

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2026**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (in the Chair); Mrs. M. Gambles, Mr. R. Griffiths, Mrs. J. Hudson, Mrs. K. Peart, Mrs. N. Towers, Mrs. S. Sims and Ms. A. Wing.

Also in attendance were:- Ms. S. Cooper, Mrs. F. Radford, Ms. S. Gilbert, Ms. M. Jordan, Mr. C. Stones and Mrs. S. Whitby.

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. G. Frost, Mrs. J. Hopkins, Mr. D Shenton and Mrs. J. Unwin

47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH NOVEMBER 2025

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2025.

Agreed: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

48. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

With reference to Minute No.39 (Local Admissions Forum Terms of Reference, Conditions and Consultation), the Clerk provided an update on the attendance review. It was noted that one member had not responded to confirm their continued membership, potentially due to outdated contact details. It was agreed that the Clerk would attempt to contact the member again and that the Forum would review the position at its next meeting.

The Chair formally recorded the Forum's thanks and appreciation to Mrs Rebecca Hibberd on her retirement and confirmed that a letter of thanks would be sent in recognition of her contribution.

A warm welcome was extended to Sarah Sims, who had joined the Forum as Rebecca's replacement.

49. SCHOOLS ADMISSION CONSULTATION DETERMINATION REPORT TO APPROVE OUTCOME FOR THE 2027/28 ACADEMIC YEAR

Consideration was given to the consultation on proposed admission arrangements for the 2027/28 academic year, as outlined in Appendix 1. The consultation took place from 1 December 2025 to 19 January 2026, in accordance with the School Admission Code. It was shared with relevant consultees, made available on the Council's website, and publicised via RMBC social media channels.

Responses were received via an online survey, alongside a parallel consultation on the relevant area.

The consultation included proposals to remove three newly academised schools from the arrangements and to remove the medical and social oversubscription criteria. It was noted that such cases would typically be addressed through an EHCP, that the criteria had not been applied for several years, and that their inclusion risked creating unnecessary complexity and expectation for families.

Nineteen responses were received, with no strong views expressed either for or against the proposed changes. No amendments were therefore proposed, other than clarification of the wording relating to shared parental responsibility.

Consultation on the relevant area had produced no issues, and the proposal that this remained the whole of Rotherham was noted.

Agreed: That the admission arrangements for 2027-28 for community and voluntary controlled schools, as detailed in Appendix 1, be determined.

50. **UPDATE ON ADMISSIONS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026**

Consideration was given to the latest update on admissions and secondary school allocations for September 2026. It was noted that all on-time secondary applications would receive an offer on National Offer Day. Although some schools were expected to be oversubscribed, it was confirmed that there would be sufficient places available to make a reasonable offer.

Oversubscription patterns continued to be driven largely by parental preference, consistent with previous years.

The primary admissions round had now closed, and the team was working to resolve any outstanding queries. All on-time primary applications would receive an allocation on Primary Offer Day. Work was ongoing to follow up late applications, and significant effort had been made prior to the deadline to secure as many on-time applications as possible.

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

51. **SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the submitted report, which set out the latest statistics on admission appeals received, and the number of appeals held. The report included data for the full academic years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 to date. The figures included within the report were noted, with fewer transfer appeals observed.

It was noted that work had commenced to identify suitable dates for the bulk appeals, although the number of those appeals was not yet known and estimates were therefore being based on the previous year's figures.

Appeal panels had now been secured for the March in-year transfer appeals.

The Chair acknowledged the significant work and commitment of the appeal panels and recorded thanks to all involved.

The Forum's attention was drawn to a proposal concerning changes to the procurement of admission and appeal services. It was proposed that the Local Authority would separate the service level agreements from April 2026. This would provide schools with greater choice and flexibility, enabling them to purchase an admissions service, an appeals service, and a presenting officer service individually. Work to finalise the internal arrangements was ongoing. The Local Authority would continue to discharge its statutory responsibilities for maintained schools, and academies would retain the option to buy into the admissions and appeals services.

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

52. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Consideration was given to an update on school organisation. It was noted that the expansion of Waverley Academy in 2025 had been successful, increasing its PAN from 60 to 90 and providing additional places across all year groups. It was also confirmed that Saint Pius X Catholic High School had academised in September 2025, meaning all secondary schools in Rotherham were now academies.

A Forum Member queried the position regarding primary admission appeals, highlighting increased pressure on school capacity and questioning whether sufficient places were available. Assurance was given that there was a good level of confidence in the overall sufficiency of places across Rotherham, and that the Fair Access Protocol continued to operate effectively.

It was noted that peaks and troughs in demand occurred across Rotherham, consistent with trends in other local authorities. Parental preference continued to place pressure on a small number of schools, which experienced higher numbers of appeals, while a small number of other schools were continuing to see falling numbers year on year.

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

53. UPDATE OF SCHOOL TERM DATES FOR 2027/28

It was noted that consultation on the 2027/28 school calendar took place in January 2025, and a fixed model was approved in February. This aligned with Sheffield's proposed model, with Barnsley and Doncaster also out to consultation. Regional alignment would depend on the final

outcomes of each authority's consultation

Agreed: The calendar update be received and the contents noted.

54. UPDATE ON FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the latest position with regards to the Fair Access Protocol.

Regular secondary Fair Access meetings continued to take place, supported by three local partnership panels across the borough, which were working effectively. For primary-aged pupils, locality meetings involving clusters of five to six schools were held, alongside a strategic Fair Access meeting.

Colleagues continued to liaise directly with Head Teachers, particularly in primary, to identify placements without the need for formal meetings wherever possible, enabling quicker allocation of places. It was noted that targeted work with a small cluster of Year 6 pupils had resulted in positive outcomes.

A small number of primary-aged children with emerging or complex SEN needs, but without an EHCP, were being supported through complex SEND meetings to ensure appropriate placements and smooth transitions.

It was also reported that work was underway on a new management information system, with development of the EYES system currently in progress.

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

55. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that dates and times had been proposed for future meetings and would be considered for agreement at the Council meeting on 4 March 2026. The proposed dates were:

- Thursday, 18 June 2026 at 10.00am
- Thursday, 26 November 2026 at 10.00am
- Thursday, 4 February 2027 at 10.00am