

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2020**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (in the Chair); Mrs. R. Scutt (Community Schools), Mrs. K. Peart (Community Schools) and Mr. D. Shenton (Community Representative).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Watson, Mrs. C. Cockayne (Community Representative), Mrs. M. Gambles (Community Representative), Mrs. A. Gyte (Community Representative) and Mr. G. Lancashire (Community Representative).

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6TH FEBRUARY, 2020

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th February, 2020.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th February, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

34. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

35. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT TO THE SCHOOL ADJUDICATOR

Consideration was given to the final draft of the Rotherham's Local Authority Report to the Schools Adjudicator, 30th June, 2020, which was presented by the Principal Officer, School Organisation. The completion and return of the report each year was a statutory requirement on admissions authorities.

The report included a number of Sections and the Local Authority had provided narrative in relation to the following points:-

Section 1 – The Normal Admissions Round – determined arrangements, co-ordination, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Section 2 – In Year Admissions – Number of in year admissions, co-ordination of in year admissions, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, other children and Fair Access Protocol

Section 3 – Other Matters

Section 4 - Feedback

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was a much reduced

document.

It was noted that the document had been discussed at the Directorate Leadership Team.

Agreed:- That the contents of the Local Authority report be approved for submission to the School Adjudicator.

36. ACADEMIES UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 31 of the meeting held on 6th February, 2020, consideration was given to the updated list of Rotherham schools which had converted/about to convert to academies.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there had been a slow down in the legal processes nationally of conversions. However, since the list was produced, Harthill Primary had now converted.

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

37. ADMISSIONS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a verbal update on the admissions and secondary school applications.

It was noted that placement offers had been made on National Offer Day despite the challenging circumstances.

Details of the proposed consultation for entry into 2022/2023 Primary and Secondary education would be submitted to the next meeting.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

38. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE

School appeals scheduled from 20th March, 2020 onwards were postponed due to the global pandemic of Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The Government issued new guidelines and Regulations, (The School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 effective from 24th April, 2020, to enable school appeals to take place with social distancing measures in place.

As a result, the Appeal Clerks have been asking all parents what method they would prefer for their appeal to be heard. There were three options: video conference via Microsoft Teams (the app can be downloaded free of charge and parents would be sent some guidance), telephone conference or for a decision to be made just based on what the parents and the school had put in writing.

Appeal hearings began on 18th June with 'in year' transfers. The Y6/7 appeals began on 25th June and the primary appeal Reception/Foundation Stage 2 and Year 2/Year 3 appeal dates were currently being arranged. Due to the large backlog of appeals, (over 200 cases) all primary and secondary schools/academies had been asked about the possibility of appeal hearings taking place during the Summer holidays and, depending upon the responses and everyone's commitments, plans would be made accordingly. This was to try to ensure that as many admission appeals were resolved as soon as possible, in the best interests of the children, parents and school/academy staff.

In reply to a question, it was noted that currently there was no legislative guidance in relation to an appeal panel taking into consideration Covid-19 and the impact of upholding an appeal and a school admitting a further pupil as a result of that process.

Government Guidance was awaited on admitting all children back to school in September.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

39. FAIR ACCESS UPDATE

Fair Access Meetings were held in abeyance as due to the school closures as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and all relevant cases were referred to CME/Early Help colleagues.

It was hoped that the Fair Access Panels would start to meet again as from September.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

40. SCHOOL ORGANISATION UPDATE

The following update was provided:-

Expansion of Aston Academy
A 2 year project which was still in its first year.

Increased capacity at Rawmarsh Community School
As a result of Covid-19 this had been delayed.

Waverley Junior Academy
Anticipated opening was the second week in September with a handover to ACET in late August. At the start of the pandemic a contingency plan had been put in place, however, progress had been made and was now on track.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

41. UPDATE ON TERM DATES FOR 2021/22

Further to Minute No. 30 of the previous meeting held on 6th February, 2020, feedback was provided on the proposed term dates for 2021/22.

It was noted that the matter was to be discussed at the Education Consultative Committee on 9th July, 2020.

Agreed:- That an update be provided to the next meeting.

42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 19th November, 2020, commencing at 10.00 a.m.