

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes: 14th May 2010

- Present: Councillor J Blundell (Local Authority) (Chair)
Councillor L Kelly (Local Authority)
Reverend T. Colling (SACRE)
K. Edwards (Catholic Diocese)
R. Hickingbotham (Parent Member)
J. McHale (Schools – Community)
C. Mulley (Church of England Diocese)
M. Simpson (Special Educational Needs)
- In Attendance: E. Atkins (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
S. Heawood (Children, Learning and Young People Directorate)
G. Paddan (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
- Apologies: C. Buchanan (Schools – Voluntary Aided)
J. Applegarth (Children, Learning and Young People Directorate)
C. Firth (Choice Adviser)
C. Mulley (Church of England Diocese)

136. Introduction

Members introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting.

Cllr Blundell announced that this was his last meeting as the Local Authority representative on the Forum and that he will be replaced by Cllr Mrs Johnson.

137. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2010 were agreed as a true record.

138. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

139. Increases in primary places – consultation update

The Forum considered the report (Document 2) from Judith Applegarth on the expansions of primary school places in the City. The report showed the expansions for September 2011 and 2012, advising that on 25th November 2009

Cabinet Member for Children, Learning and Young People approved the consultation proposal to expand 17 primary schools to meet the forecasted population requirements.

Page 2 of the report detailed that there had been objections to statutory notices for expansion to Grange Farm Primary School and St Augustine's Catholic Primary School. Residents had complained on planning grounds, the main issue being impact on residential areas from potential increase of traffic. It was noted that similar issues had been raised before and the objections would be considered by the Cabinet Advisory Panel on the 8 June 2010, following which they would make their recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet would be making the final decision at their meeting in June 2010.

Concern was expressed that the plans so far may still not provide sufficient future places after 2011. Members discussed the importance of health authority and other statistical data for on-going assessment of school place provision, and the need to be kept informed.

140. Secondary school places for September 2010 – allocation reports

The Forum received two reports (Documents 3a and 3b) illustrating the allocation and the variances in vacancies. The table contained within report 3b showed the parental preference at the second allocation, as at 19th April 2010, the first allocation having been made in March 2010.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the vacancy changes since the first allocation, as shown in column number 4 on report 3b. It was noted that more people are coming on board to fill school places; currently 10 schools are full and appeals processes were in motion.

It was noted that this year all on time applicants were able to secure a place within their catchment area school or at the same school as their sibling.

141. Primary school places for September 2010 – allocation report

The Forum received a revised report on Primary School allocation comparison. The table on analysis of places at primary schools showed that 90 additional places had been created, and that 173 more children had been allocated places than in the previous year.

Members were advised that places continued to be offered on a daily basis and that at today's date there were 112 places available.

It was noted that junior schools had not been included in the report and that the report next year should include these schools.

142. **Primary and secondary parental preference reports**

The Forum received a report (Document 5) and an account was given on the percentage of parental preferences met for September 2010. The statistics illustrated the percentage of first preference requests that had been met at the end of the allocation period and included only those requests received from Coventry parents.

It was noted that parents are less likely to get their first preference if they do not apply on time and may find that the school offered is some distance away. There will continue to be some popular schools which remain oversubscribed, leading to disappointment for some parents.

The consequences of parents not using all their preferences were explored. In a response to a question as to how to get across to parents that it was in their interest to list more than one school on their preference form. Members were advised that parents did not always listen to advice and believed it would dilute their choice if they named more than one school. Some members expressed the view that parents could be requested/required to make a second choice but after consideration it was agreed that it was not in line with the School Admission Code to impose such a sanction.

RESOLVED that a report be tabled on comparison of first preference data with other authorities, and for further work to be done to analyse the applications of those who applied for one school to help with targeting messages about the potential consequences of such action.

143. **In-Year transfers and admissions**

The Forum received three reports (Documents 6, 7 & 8) on In-year transfers and admissions. The tables included all schools and compared the Autumn Term 2008/2009 to Autumn Term 2009/2010 figures.

It was agreed that junior school details would also be included in future reports.

144. **Fair access monitoring**

The revised report (Document 9) was received for information and showed the waiting times in school days and illustrated the length of time before pupils were admitted to the school. Various issues relating to 'difficult to place' pupils were discussed. The number of children requiring placement via the protocol was by definition fluid reflecting the transient nature of the cases and their identification. The majority of pupils within Coventry continue to be admitted into schools under normal policy.

The general consensus was that waiting time needed to be reduced in the future.

145. **Meeting Dates for 2010/11**

The Forum agreed the dates set out below for meetings of the School Admissions Forum from September 2010 to May 2011:

Friday 24th September 2010

Friday 3rd December 2010

Friday 25th February 2011

Friday 13th May 2011

The meetings would commence at 1.00 p.m.

Chair