

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 2015**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (Community Schools) (in the Chair from agenda item 115); Councillor Beaumont (Community) and Mrs. M. Gambles (Community), Mr. G. Lancashire (Community) and Mr. M. T. Shahid (Community).

Also in attendance were:- D. Fenton, M. Jordan. C. Stones. J. Unwin (School Planning, Admissions and Appeals), and H. Etheridge (Committee Services/Appeal Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Roche: Mrs. P. Powell (Community Representative) and Ms. C. Thorpe (Diocese of Hallam).

113. MR. C. E. KELSEY.

The Rotherham Local Admissions Forum was saddened to hear of the death of Mr. C. E. 'Ted' Kelsey, Academy Representative to the Local Admissions Forum.

All noted Ted's long-term commitment to Rotherham through his community, parish council and school governor work. Ted had worked hard for his various causes and interests.

The Rotherham Local Admissions Forum wished to pass on their condolences to Ted's family and friends and mark their respect to him for his hard work and commitment to Rotherham.

114. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON.

Agreed: - That Mrs. I. Hartley, Community Schools' Representative, be confirmed as the Chair of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum between March, 2015 – February, 2016.

115. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th November, 2014, were considered.

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that were not covered by this meeting's agenda.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

116. MEMBERSHIP, TERMS, CONDITIONS AND CONSTITUTION.

All noted the Membership, Terms, Conditions and Consultation document.

Efforts would continue to fill the five vacancies on the membership list through consultation with stakeholder groups in Rotherham.

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

(2) That efforts continue to fill all vacancies on the Forum's membership.

117. SCHOOL ADMISSION CONSULTATION REPORT FOR THE 2016/17 ACADEMIC YEAR.

Dean Fenton, Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals, presented the report that outlined admissions consultation outcome for the 2016/2017 academic year.

Admissions Authorities had to consult by 1st March each year over a minimum period of eight weeks between 1st November and 1st March. Final determinations would be due on 15th April, 2015.

There were no changes proposed for admission criteria to community schools for 2016/2017. The Published Admission Numbers for each School had been included in the submitted report as an appendix. This document noted, where applicable, whether changes to Published Admission Numbers were temporary or permanent changes.

- Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements;
- Waiting Lists;
- Catchment areas – no changes were proposed to the existing school catchment areas for 2016/2017;
- Fair Access Protocol;
- Statutory closing dates;
- Report to the Schools Adjudicator.

Agreed: - That the submitted report be approved.

118. UPDATE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2015.

Dean Fenton, Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals informed the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum that the Admissions Service had processed 3,261 applications for admission to secondary school for the 2015/2016 school year. 94% of first preferences had been met, along with 4% of second preferences and 1% of third preferences being met. These statistics were for applications received on-time/within deadline. The statistics related to all applications received, if just Rotherham applications were considered, a higher percentage of parental preference was met.

Wath, Wickersley, Aston, Wales, Saint Bernard's and Saint Pius X Comprehensive Schools were full and over-subscribed and appeals would

be heard in respect of refusals to these schools. Where higher numbers of appeals were lodged, group appeals would be considered.

Rotherham was a 'net importer' of pupils from all of the neighbouring and bordering local authorities; all applications were treated equally regardless of where they were submitted from and admission was governed by the Admissions Criteria. Being a net importer was testament to the popular and high standard of schools in Rotherham. Funding for 'extra district' pupils was received through the School Census based on pupil numbers at each school. Rotherham did not receive any additional funding in respect of the additional pupil numbers it imported.

Agreed: - That the update provided be noted.

119. **SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE.**

Hannah Etheridge, Appeals Clerk, spoke through the 2014/2015 school year appeals figures for all (academy and LA maintained) primary and secondary schools, and church primary and secondary schools. The numbers provided would increase through the remainder of the 2014/2015 school year due to continuing numbers of in-year transfer requests.

All Primary Schools – 2014/2015

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Appeals Lodged: - | 401 |
| Appeals Refused: - | 128 |
| Appeals Allowed: - | 71 |

All Secondary Schools – 2014/2015

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Appeals Lodged: - | 155 |
| Appeals Refused: - | 47 |
| Appeals Allowed: - | 54 |

Primary Church Schools – 2014/2015

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Appeals Lodged: - | 51 |
| Appeals Refused: - | 23 |
| Appeals Allowed: - | 12 |

Secondary Church Schools – 2014/2015

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Appeals Lodged: - | 35 |
| Appeals Refused: - | 11 |
| Appeals Allowed: - | 13 |

Current pending appeals (42) included numbers of Year 6 and 11 appeals.

Marina Jordan, Principal Officer for Appeals and Fair Access, informed the Forum that there were currently 37 appeals lodged for admission to secondary school in the 2015/2016 school year. Parents/Carers had 21 school days to lodge an appeal following the national offer day.

The annual training day for independent school admission appeals panel members would take place later in the spring term. Issues that would be covered would include training and advice and guidance on the situations where schools were refusing applications for in-year admissions when they were under their PAN.

The group appeal that had been held for admission into a Secondary School for 2014/2015 had been positive and positive feedback had been provided from a number of stakeholders. This would also form part of the training session. Experience had shown some things that were required for group appeals to run efficiently, including the attendance of the Headteacher (or their representative) at the school's case stage to provide expert knowledge about the school.

One of the members of the Forum, who was also an independent appeal member, had experience of group appeals and felt they were useful to address 'school gate gossip' and show parents / carers that all appellants received equal treatment.

Agreed: - That the information provided be noted.

120. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION.

Dean Fenton, Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals, informed the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum on school organisation changes that had happened recently: -

- Wickersley School and Sports College's classroom extension that was being provided through Targeted Basic Need funding would be completed on time for the new term in September, 2015;
- Eastwood Village Primary School would also be built through Targeted Basic Need funding and open in September, 2015. This would provide surplus capacity in the central area of Rotherham for the first time.

A member of the Forum noted the additional building at Wath Comprehensive School to create additional capacity at the School and in the car park.

A pre-statutory consultation phase was underway in relation to Milton School and Kilnhurst Primary School's autism resource centre. If the pre- and statutory consultation phases were approved, the children attending the Kilnhurst Autism Resource Centre would be placed on to Milton School's roll. There would be no physical changes to where children

attended each day.

Abbey School was going through the consultation process to reduce its Admission Number following its most recent Ofsted report and the work of the Interim Executive Board. The School's longer-term future now looked more viable with the new proposals.

The Rawmarsh Learning Community was set to experience a bulge cohort in the 2016/2017 school year and have exceptionally high numbers of children to place. Work would continue on increasing capacity in primary schools in the area.

The announcement that Rudston School may close was noted. A decision by the School's Trustees was expected in April, 2015.

Chris Stones, Principal Officer – School Organisation, would continue work on submitting the Annual Schools' Adjudicator and annual School Capacity and Planning (SCAP) reports.

Agreed: - That the update provided be noted.

121. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL.

Marina Jordan, Principal Officer – Appeals and Fair Access, explained that a more effective and updated Terms of Reference for Rotherham had been published and a majority of schools had signed up to it in-line with the Admission to School Code.

The Fair Access Panel considered unplaced children in both the primary and secondary phases and met at least half-termly. All children who had been considered by the Fair Access Panel had been identified a placement. Recent Panels had agreed places for 6 children.

A member of the Forum asked how 'unplaced' children were defined/identified. Marina explained it was when parents/carers had made a preference/s that had not been met and when appeal/s had been refused. The Fair Access Protocol became active when statutory processes had been exhausted.

The Fair Access Protocol aimed to be effective over a shorter timeframe. Secondary Fair Access Panels also had Pupil Referral Unit representation so places could be agreed in PRUs where appropriate.

Agreed: - That the update provided be noted.

122. ACADEMIES CONVERSION UPDATE.

Dean Fenton, Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals asked the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum to note the most recent list of Academy Schools in Rotherham as at March, 2015.

There had been five additional applications from schools seeking to become academies since the list had last been presented. One application had been rejected by the Secretary of State.

Hannah Etheridge, Appeals Clerk, informed the Forum that Rotherham would invoice academy schools for the appeals lodged and heard from January, 2015. The central academy schools would not be invoiced until September, 2015, when the new central primary school would be opened. It was felt to be unfair to invoice the central academies whilst the area overall did not have sufficient capacity.

All but one of Rotherham's academies bought-back the admissions and appeals services provided by the Council.

Agreed: - That the update provided be noted.

123. UPDATE ON 2014 ADMISSIONS CODE AND TIMELINE CHANGES FOR CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL.

Dean Fenton, Service Lead School Planning, Admissions and Appeals, explained that there was a new Admissions Code with effect from December, 2014.

The main impact of the 2014 Code was that the annual consultation timeline had been shortened. Earlier approval was required in February, rather than March. This would mean that the spring term meeting of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum would need to take place earlier in the year in February in future years to ensure compliance with the new Code.

Agreed: - That the update provided be noted.

124. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: -

Agreed: - That the next meeting of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum take place on Thursday, 2nd July, 2015 at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.