

## **SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM**

**Minutes: 24th September 2010**

- Present: Councillor L. Kelly (Local Authority) (Chair)  
Councillor Mrs H. Johnson (Local Authority)  
C. Buchanan (Schools – Voluntary Aided)  
K. Edwards (Catholic Diocese)  
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. Firth (Choice Adviser)  
P. Burns (Independent School Appeal Panel)

### **146. Introduction**

Members introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting.

### **147. Annual Appointment of Chair**

**RESOLVED that Councillor L Kelly be appointed as Chair of the Forum.**

### **148. Annual Appointment of Vice Chair**

**RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs H Johnson be appointed as Vice Chair of the Forum.**

### **149. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2010 were agreed as a true record subject to the removal of C Mulley from the apologies list.

### **150. Matters Arising**

With reference to Minute 142, a report on comparison of first preference offers with figures for the West Midlands and Coventry City's statistical neighbours was circulated. The table and graphs showed the percentage of first preference school places offered in comparison with Coventry City's statistical neighbours and the rest of the West Midlands.

It was noted that Coventry City came seventh out of the 14 local authorities in the West Midlands and third out of the 10 in comparison with its statistical neighbours.

**151. Allocation of School Places for September 2010 – Final Report**

The Forum considered the reports (Document 2a (1,2,3)) from Sue Heawood on allocation of school places for September 2010 and it was agreed that Coventry City had limited places available, as shown on the circulated coloured maps. The white areas on the two maps showed spaces available but it still left very few options for parents and also potential implications for in-year transfers.

The Forum was advised that Judith Applegarth would be attending the December meeting to discuss work on expanding school places.

The report on Secondary School allocation was reviewed and the Forum was advised that the minus figures and percentages shown in red were as a result of appeals process entry to the respective schools.

**152. Analyses of Appeals for school places in 2009/10**

The Forum received a report (Document 3) illustrating the analysis of appeals for 2009/10 (1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010). The Forum noted the numbers of secondary school appeals held and in particular noted that the proportion primary appeals were relatively elevated. .

A discussion took place on Appeals Panels and it was noted Appeal Panel Members were recruited and trained and that Appeal Panel Clerks were legally qualified and had extensive knowledge of the admissions arrangements.

A further debate ensued on the need to track down families that do not apply on time and therefore then need to use the appeal process. It was noted that Chris Firth, Choice Adviser had allocated considerable time to such investigations.

Other points raised on the analysis of appeals report included:

- The figures for 2009/10 included voluntary aided schools information.
- Sixth form appeals not included as such demands are considered at local level.

**153. Implementation of the In-year Fair Access Protocol – third year review**

The Forum considered the report and appendices (Document 4) on the Implementation of the In-Year Fair Access Protocol - third year review: Operation of the Social Inclusion Placement Panel 2009/10. All schools and Academies are required to participate in their local authority area's protocol. This is to ensure that all children have a place, especially the most vulnerable, as speedily as possible. The report enabled the Forum to meet its obligations

under the School Admissions Code 2010 to monitor the effectiveness of local authority Fair Access Protocols and was accepted.

**154. In- year Transfers Report: Academic year 2009/10**

The Forum received two reports (Documents 5a and 5b) of the In-Year admissions and transfers for the past two years.

The volume of movement across primary schools was partly explained by problems in initially getting into preferred schools due to the lack of spaces, and subsequent desire to change schools to be with siblings or to be nearer to home when places became available.

Details in both reports were noted.

**155. Local Authority Annual Report**

The Local Authority Report to the Schools Adjudicator was considered and it was noted the report was completed in June 2010 but could not be tabled at the last meeting in May due to insufficient data being available. This was the second year that this report has been produced and to comply with the regulations it must be viewed by the Forum.

The Report covered the questions and answers on Fair Access Protocol, Infant class sizes, Admission appeals, Admission arrangements, Admission Forum, Free School Meals, Choice Advice, transport and school uniform costs. Members debated the cost of school uniform and its availability in none specialist uniform shops. Some concern was raised regarding the cost of uniform items required for some schools.

It was suggested that research needed to be carried out to establish in more detail what costs were involved and what assistance schools offered with acquiring of a school uniform; for example, some schools had second hand uniform sales.

**RESOLVED to ascertain from schools the cost of their uniform requirements and what arrangements were in place by the school to assist parents with the cost of school uniforms.**

**156. Any Other Business**

a) The scheduled February 2011 meeting is currently during half term and it was agreed that it should be moved back to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to accommodate Members. It was further stated that not all papers/reports would be available for circulation with the agenda and that they would follow.

**RESOLVED that the meeting be held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011.**

- b) It was suggested that report numbers be placed at the bottom of the page for ease of reference.
- c) A discussion took place on the possibility of receiving the agenda and papers electronically but after some deliberation it was agreed to continue with the current practice, as not all Members were able to print out hard copies for the meetings.

**RESOLVED that the agenda and papers be circulated as current practice (hard copies).**

157. **Date of next meeting**

The Forum noted that the date of the next meeting would be 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.

Chair .....