling being on roll but this would not be part of the published criteria

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the proposed admission numbers (contained in Annex 1 of the report submitted) for community and controlled schools be confirmed for 2014/15, subject to the clarifications included in Annex 2.

(3) That the proposed admissions criteria for community and controlled schools for 2014/15 be agreed and adopted.

(4) That the proposed admissions numbers and criteria for voluntary aided schools and Academies, as outlined in Annex 2 of the report submitted, be noted.

(5) That a summary of the information contained in the Admissions Booklet be sent to parents with full copies available on request and/or via the Rotherham.gov.uk website.

(6) That the appropriate notice be published in respect of the proposed admission numbers for the schools named in Annex 2 of the report submitted, where the admission number will be less than that indicated by the current net capacity calculation.

(7) That advice be sought on the “sibling” rule.

53. UPDATE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2013

Please see Minute No. 56 below.

54. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS - STATISTICS

Consideration was given to a report containing statistics of the number of school admission appeals received and hearings that had taken place from September, 2012-February, 2013, as follows:-

	Appeals Lodged	Appeals Refused	Appeals Allowed
LEA Primary	493	175	79
LEA Secondary	102	34	34
Church Schools – Primary	85	38	13
Church Schools – Secondary	8	3	3
Academies			
Aston	1	-	1
Brinsworth	Conduct their	Own appeals	Process
Maltby	-	-	-
St. Bernard's	6	3	2
Wales	9	-	1
Winterhill	4	-	1

Discussion ensued on Brinsworth Academy conducting their own appeal process and the independence of their decision making. It was noted that the Authority was not informed of the number of appeals held or the outcomes. The Academy had been represented on a sub-group that had met to discuss admissions issues, and information/guidance was shared with them.

Agreed: (1) That the information be received.

(2) That the Service Manager, School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, draft a letter for Forum to send to the 3 local Members of Parliament, expressing Members' view that it would be helpful for all schools who choose to manage their own admissions and appeals to share information routinely with the Authority regarding the number of appeals, appeal outcomes and how an Academy in general could demonstrate its independence whilst conducting their own appeal panels process.

55. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS

Marina Jordan, School Admissions Organisation & SEN Assessment, reported that there was an addition to the oversubscription criteria for Looked After Children in the new Admissions Code.

Previously Looked After Children had been given the highest priority in the over subscription criteria but the Code now included "previously Looked after Children".

For the whole of the schools across Rotherham there were 15 Looked after Children and 12 previously Looked after Children for admission to Year 7 in September, 2013.

Legal advice had been sought as to the definition of "previously Looked after" and been given as to those who at some point in their past had

been looked after by the local authority and the subject of formal care procedures. Parents would be requested to provide the relevant information and were given an explanation given as to why the Authority needed the information.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

56. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

Update on Admissions

- Y6/7 transition National Offer day 1st March, 2013
- 2,420 Rotherham children applied on time
- 40 children had yet to make a preference
- 99% of applications got 1 of their 3 preferences
- 96% of applications got their 1st preference
- Aston (23), Oakwood (22), St. Bernard's (23), Wales (3) and Wickersley (71) were oversubscribed on offer day
- Aston had offered places additionally to 23 children on their waiting list (new Admissions Code)
- Y2/3 and FS1/2 Offer Day was 16th April, 2013

Published Admission Numbers

For the academic year 2012/13 in F2 only:-

- Bramley Sunnyside – increased PAN from 80-90
 - Bramley Grange – increased PAN from 40-45
 - Flanderwell – increased PAN from 30-45
 - Kilnhurst – increased PAN from 28-30
 - Treeton – increased PAN from 37-45
 - Catcliffe – increased PAN from 25-30
- Formal increases to whole school PAN from 2014/15 for the above schools
- Aston Hall – increased PAN from 30-45 in KS1 only from September, 2013
 - Herringthorpe Infant School – increase of 13 places in FS2 only from January, 2013

88 additional places

Consultations planned during the Academic Year 2012/13

- Final approval granted to expand Aston Hall in KS1 only from 30-45 PAN with effect from September, 2013
- Statutory stage to expand Herringthorpe Infant and the separate Junior School from 70 to 90
- Temporary increase in admission number from 30-45 at Brinsworth Howarth in FS2 only from September, 2013 approved
- Temporary increases in admission number at Broom Valley (60-75) and Listerdale (30-45) approved

- Total places created following final approval of projects to date:
FS2 = 140 Whole School = 980
- Waverley catchment area arrangements for both primary and secondary school (approved)
- Initial CYPS consideration to determine a suitable school or expansion in the Wath area and also expansion plans in Brampton Bierlow (advanced stage negotiations with Governing Bodies)
- Preliminary discussions with Wales Primary Governing Body (temporary increase 30-45 FS2 and tracking through)

Available Capital Funding

- In 2012/13 the DfE allocated Rotherham
£3.7M for Capital Maintenance
£1.5M for Basic Need
The above allocations are not ringfenced
- In 2013/14, the DfE allocated Rotherham
£3.5M for Capital Maintenance
£1.45M for Basic Need (£2.9M for a 2 year allocation to 2015)
- Section 106 Agreements
£11M for 2 primary schools at Waverley
£1.38M in the Wath area
£338,000 split between Wickersley, Brinsworth and Rawmarsh

Discussion ensued with the following clarified/highlighted:-

- The risk of increasing the Y7 intake as it progressed through the school had been explained to Aston
- Other secondary schools had to be made aware of the provision within the new Admissions Code that Aston was taking up
- All the Y6/7 children who had not been allocated a preference had been offered alternative schools
- Modular classrooms were expected to accommodate at least 30 children
- Planning work for the Waverley site must include the proposed route of the HS2 train
- Consultation underway in the Wath area with regard to the schools forming a co-operative trust

Agreed:- (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That a report be submitted to the July meeting on the latest position with regard to Academies.

57. UPDATE ON FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Helen Barre, Service Manager for School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment, circulated a revised Fair Access Protocol for in-year admissions where children are considered to be vulnerable and/or hard to place.

The current Protocol and process for in year admissions was not considered fit for purpose; parts of it were confusing and the Admissions Code changed as of September, 2013.

In the past the Authority had not had to use the Protocol much, but given the demand for school places and protracted discussions with schools where children may have challenging behaviours, it was timely to revise the document.

The Protocol was designed to:-

- Ensure that unplaced children and young people, who were deemed to be vulnerable, in accordance with the definitions, were offered a place at a suitable school quickly
- Ensure equitable distribution so that no school, including those with available places, was asked to admit a disproportionate number of children or young people who had been excluded from other schools or who had challenging behaviour
- Work in the best interests of all Rotherham's children and young people.

A sub-group had been established including 2 Secondary Head Teachers and 2 Primary Head Teachers together with key officers, to consider a first draft of the document.

It was hoped that by having a published and clear set of criteria and process, a Fair Access Admission Panel for those cases that a decision could not be made upon with a mandate to make a decision, it would reduce the number of appeals.

3 documents had been produced:-

- (1) a summary of the Protocol and flowchart that made it easy to understand at a glance – this would go to all schools and key services for consultation
- (2) Appendix setting out the context of the Protocol and reference to the Admissions Code
- (3) Consultation questions.

Once agreed, the revised document would be included on the website

Subject to the Forum's agreement, the sub-group would be given until 18th March for final review and then sent to Head Teachers for consultation with a deadline of 28th March. It would become operational from September, 2013.

It was noted that it would be a conflict of interest to have Education Appeal Panel members on the Fair Access Admission Panel.

Forum members supported the documents and appreciated the amount of work that had taken place to produce the Protocol.

Agreed:- That the Fair Access Protocol be approved.

58. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 4th July, 2013, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.