

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM  
THURSDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 2016**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (in the Chair from item 22); Mrs. M. Gambles, Mrs. C. Cockayne, Mr. G. Lancashire.

Officers in attendance were: - Mr. D. Fenton, J. Unwin, C. Stones, M. Jordan and H. Etheridge.

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Watson and Mrs. P. Powell.

**21. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR.**

Agreed: - (1) That Mrs. I. Hartley be appointed to Chair of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum for the year.

(2) That the term of appointment last until the February, 2017 meeting.

**22. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5TH NOVEMBER, 2015.**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, were considered. This meeting was not quorate.

There were no matters arising that were not covered by this meeting's agenda.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

**23. TERMS OF REFERENCE.**

Rotherham Local Admissions Forum's Terms of Reference document was considered. The sections relating to attendance, quorum and membership were discussed in light of previous meetings' attendances being low/not quorate and the aspiration to increase attendance and participation at future meetings.

There were currently twelve members of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum, which would make the quorum of one third (four members).

It was suggested that further efforts be made to invite attendance/participation by contacting all schools, Rotherham's school admission appeals members and local dioceses to let them know about the meeting and invite them to attend. Observers should be invited to the meeting to increase participation and relevance to the school sector.

It was also suggested that the covering letters that were sent out with the agenda and report packs make reference to the requirement for members

to submit their apologies if they could not attend and (9) 'non-attendance at three consecutive meetings may result in the termination of membership, at the discretion of Forum members'.

Agreed: - (1) That the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum's Terms of Reference document be noted.

(2) That efforts continue to try to broaden attendance by promoting the Forum to Rotherham's schools, appeal panel members, local dioceses and other stakeholders.

(3) That covering letters remind members of the need to submit apologies and the Forum's discretion to terminate membership.

(4) That the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum Terms of Reference document be annually reviewed.

#### **24. SCHOOLS ADMISSION CONSULTATION FOR THE 2017/17 ACADEMIC YEAR.**

Chris Stones, Principal Officer for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals Service, referred to the follow-up report to that presented in the Autumn term (Minute no. 15). The report had undergone consultation with governing bodies.

This report outlined the consultation timetable relating to the 2017/2018 admission year. Chris explained that the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum Spring term meeting needed to take place earlier in the term in order to meet the earlier consultation deadline set by the Department for Education. The Rotherham Local Admissions Forum would meet in February rather than March.

The document also covered: -

- Arrangements for Community and Controlled Schools;
- Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies and Trust Schools;
- Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements;
- Waiting Lists;
- Local Authority 'Admission to School' booklets;
- Consideration of the 'relevant area';
- Consideration of an in-year admissions policy;
- Admissions criteria for primary reception, year three and secondary year seven;
- The proposed net capacity of Rotherham's Schools, along with their admission numbers in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.

Agreed: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That the spring term meetings of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum take place in February so that the consultation reports on

forthcoming school years can be considered and reported to the Department for Education.

**25. ADMISSIONS AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2016.**

Joanne Unwin, Principal School Planning, Organisation, Admissions and Appeals Service Officer, provided a verbal report on the arrangements relating to secondary school allocations for September, 2016.

- National Offer day would take place on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2016;
- This year the Admissions Authority did not send out application forms to increase on-line applications;
- Where parents applied on-line, they would be informed of their allocated school place by email;
- For admission to secondary school in 2016/2017 school year, on-line applications amounted to 50-60% of the total received;
- The School Planning, Organisation, Admissions and Appeals Service would achieve financial and time savings as a result of increasing on-line applications;
- The on-line application software had experienced some compatibility issues with Apple products, but this had been rectified;
- The increased time capacity gained through applications being submitted on-line was being used to contact parents who had not yet made an application to ask for their preferences and to talk them through the on-line application process. This aimed to reduce the number of late applications, which could result in places not being received at parents' first preference if submitted after the allocation deadline.

The following questions and issues were raised following Joanne's presentation: -

- What support was there for people who did not have access to their own computer or internet?;
- Parents who opted to apply on-line were also asked to agree that they receive the decision by email too;
- George thanked the Admissions Team staff for the work that they did to contact parents and support them to make a preference within the deadline.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

**26. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE.**

Hannah Etheridge, Senior Democratic Services Officer, reported on the current school admission appeals lodged in the spring term, 2016. In-year transfer appeals were continuing to be submitted, although the

number of appeals for the central primary schools had reduced due to Eastwood village Primary school opening in September, 2016. Multiple school admission appeal panels were taking place each month.

Further information would be provided in the annual refresher training for school admission appeal panel members relating to the cases where schools can refuse pupils when they were under their admission number.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

## **27. SCHOOL ORGANISATION UPDATE.**

Dean Fenton, Service Lead for School Planning, Organisation, Admissions and Appeals, reported on the consultation that was ongoing relating to a proposal to close the Flanderwell Resource Unit. There were a small number of pupils who were accessing the Unit and two members of staff. It was proposed that the Unit be closed and the accommodation be used to increase the accommodation available to Flanderwell Primary School, which was increasing in popularity through its partnership with Wickersley Saint Alban's Primary School. The children accessing the Unit at Flanderwell could be appropriately accommodated in other provision.

Further information about the outcome of the consultation on the proposal would be shared at the next meeting of the Forum.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

## **28. SCHOOL TERM DATES CONSULTATION 2017/2018.**

Chris Stones, Principal School Planning, Organisation, Admissions and Appeals Officer, provided an update on the consultation taking place relating to term dates for the 2017/2018 school year. This issue was reported to the last Rotherham Local Admissions Forum (Minute number 19) where the Forum's support for option one was confirmed. Consultation was taking place across South Yorkshire.

Rotherham's February half-term in 2016 had been different to many other areas of the country, including neighbouring authorities.

The outcome of the consultation in Rotherham was: -

Option One – 70%;  
Option Two – 12%;  
Option Three – 18%.

This would be reported back to the regional group. There was a risk that different term dates could be implemented across South Yorkshire in 2017/2018. An update would be provided to the next meeting on the regional decision/s.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

**29. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL.**

Marina Jordan, Principal Appeals and Fair Access Officer, reported on the progress of Rotherham's Fair Access Protocol. Consultation had taken place with Rotherham's secondary schools between October and December, 2015 on four options for taking the agreement forward. There had been a 100% rate of response from all secondary schools and the Aspire PRU.

It was agreed that the current model should be maintained although future consultation may be required when the developing Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) partnerships that schools were setting up were operational.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

**30. ACADEMIES CONVERSION UPDATE**

The February 2016 list of Rotherham schools that were academies and applying to become academies was shared. This was around 40 schools.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

**31. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS: -**

Agreed: - (1) That the next Rotherham Local Admissions Forum take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016, to start at 10.00 am in the Rotherham Town Hall.

The agenda is to include the Annual Admissions Report prior to it being submitted to the Schools' Adjudicator.

(2) That the next meeting take place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2016.