

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
6TH FEBRUARY, 2020**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (in the Chair); Mrs. C. Cockayne, Mrs. M. Gambles and Mrs. A. Gyte. and Mr. D. Shenton (Community Representatives).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Watson, Mrs. K. Peart (Community Schools), Mr. D. Fenton (Access to Education) and Mrs. J. Unwin (Access to Education).

22. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2019

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th November, 2019.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th November, 2019, be approved as a correct record.

23. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Arising from Minute No. 16 (Schools Admissions Consultation), it was noted that when future housing developments were proposed, contact was made with Access to Education with regard to possible Section 106 Agreement funding.

24. ACADEMIES

In accordance with Minute No. 18 of the previous meeting, Rob Holsey, CYPS Asset Manager, gave the following powerpoint presentation on academies:-

Background

- Academies were state funded schools that were independent from local authorities
- Academy status was granted by the Learning and Skills Act 2000
- The Academy Act 2010 allowed all maintained schools to convert to Academy status
- The Council had a legal obligation to facilitate the conversion process

Types of Academies

- Sponsored Academies – these had sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. Most but not all sponsored Academies were previously underperforming schools that became Academies in order to improve their performance

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- Converter Academies – these did not have sponsors and were schools previously assessed as “performing well” that had converted to Academy status

Rotherham Academies

- There were 119 schools of which 84 (70%) had converted to Academy status divided as follows:-

65 Primary
14 Secondary
4 Special
1 Through School

A further 8 schools were in the process of converting to Academy status

Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

- A MAT was a group of schools in partnership with each other often, but not always, because they were geographically close to one another. There were 20 MATs in Rotherham
- A MAT was run on business lines. They were given funding from the Government but then had to make all the decisions themselves about how the money was spent and how to balance the books

The Academy Process

- The Secretary of State for Education makes an Academy Order. There were a number of legal documents that needed to be agreed:-

Commercial Transfer Agreement – this document dealt with employment issues, live contracts and other liabilities and benefits

Lease – the Council leased the school site to the Academy Trust for 125 years

- The process can take between 3 to 6 months and up to a year for a PFI school

Benefits of Academies

- Proponents argue that Academies drive up educational standards in disadvantaged areas by allowing external investment above the means of cash strapped local authorities giving Head Teachers larger budgets and more opportunities
- For many the attraction “is the autonomy that Academy status brings”. Unlike traditional state schools, Academies can set their own term times and did not have to follow the national curriculum as long as they offered a “balanced and broadly based” range of subjects including English, Mathematics and Science

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Disadvantages of Academies

- Research by the Education Policy Institute concluded that turning schools into Academies did not automatically improve standards with primary and secondary schools in some Academy groups among the worst performing in the country
- Detractors say the rights of parents to choose the type of school they want their children was also weakened by the Academy system
- Local authorities' ability to fulfil their statutory responsibility including their duty to provide schools places was "undermined" in areas where a high proportion of schools had become Academies

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised and clarified:-

- When an Academy took over a school they had to continue using it for that purpose. They effectively became a private company operating a school and leased the land for 125 years. If they wished to make structural alterations they had to notify the local authority as leaseholder
- Many MATs had moved away from purchasing local authority services
- If a school was a Federated/Co-operative Trust by law the land had to be transferred over to the Trust
- If a site had not been used for educational purposes for more than 10 years then it could be developed. Anything under 10 years had to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Section 77 approval
- Sport England was very clear that if a Trust wanted to develop on a playingfield a suitable space had to be provided elsewhere
- When converting to an Academy, the DfE gave the school concerned a £25,000 contribution towards the legal costs, changes to notice boards, uniforms etc. If a PFI school, they received up to £40-50,000 to aid the conversion process
- The local authority could not insist a school paid a contribution of their funding to pay for the legal costs involved in a conversion
- If a school was failing it was directed to become an Academy

Rob was thanked for his very informative presentation.

Agreed:- That the presentation be noted.

25. **SCHOOLS ADMISSION CONSULTATION REPORT OUTCOME FOR THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Further to Minute No. 16 of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum consideration was given to the report which detailed the admission arrangements (criteria and admission number) following the consultation outcome, which would apply for admission in 2021/22.

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The timetable for the year was:-

Autumn Term 2019	Governing Bodies consider the arrangements which will apply
By 22 nd November, 2019	All relevant details to be forwarded to the Local Authority
9 th December 2019-24 th January, 2020	Period of consultation via the Local Authority's website
By mid-February	Local Authority and the Local Admissions Forum consider any changes and forward any comments to appropriate Admission Authority(ies)
By 21 st February, 2020	All admission authorities to determine their arrangements and notify those consulted

Agreed:- That the information be supported.

26. UPDATE ON ADMISSIONS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

Marina Jordan, Appeals and Fair Access, gave the following verbal update:-

Year 6-7 Transfers

- Offer date was 2nd March, 2020
- Another high birth rate cohort
- Final checks being undertaken and the exchange of files with other authorities currently underway

Primary – FS2

- Offer date was 16th April, 2020
- Applications were currently being processed and exchanging data with other local authorities
- Information awaited from Church Schools as to their rankings

Y2-Y3

- Offer date was 16th April, 2020

Waverley Junior Academy

- Applications had been invited since 1st December, 2019
- Over 90 applications had been received in the first few days
- The closing date for applications for in year transfers was 14th February, 2020
- The closing date for FS2 applications had been 15th January, 2020
- Offers of Y1-6 places would be sent out on 13th March
- There was ongoing analysis of the numbers per year group with regular updates sent to ACET as well impact analysis of the current schools the children attended
- There were currently in excess of 170 applications for Y1-6 plus FS2 places

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

(2) That information with regard on how to apply for a place at Waverley Junior Academy be circulated to Forum members.

27. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which provided a snapshot of the numbers of school admission appeals received and the appeal hearings taking place and provided statistics for the full academic years 2018/19 and to date 2019/20 school year.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

28. SCHOOL ORGANISATION UPDATE

Chris Stones, Education and Skills, gave the following verbal update:-

Kilnhurst Primary School

Due to the damage to Kilnhurst Primary School suffered from the 7th November, 2019, flooding, the school had had to be closed. It was hoped it would re-open in September/October, 2020.

Initially the children had been split between Swinton Fitzwilliam (2 classes) and Swinton Brookfield (3 classes). Whitewood Trust had successfully applied for funding to the DfE and portacabins had now been placed at Swinton Fitzwilliam School to enable all the Kilnhurst Primary children to be rehoused and taught on the same site.

Waverly Junior Academy

It was reported that the delay to the building of the new Academy had now reduced to one week. It was hoped to hand the building over to the Trust at the end of July.

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Forum members requested that a visit be arranged once the building was open.

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

(2) That arrangements be made for the Local Admission Forum to visit the Waverley Junior Academy when appropriate.

29. SCHOOL TERM DATES CONSULTATION FOR 2021/22 UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 19 of the previous meeting held on 7th November, 2019, feedback was provided on the proposed term dates for 2021/22.

Barnsley appeared to be following the traditional pattern, with Sheffield suggesting the Easter term dates be fixed and Rotherham still consulting whilst Doncaster were consulting on 4 options.

The Rotherham consultation would end on 24th February, 2020.

The term dates would be subject to further consideration by the Education Consultative Committee at its next meeting.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and a further update submitted to the next meeting.

30. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL UPDATE

Marina Jordan, Appeals and Fair Access, reported that secondary Fair Access meetings were ongoing with the Central Pupil Management Group having met on 28th January and the South on the 29th. The Wickersley Partnership meetings were ongoing.

Fair Access Strategic Group had met on 30th January and was due to meet again on 27th February.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

31. ACADEMY CONVERSIONS AND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST UPDATES

Further to Minute No. 18 of the last meeting held on 7th November, 2019, consideration was given to the updated list of Rotherham schools which had converted/about to convert to academies.

8 schools were currently in the conversion process.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

32. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 25th June, 2020, commencing at 10.00 a.m.