LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM THURSDAY, 20TH MARCH, 2008

Present:- Councillor Rushforth (in the Chair); Mr. B. N. Sampson (Church of England), Mrs. I. G. Hartley (School Governors), Mr. M. Hall (Community Representative), Mr. F. Hedge (Community Representative), Mr. G. Lancashire (Junior and Infant Schools), Mrs. P. Powell (Community Representative), Mr. P. Robins (Community Representative), Mrs. H. Morris (Diocese of Sheffield) and Mrs. C. Thorpe (Diocese of Hallam).

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Miss H. McLaughlin, Mrs. G. Atkin, Mrs. A. Chambers and from Councillor J. Falvey.

23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2007

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 15th November, 2007, be approved as correct record.

24. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The following issues were noted:-

- (a) Welcome Centre (Minute No. 18) reports would be submitted to the next meeting of the Local Admissions Forum on:-
- schools in the Rotherham area which have particular pressures and possible alternative schools to which pupils can be sent; and
- arrangements for a Transport Plan to be developed, with a view to getting children to alternative schools with places when nearby schools are full.
- (b) Welcome Centre (Minute No. 18) it was noted that the members' visit to the Welcome Centre had been beneficial and informative.

25. ANNUAL CONSULTATION - FEEDBACK FOR 2009/2010 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Principal Officer, Forward Planning (Children and Young People's Services) concerning the requirement for all admission authorities to determine admission arrangements, for the 2009-2010 academic year, by 15th April, 2008. The report described the issues which had arisen as a result of the annual consultation exercise with and between schools and other admission authorities.

Consideration was also given to:-

- the Ministerial Statement by Schools Minister Jim Knight M.P., entitled 'Strengthening the School Admissions System';
- the proposed admissions policy, for the 2009-2010 academic year, for the St. Bede's R.C. Primary School.
- Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.
- (2) That the Local Admissions Forum agrees with the following courses of action:-
- (a) the proposed admission numbers (contained within Annex 1 of the report submitted) for community and controlled schools be confirmed for 2009/10, subject to the clarifications/amendments contained in Annex 2, at section 1Ai;
- (b) the changes relating to voluntary aided schools' admissions criteria (shown at Annex 2, section b ii of the report submitted) be noted;
- (c) the appropriate notice be published in respect of the proposed admission numbers for 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;
- (d) the report be published on the Council's Internet website; and
- (e) the co-ordinated schemes for Primary and Secondary preferences be confirmed.
- (3) That, with regard to proposed admissions policy, for 2009-2010, of the St. Bede's R.C. Primary School:-
- (a) the Local Admissions Forum notes and concurs with the Local Authority's concerns over the proposed changes to the admissions criteria, particularly with regard to the priority given to those attending the school's FS1 unit and the lack of timely consultation;
- (b) the school's governing body be asked to respond to these concerns and to consider a redetermination in line with the admissions code of practice before the deadline of 15th April, 2008; and
- (c) the Local Admissions Forum agrees that, failing a satisfactory outcome, the Local Authority should make a formal objection to the Schools Adjudicator in line with the Code of Practice and the recent Ministerial letter, against the proposed admissions criteria for St. Bede's R.C. Primary School applying to the 2009/10 year.
- (4) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Local

Admissions Forum containing a definition of the 'sibling' criteria.

26. MINISTER OF RELIGION FORM (DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD)

Heather Morris (Church of England Diocese of Sheffield) presented the amended information form and Minister of Religion Referral form which were to be used in future with the common application form for places at Church of England Aided Schools.

The Local Admissions Forum agreed to the use of these amended forms.

27. CURRENT SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CYCLES - UPDATE

The Principal Officer, Forward Planning (Children and Young People's Services) presented a report about the current situation with regard to primary and secondary school admissions cycles for September, 2008, as follows:-.

(a) Secondary Schools - Year 7 Admissions in September 2008

The National offer date was 3rd March, 2008. There were seven oversubscribed secondary schools in Rotherham..

There were 510 on-line applications. It appeared that the submission of applications by this method had reached a plateau. 95.2% of parents had been offered a place at the first preferred school, compared with 87.3% for Yorkshire and the Humber and the national figure of 82%. 98.8% of children had been allocated to either the first, the second or to the third preferred school (96.6% in Yorkshire and the Humber and 94% nationally).

The Local Admissions Forum was informed of the current number of admission appeals for secondary schools and the appeal panel meetings being processed by Democratic Services. It appeared that there would be a large number of appeals for Wickersley School and Sports College, for Wales High School and also all for Saint Bernard Catholic High School and Wath Saint Pius X R.C. Comprehensive School.

(b) Primary School Admissions – September 2008

The national offer day was Thursday, 10th April 2008. There had been 380 on-line applications for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 and 41 on-line applications for Year 2 and Year 3 admissions. Early indications were that there might be as many as twenty oversubscribed schools which have a waiting list.

Agreed:- (1) That the report about the current admissions cycles be received.

(2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Local

Admissions Forum about the effectiveness of the school admissions process, in the light of the Ministerial Statement by Schools Minister Jim Knight M.P.

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Local Admissions Forum discussed the following issues:-

- (a) issues raised by parents concerning the admissions process to Primary Schools in Laughton it was noted that Children and Young People's Services had provided clarification to the two schools concerned;
- (b) Children's Education Advisory Service (Service Community Representation) a reply would be sent to this Advisory Service stating that there is not a significant population of Service children attending Rotherham schools and consequently an invitation is not extended to a representative of the Service community to attend meetings of the Local Admissions Forum;
- (c) School Admissions Appeal Panels members expressed concern about the new requirement to inform parents of the names of appeals panel members (paragraph 2.11 of the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice);
- (d) there was now a requirement for agendas and minutes of the meetings of the Local Admissions Forum to be made available for all schools (these documents are also published on the Council's Internet web site).

29. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - THURSDAY 3RD JULY 2008 AT 10.00 A.M.

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Local Admissions Forum be held on Thursday, 3rd July, 2008, commencing at 10.00 a.m.