

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2011**

Present:- Councillor Barron, Mr. G. Lancashire, Mr P Robins and Mr B N Sampson (Community Representatives), Mrs. I. G. Hartley and Mr C E Kelsey (Community Schools), Ms. C. Thorpe (Diocese of Hallam) and Mrs. G. Atkin (Voluntary Aided Schools)

Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor Havenhand, Mrs. C. Cockayne and Mrs. P. Powell (Community Representatives), Father A. Hayne (Diocese of Hallam), Mrs. H. Morris (Sheffield Diocese) and Mrs. H. McLaughlin (Voluntary Aided Schools).

13. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE MEETING

Agreed:- That Mrs. I. G. Hartley be appointed Chair of this meeting.

(Mrs. I. G. Hartley in the Chair)

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH NOVEMBER, 2010

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum, held on 11th November, 2010, be approved as a correct record.

15. ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION - ANNUAL CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT FOR 2012/13 ADMISSION

Further to Minute No. 8 of the meeting of the Local Admissions Forum held on 11th November, 2010, consideration was given to a report presented by the School Organisation, Planning and Development Manager concerning the admission arrangements (ie: criteria and admission number) which would apply for school admission in the 2012/2013 academic year. The report summarised the issues which had arisen during the annual consultation exercise with and between schools, other local authorities and via the Borough Council's Internet website. It was noted that all admission authorities were required to determine their arrangements by 15th April, 2011.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the proposed admission numbers (contained in Annex 1 of the report submitted) for community and controlled schools be confirmed for 2012/13, subject to the clarifications included in Annex 2.

(3) That the proposed admissions criteria for community and controlled schools for 2012/13 be agreed and adopted.

(4) The proposed change to the length of time the 'Waiting List' for school places operates for primary schools (ie: only until 31 December and not for the entire academic year) be noted.

(5) That the proposed admissions numbers and criteria for voluntary aided schools and Academies, as outlined in Annex 2 of the report submitted, be noted.

(6) That the appropriate notice be published in respect of the proposed admission numbers for the 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.

(7) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Local Admissions Forum concerning the admission to school of the children of the travelling community.

16. FREE SCHOOLS - PROPOSALS FOR THE ROTHERHAM BOROUGH AREA

Consideration was given to a report presented by the School Organisation, Planning and Development Manager stating that are currently two proposals for Free Schools within the Rotherham Borough area:-

(i) Three Valleys Academy : the Department for Education has received a proposal to set up a new school in Rotherham from the Nationwide Independent College of Higher Education (NICHE). The proposal is for an 850-places school for pupils aged 11-18 years, to be situated in Wath-Upon-Dearne. The Department for Education has fully assessed the proposal and the Secretary of State has given his approval for it to proceed to the business case stage.

(ii) Rotherham Central Free School : a proposal to establish the 'Rotherham Central Free School'. The School will probably be located in central Rotherham and will provide education for 500 Secondary age pupils. The school will have an open admissions policy and will have a catchment area of around three miles from the centre of Rotherham. No information has yet been issued by the Department of Education on the progress of this proposal.

It was noted that Rotherham Borough Council has formally objected to the proposed establishment of both of these Free Schools.

The Local Admissions Forum expressed concerns about the probable impact upon the take-up of school places in a number of Rotherham area secondary schools, should the two free schools open.

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

17. ACADEMIES AND TRUST SCHOOLS IN ROTHERHAM - UPDATE

Discussion took place on:-

- school organisation in Rotherham and its growing diversity, which reflects the trends nationally;

- the Transforming Rotherham Learning strategy;

- the establishment of the three Academies, from existing secondary schools : Brinsworth, Maltby and Wales;
- other schools considering Academy status;
- the proposal to establish a Trust School (Winterhill secondary school);
- funding arrangements for schools which are not under the direct control of the local authority.

Agreed:- That the Local Admissions Forum continue to be informed of issues concerning the establishment of Academies and Trust Schools in the Rotherham Borough area.

18. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS - STATISTICS

Consideration was given to a report containing statistics of the number of school admission appeals received and hearings taking place during the two school years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

Agreed: That the information be received.

19. DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUMS

Discussion took place on the intention of the coalition Government (expressed in the White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' issued in November 2010) to abolish admission forums. During January 2011, the Chair and Clerk had sent a response to a questionnaire received from 'Comprehensive Future' (based in London - www.comprehensivefuture.org.uk) expressing support for the continuation of the admissions forums. It was agreed that such forums facilitate the effective consideration of the fairness of school admission arrangements in their local context and enable admission authorities and other key interested parties to participate in that debate.

20. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROTHERHAM LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Details of the current membership of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum were noted. Every endeavour continued to be made to try and fill the vacant places.