

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023**

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

Along with Ms. M. Jordan, Mr. C. Stones and Ms. J. Unwin (Access to Education).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Cusworth, Peart and Scutt.

59. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH NOVEMBER, 2022

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th November, 2022.

It was noted since the last meeting Dean Fenton, Head of Service, and Marie Boswell had since retired.

Agreed:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th November, 2022, be approved as a correct record.

(2) That the Forum's thanks and appreciation be forwarded to Dean Fenton and he be wished a long and happy retirement.

60. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Further to Minute No. 55 (Update On Appeals And Primary And Secondary Fair Access Protocol), it was noted the admission appeals timetable had been circulated to Forum Members for their information.

61. SCHOOLS ADMISSION CONSULTATION 2024/25 ACADEMIC YEAR

Further to Minute 52 of the meeting held on 17th November, 2022 consideration was given to the outcome of the consultation sent to all schools regarding the proposed admission arrangements (i.e., criteria and admission number) which would apply for school admission in the 2024/2025 academic year.

This was brought back to the Forum for information.

Agreed:- That the School Admission Consultation 2024/25 be noted.

62. UPDATE ON ADMISSIONS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

Consideration was given to the admissions and secondary school allocations for September, 2023 with the offer date for admission to secondary school being 1st March, 2023.

Final checks were being undertaken before notification was sent to parents as to which secondary school their child had been allocated.

The offer date for primary admission was 17th April, 2023, and again final checks were being undertaken.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

63. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which informed the Forum of the numbers of school admission appeals received and the appeal hearings currently taking place.

Statistics were included for the full academic years 2020/21 and also for the part-year, to date 2022/23 school year.

The separation of Local Authority schools and Faith schools had been used in this analysis, but there was no separation for the Academies.

The Forum were advised the demand was not unique to Rotherham as it was a similar picture across the region.

The updated and revised Admission Appeals Code was now in operation and gave families various options of how they wanted their appeals undertaken.

Agreed:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

64. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Information was shared on the current position with the Access to Education Team following the retirement of the Head of Service, Dean Fenton.

Reports were also in the process of being submitted to the Cabinet on the update numbers for Section 106 Agreements and contributions to schools and also on the formal closure of the Rowan Centre.

An update was also provided on the current position with regards to Waverley Junior Academy and its over-subscription. Discussions were ongoing with regards to the funding arrangements and the potential for expansion in future years.

In response to a query about the recent industrial action affecting schools, it was noted that this did not impact on all schools.

The process for a school requesting permission to lower its admission number was also noted.

Agreed: That the update be received and the contents noted.

65. UPDATE OF SCHOOL TERM DATES CONSULTATION FOR 2024/25

Further to Minute No. 57 of the meeting of the Forum held on 17th November, 2022, consideration was given to the outcome of the consultation on the school calendar for the 2024/25 academic year which had now taken place with all schools.

Barnsley were opting for a traditional calendar and Doncaster and Sheffield had moved to a fixed calendar.

Rotherham had fixed its calendar this year and the final decision on the school term dates for 2024/25 would lay with the Education Consultative Committee when the outcome of the consultation would be shared.

An update on the decision would be provided for Forum Members at the next meeting.

Forum Members agreed aligning the school term dates across South Yorkshire would help parents, especially those who lived or worked in neighbouring areas.

Agreed:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

66. UPDATE ON FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the latest position with regards to cases referred for consideration under Fair Access.

The number of cases for inclusion had been the highest ever recorded with forty-five cases in January equally split across both primary and secondary.

The Secondary Strategic Fair Access Panel met on the 26th January, 2023 and considered nine new cases. The Central Partnership were meeting on the 9th February, 2023 (today) and were also considering seven cases. The South and Wickersley Partnerships were also considering some new cases.

Fifteen primary cases were being moved to local partnership meetings between February and early March.

The number of Fair Access cases were in correlation to the number of in-year transfer application requests and appeals and not directly related to new entrants to the U.K. The majority of the children placed under the Homes for Ukrainians Scheme had been dealt with by way of admission appeals.

This was not unique to Rotherham as other Local Authorities were also facing the same pressures.

In addition, there appeared to be more complex cases emerging and some without any support of an Education and Health Care Plan.

Action to address the challenges was being undertaken as quickly as possible.

Agreed:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

67. ACADEMY CONVERSIONS AND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST UPDATES

Consideration was given to the current list of Rotherham schools which had converted/about to convert to academies. No further update had been received since the last update submission.

West Melton Junior and Infant School, however, was due to have converted in January and was changing its name to Highfield Farm Primary School.

There were still around twenty maintained schools remaining and consideration was being given to them collaborating together.

Agreed:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

68. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Agreed:- (1) That the next meeting of the Local Admissions Forum take place virtually on Thursday, 15th June, 2023 at 10.00 a.m. via Microsoft Team Teams.

(2) That the following future dates be noted:-

16th November, 2023

1st February, 2024

13th June, 2024