

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM  
HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2011 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.55PM**

*Present:-*

**Local Education Authority Representatives:**

David Chopping and Beth Rowland

**Diocesan Representatives**

None present

**Parent Representatives:**

Phiala Mehring

**Representatives from the Local Community**

Patricia Cuss – *Early Years Forum*

Major Richard Henderson (deputising for Colonel Derek McAvoy) – *Arborfield Garrison*  
– *Other Faith Groups*

**Schools Representatives**

Peter Lewis – *The Bulmershe School*

Paula Montie – *Polehampton CE Junior School*

Elaine Stewart – *Aldryngton Primary School*

Hilary Winter (Vice Chairman) – *The Piggott CE Aided Secondary School*

*Also present:-*

*David Armstrong, Policy and Schools Access Officer*

*Piers Brunning, Service Manager Children's Services Infrastructure Development*

*Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer*

*Rachael Wardell, Head of Children's Services Strategy and Partnerships*

*Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer*

In the absence of the Chairman, Hilary Winter, Vice Chairman took the Chair.

**86. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 15 February 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was reported that a reply had been received from the Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese in response to the letter sent following the last meeting to express the Forum's concerns that admission criteria discriminate against non baptised Catholic Looked After Children. The response indicated that Catholic schools do give priority to Catholic children, and a recent Adjudicator determination confirmed that Catholic schools can continue to differentiate between Catholic and non Catholic Looked After Children.

**87. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from David Babb, Chairman and Diocesan Representative; Jean Bateman, Grazeley CE Aided Primary School; and Colonel Derek McAvoy, Major Richard Henderson attended in his place.

## **88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Phiala Mehring declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that she lived in the proposed new Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe designated area; and she was a governor of The Forest School.

David Chopping declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that he was a Ward member for the Maiden Erlegh area and lived within Maiden Erlegh designated area.

Elaine Stewart declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that she was the Headteacher of Aldryngton Primary School.

Peter Lewis declared a personal interest in relation to the Designated Areas section in Item 89, the 2012/13 Admission Arrangements, on the grounds that he was the Headteacher of Bulmershe School.

## **89. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ADMISSIONS SCHEMES FOR 2012/2013**

Piers Brunning presented the report set out on Agenda pages 5 to 15, which gave the background to the consultation on the admission arrangements for 2012/13 the academic year, which had included 2 public meetings to discuss the proposed changes to the secondary school designated areas for Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe and Emmbrook/Forest/Holt and St Crispin's.

He explained that Annex 1 on Agenda pages 7 to 12, set out an analysis of the responses and included the Officers' views on the results for each proposed change. Overall there had been 1026 on line responses and 1111 email and postal responses, as well as four petitions. Rachael Wardell drew attention to a correction that on page 10 in the fifth paragraph referring to the petition with 308 signatures, in that it did not support the proposals, but objected to the amendment to give Aldryngton pupils a higher priority.

The Forum considered proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements in light of the responses to the consultation as follows:

### **Designated Areas – Secondary Schools *Maiden Erlegh and Bulmershe***

As a result of the consultation, alternative proposals for the tiebreaker had been put forward. Piers Brunning explained and gave clarification on the five different options with the help of coloured plans, which showed the possible effect of the different options:

- Option 1 - the proposal in the consultation
- Option 2 – an inner designated area based on the Aldryngton Primary School designated area
- Option 3 – an alternative smaller inner designated area – the northern half of the Aldryngton Primary School designated area
- Option 4 - alternative relative distance tie breaker
- Option 5 – new radial distance inner area tie breaker around the school, limited to the first 600m

Copies of the plans and descriptions of the five options are attached to the minutes.

Comments were made as follows:

- Concerned that the options 2 and 3 which gave priority to those children attending Aldryngton Primary were not fair as they gave preferential treatment to those children when there were children living in the area who attended other primary schools.
- Not favouring a particular school meets the reasonable needs of residents living near Maiden Erlegh.
- The objective of the review had been to make things simpler, but the options with an inner area add complexity.
- Option 4 would not reduce travel time/distance, which was one of the initial objectives of the review.
- There is a strong case for option 2, as it is nonsense to bus children past Maiden Erlegh to get to Bulmershe
- Children living near Maiden Erlegh should get a place
- The area immediately north of Wokingham Road, would be included in the Option 1 and 5.

**The Forum did not reach a consensus on any one option** but felt that Options 1 and 5 should be recommended to the Executive for consideration.

### **Designated Areas – Secondary Schools**

#### ***The Emmbrook, Forest, Holt and St Crispin's***

Peirs Brunning explained that the consultation proposed to combine the designated areas of the four schools into a large shared area, including the adjustments made to the Maiden Erlegh/Bulmershe areas. A combined tie breaker for Forest and Holt Schools, the two single sex schools, was proposed for those pupils in criteria C and D.

Concerns had been expressed that under the combined tie breaker, pupils in Arborfield would be less likely to gain a place at Forest or Holt, because of the distance from the ellipse.

David Chopping commented that it was important that residents are not seen to be disadvantaged and put forward a suggestion that Executive be asked to consider whether to refer the interpretation of the single sex criteria and the changing circumstances to Scrutiny, to inform and give guidance on decisions about admission arrangements in future years beyond 2013.

**The Forum reached a consensus to** recommend to Executive that the proposed shared designated area and combined tie break set out in the consultation be approved.

It was also suggested that Executive be asked to consider whether to refer the interpretation of the single sex criteria and the changing circumstances to Scrutiny, to inform and give guidance on decisions about admission arrangements for years beyond 2013.

**The Forum reached a consensus that the remaining proposed changes in the consultation be recommended to the Executive for approval:**

#### **1) Oversubscription Criteria**

- ***Secondary Schools – Linked/feeder schools*** - the removal of the feeder school criterion
- ***Secondary Schools - Transitional protection for siblings*** until June 2018 where designated areas change

- **Primary Schools – Infant Junior transfer** – infant school pupils given high priority for admission to linked junior school.

## **2) Admission Numbers**

No changes were proposed.

## **3) Coordinated Schemes for Primary, Secondary and In-Year admissions 2012/13**

The number of preferences be increased from 3 to 4.

## **90. ADDITIONAL ITEM**

### **Annual Report to Schools Adjudicator**

Sue Riddick raised the issue of whether the Admissions Forum wished to make its own report to the Schools Adjudicator. Officers will be bringing a copy of the Local Authority's report to the June meeting of the Forum for comment.

**RESOLVED:** That the School Admissions Forum would not be preparing an annual report to the Schools Adjudicator for 2010/11.

## **91. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next meeting will be on 14 June, with further meetings planned for; 23 November 2011, and 22 February, 14 March 2012.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the School Admissions Forum*

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