

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes: 23 September 2011

- Present: Councillor Mrs S. Dixon (Local Authority) (Chair)
K. Edwards (Catholic Diocese)
C. Firth (Choice Adviser)
G. Robinson (Church of England Diocese)
M. Simpson (Special Educational Needs)
- In Attendance: S. Heawood (Children, Learning and Young Peoples Directorate)
G. Paddan (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
S. Symonds (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
- Apologies: E. Atkins (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
P. Burns (Independent School Appeals Panel)
C. Buchanan (Schools – Voluntary Aided)
Reverend T. Colling (SACRE)
Councillor L. Kelly (Local Authority)

188. Introductions

Members introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting.

189. Annual Appointment of Chair

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

190. Annual Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs S. Dixon be appointed as Vice Chair of the Forum.

191. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2011 were agreed as a true record.

192. Matters Arising

- a) With reference to Minute 170 it was confirmed that a decision had been made on the School Transport policy in line with the original consultation proposal to abolish additional discretionary transport rules for faith and single sex schools from 2012 for all new applicants. However, it was noted that once this occurs the Catholic

schools and the single sex schools were proposing to provide transport support through their own school policies.

- b) With reference to Minute 181 it was confirmed that Councillor Kelly would be meeting with the Governors to examine a number of issues that had arisen.

193. Allocation of school places for September 2011

Members discussed the allocation of school places final reports (Document 2 and 3). The coloured maps showed the allocation for Coventry Reception classes for September 2011. It was noted that St John's CE and Stretton CE had no actual catchment areas. The maps highlighted the areas that had spaces remaining and those that were full. The lighter shaded areas on both maps illustrated that the school had one remaining space. Although it was noted there was an expansion of places in some schools; spaces had remained tight across the City. The local authority had kept a strategic view on the number of spaces to meet the cycles of population changes within the City.

The Forum considered and noted a schedule of Year 7 allocations for 2011 (Document 3), which provided the current situation as at 2nd September 2011.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

194. In-year transfers report: Academic year 2010/11

The Forum received two reports (Documents 4 and 5), which showed the primary and infant school in-year admissions and transfers and Document 5 illustrated the secondary in-year and transfers.

The statistics provided information on the number of pupils allocated and the breakdown showed whether pupils came from within the City, from abroad and from outside the City. Further analysis would be provided by Chris Shearby in his presentation of recently arrived pupils from overseas at a later meeting.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

195. Implementation of the In-year Fair Access Protocol 2010/11

The Forum received a report (Document 6), which detailed the Implementation of the In-Year Fair Access Protocol: Operation of the Social Inclusion Placements Panel 2010/11.

The report detailed Coventry's In-year Fair Access Protocol in respect of children who have permanently been excluded from school or who were at risk of permanent exclusion (managed transfers) and hard to

place pupils. Appended to the report were statistical data providing a breakdown of managed transfers and exclusions in secondary school 2010/11 and admission of hard to place pupils.

Following a discussion on the figures provided and the formula used to determine the number of pupils each school would be expected to take; members noted that secondary headteachers were developing a new system based on the East and West partnerships. The impact on the Social Inclusion Placements Panel and procedures would be kept under review and be reported to the Forum in due course.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

196. Future of the School Admissions Forum

At the last meeting of the Forum consideration was given to the changes to legislation within the Schools White Paper and the Education Bill; the government is due to abolish the requirement for all local authority areas to have a school admissions forum.

The main question tabled was whether the Forum members felt the body should remain in existence after the Education Bill was enacted and continue on the current basis, on an alternative basis or dissolve the Forum.

The Forum has been meeting four times a years and attendance has included representatives from Catholic diocese, Church of England diocese, SACRE, independent appeals panel, headteachers from primary schools, voluntary aided secondary schools, councillors and Council officers. Members considered the items of business that had been covered under the Code and those items that had been examined under general issues of fair access. Further discussion took place on resource requirements and the value of continuing the Forum. It was agreed that the Forum provided a useful meeting for independent oversight and scrutiny of admissions issues and the representatives had provided very useful input into admission issues. A number of authorities were considering maintaining their current meetings for this reason. It was noted that there was a lack of schools representation/ participation and change in legal status of School Admission Forum would create no further incentive to attend.

A suggestion was made to reduce the resource demand by cutting down on the number of meetings to two meetings a year – September for annual reports for the previous academic year and February for co-ordinated arrangement for all of Coventry and policy. Due to the limited attendance at the meeting and the fact that currently the admissions forum is a still a statutory requirement it was agreed to seek views of non attending members and to await the publication of further legislation during the autumn.

RESOLVED that a note be circulated to all Forum representatives to seek their views on the future of the Forum and to consider this matter at the next meeting.

197. Local Authority Annual Report

The Forum considered the report produced by the local authority for the Schools Adjudicator. The topics covered included – Fair access protocol, Infant class sizes, admission appeals, admission arrangements, admission forum, free school meals, choice advice, transport and 6th forms.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

198. Any Other Business

It was agreed to proceed with the next scheduled meeting on 9th December 2011 until a decision was made on the future of the Forum.

Chair.....

Date.....