

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

Present:- Mrs. C. Cockayne, Mrs. M. Gambles, Mrs. A. Gyte, Mrs. I. Hartley, Mr. G. Lancashire and Mr. D. Shenton (Community Representatives) along with Mrs. K. Peart (Community Schools) and Mrs. R. Scutt (Academies).

Officers:- Mr. D. Fenton, Ms. M. Jordan and Mr. C. Stones (Access to Education).

11. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR FOR 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR

Agreed:- (1) That Mrs. I. Hartley be appointed as Chair of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum for the 2021/22 academic year.

(Mrs. I. Hartley in the Chair)

(2) That Mrs. C. Cockayne be appointed Vice-Chair of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum for the 2021/22 academic year.

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cusworth and Mrs. J. Unwin (AET).

13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th June, 2021.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th June, 2021, be approved as a correct record.

14. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Further to Minute No. 5 (Admissions Update) Forum Members noted the new additions to the Code.

Agreed:- That the link to the details of the new Code be circulated to all Forum Members for information.

15. MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Details of the current membership of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum were discussed.

Information regarding the current vacancies would be circulated to schools in an attempt to seek further representation.

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

(2) That information be sent to schools highlighting the vacancies on the Forum and seeking representation under the various headings

16. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to the submitted document which set out the Terms of Reference for Rotherham Local Admissions Forum.

Agreed:- That the document be received and accepted as the Local Admissions Forum's Terms of Reference for the 2021/22 academic year.

17. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION FOR ENTRY IN THE 2023/2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Consideration was given to the consultation document sent to all schools regarding the proposed admission arrangements (i.e. criteria and admission number) which would apply for school admission in the 2023/2024 academic year.

The timetable for the year was:-

Autumn Term 2021	Governing bodies consider the arrangements which will apply
By 20th November, 2021	All relevant details to be forwarded to the local authority
6 th December 2021 – 21st January, 2022	Period of consultation via the Local Authority's website
By mid-February	Local Authority and the Local Admission Forum consider any changes and forward any comments to appropriate Admission Authority(ies)
By 18th February, 2022	All admission authorities to determine their arrangements and notify those consulted

The report made reference to the admission criteria and numbers for both community and controlled schools and for voluntary aided schools, academies and trust schools.

Consultation was currently taking place on admission numbers with a report being submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

It was noted that there were a number of summer born children moving through primary who had been educated out of year group having had approval at the point of entry to primary under the School Admissions Code 2021. These children would shortly start to reach the end of Key Stage 2. Schools and Academies would need to consider whether they were in agreement with a child transitioning to Year 7 with their “adopted” cohort rather than their chronological age group. Parents were likely to need to request this approval a year in advance in order to know when they needed to apply for a Year 7 place as part of the normal admissions process.

Also included within the report were details of each school and academy’s proposed admission number for 2023/2024 (Appendix 2 of the report submitted).

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

(2) That the finalised document be submitted to the February meeting for approval.

18. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In terms of School Organisation Forum Members noted:-

- Proposal to increase the number of planned places at The Willows from 120 to 150 was currently subject to public notice and would be determined by Cabinet in January, 2022.
- Increasing secondary school provision at two local schools (Brinsworth and Aston) to accommodate children attending Waverley Junior Academy. The Aston project was currently in build stage after Cabinet approval reported previously and the Brinsworth proposal was currently being consulted on. Capital investment would be subject to Cabinet approval and a successful planning application.

Agreed:- That the update by noted.

19. UPDATE ON ADMISSIONS

Forum Members had previously noted the update to the School Admissions Code which came into force on 1st September, 2021. The purpose of the updated Code was to ensure that all school places for maintained schools and academies (excluding maintained special schools and special academies) were allocated and offered in an open and fair way.

The main changes to the Code and how this affected Admissions were highlighted as these related to timescales for decisions, Published Admission Number now only required at initial entry to primary and secondary school, Admission Number for all other years groups to be publicised on school/academy websites and statutory timescales for Fair

Access.

A further update was provided on the progress of secondary applications for the 2022/23 academic year. The deadline for submitting applications was the 30th November, 2021. Reminders had been sent out to parents and schools in September and October with a further reminder last week.

As at 5th November, 2021 362 applications remained outstanding and this number had been seen to decrease to 214 as of 17th November, 2021.

In terms of admission into Reception/Foundation Stage 2 applications would close on 15th January, 2022. The first reminder had been issued last week and a further would be circulated in December.

Rotherham had also agreed to support a number of Afghan Refugees. Work was taking place with the Refugee Council to locate school places.

Forum Members sought advice on how they could best support these refugees and who to contact as a result.

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

(2) That details be sought on which service could be contacted to support the Afghan Refugees.

20. UPDATE ON APPEALS AND PRIMARY & SECONDARY FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

An update was provided on the current process for school appeals with the extension of the legislation until the 30th September, 2022.

Whilst face to face hearings should commence where possible, it was up to individual Local Authorities to determine how best to manage appeals and on what basis.

Rotherham would continue on a virtual basis either by video or telephone link or on written representations and this would be re-assessed in the Spring.

Overall the process for running appeals had been very positive and in the main well received by parents and those involved.

In terms of Fair Access the Secondary Fair Access Panel dates had been confirmed for the academic year. Additional meetings were held in a timely manner to ensure young people were not unnecessarily out of school.

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

21. ACADEMIES UPDATE OCTOBER 2021

The Forum noted the updated list of Rotherham schools which had converted/about to convert to academies as at October, 2021.

It was noted that only twenty-six maintained schools remained.

Discussion ensued on the potential encouragement for all schools to convert to academies and how some maintained schools were monitoring the process and gathering information in the event of further pressure to convert.

On a positive note Rotherham benefitted from having local academy chains/trusts who knew the area well, where some Local Authorities had schools taken over by national academy trusts.

A further update was provided on the progress of applications for the new Waverley Junior Academy. The official opening would take place in Spring, 2022. It was hoped that a visit to Waverley could be arranged for Forum Members to view the facilities on offer to children living in that area.

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

22. TERM DATES CONSULTATION FOR 2023/24

The Forum noted that the consultation for term dates for 2023/24 would commence in January, 2022 and details had been shared with neighbouring authorities.

An update following the consultation would be provided at the next meeting in February, 2022.

Doncaster this year had opted for a two week half term in October, but were reverting back to one year in future years.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and the update be received in due course.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Local Admissions Forum take place on Thursday, 17th February, 2022 at 10.00 a.m. venue to be confirmed.