

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2012 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.40PM**

Present:-

Local Education Authority Representatives:

Beth Rowland
Pauline Helliard Symons

Diocesan Representatives

David Babb

Representatives from the Local Community

Patricia Cuss – *Early Years Forum*
Captain Rob Gisby - *Arborfield Garrison*

Parent Representative

Phiala Mehring

Schools Representatives

Hilary Winter – *The Piggott CE Aided Secondary School*
Elaine Stewart – *Aldryngton School*

Also present:-

Rob Stanton – *Executive Member for Children's Services*
Rachael Wardell – *Head of Early Intervention and Community Support*
David Armstrong - *Policy and Schools Access Officer*
Piers Brunning - *Service Manager Children's Services Infrastructure Development*
Sue Riddick - *Lead Admissions Officer*
Charles Yankiah – *Senior Democratic Services Officer*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Jean Bateman (Grazeley CE Aided Primary School and Major Rick Henderson (Arborfield Garrison).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pauline Helliard Symons declared a personal interest in Minute No.112.11 - Oakbank School by virtue of her employment and association with CfBT.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 23 November 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following changes –

- Minute No. 105 – Free Schools, Minute No. 106 – Future Role of the Admissions Forum and Minute No. 107 – Next Meeting, be renumbered to correctly read Minute No. 8 – Free Schools, Minute No. 9 – Future Role of the Admissions Forum and Minute No. 10 – Next Meeting.
- Phiala Mehring enquired if the resolution for Minute No.7, 1.2 Oversubscription Criterion F was a true reflection of the discussions held during the meeting.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the decision of the authority was to leave the information relating to single sex criterion in.

4. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

Sue Riddick presented information relating to the admission arrangements for 2013/14 as was included in the Agenda pages 14 to 108 for the following voluntary aided schools –

ALL SAINTS CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick informed the school that no policy had been received for F1 – nursery and was therefore unable to comment. However, she reminded them that the school would need to determine those arrangements for 2013/14 and forward it to the local authority along with the school policy. She made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

Proposed School Policy

For information, it is being proposed within the co-ordinated scheme that application forms be forwarded to own admission authority schools by February 8, 2013.

Criterion 1 – Looked after children and previously looked after children. Whilst the criterion is correct, note 2 requires amendment. The school might want to consider what evidence should be provided by parents to verify an application made under this criterion e.g. copies of the special guardianship order, adoption order or residence orders (1.7 refers) and to make any requirements clear within the policy. It is also recommended that the school identifies what is meant by the term previously looked after child (the Code wording is on page 9 – notes 17 to 20 inclusive).

Criterion 2 – Sibling. Is it reasonable to 'state at the time of application'. One option might be to state 'at the deadline for applications', this allows for in-year application to be handled if the starting school and sibling in-year applications are submitted at the same time. The new wording is also not compatible with how the schools handles late applications which states that late applications will, as far as possible, accept applications that are received 'late' for a good reason.

Criterion 4 – Siblings of former pupils. Whilst this is a valid criterion in respect of the new Code, it was suggested that it would question why the school is expanding its list of criteria to include these children. Historically, the school is undersubscribed and therefore these children would normally be admitted and that the Office of the Schools Adjudicator is particularly keen on ensuring that schools do not have overly complex arrangements. Please also ensure that the school provides a clear and simple definition of such former pupils (Code 1.11 refers)

Criterion 5 – Children of staff. Previous comments apply to this criterion too. The school should define what it means by 'staff', for instance does this include dinner ladies or kitchen staff?

Criterion 6 and 7 – Medical and Social. Why are these criteria low in the school's list of criteria as if it is proved that it is essential that they attend the school, it might reasonably be considered that they should have higher priority.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It was recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

In-year - From the proposed policy it was noted that the school is intending to handle its own in-year applications. Whilst there is no requirement to co-ordinate in-year applications, Wokingham Borough Council is proposing to continue with a locally agreed in-year co-ordinated scheme (similar to that which operated prior to the requirement to co-ordinate fully with other local authorities) allowing parents to apply direct to Wokingham Borough Council and will also be available to own admission authority schools. The authority will also continue to liaise with neighbouring local authorities where they receive applications for Wokingham schools within the proposed in-year co-ordinated scheme. It is being proposed that within the scheme that all offers will be made by Wokingham School Admissions direct to any parent with a copy to the home local authority to reduce any delays in offering school places.

Where a preference is expressed for a school operating outside the proposed co-ordinated scheme on the application form received by Wokingham, parents will be advised to complete the single preference form for the school and to send direct to the school, as it is not appropriate for the school to see the ranking of preferences for other schools on Wokingham Borough Council's four preference (if determined) application form. Parents may of course then hold more than one offer.

It was noted that the school states that information on the availability of spaces will be available from the school but would advise that the school must ensure that the local authority is aware of the availability of places too to be able to provide information to parents regarding availability of places in all schools (Code 2.21).

Note 3 – how will the school handle applications for children within the same birth year if oversubscribed and the children split as such children are not considered exceptions under Infant Class Size legislation.

Appeals – the new Appeals Code includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeals. I recommend the school makes this clear in its arrangements.

Elaine Stewart commented that the following sentence was quite broad and would it exclude others..... "The School also welcomes children with physical disabilities provided that the Statement of Special Educational Needs is in place and appropriate support is available."

Rachael Wardell agreed and asked that it be referred back for clarification.

EARLEY ST PETER'S CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

Appeal Form

It is noted that there is a section on the form where a parent may indicate that they are appealing on infant class size grounds. It is feasible that the number of children allocated at KS1 might suggest that an infant class size appeal is a possibility based on the school's admission number - Reception = 70, year 1 = 70 and year 2 = 70, which totals 210 children divided by 1:30 teacher/pupil ratio which equates to seven mixed age classes at key stage 1. Is this how the school organises?

If the school does not organise as above, then it is unlikely (unless there are over 20 appeals for Reception) that there would be an infant class size appeal for the school and therefore the question on the form is largely irrelevant and misleading. The general question asking for the reason for the appeal should pick up if a parent considers that their appeal is an infant class size appeal.

Parents are advised by the local authority in the appeal statement which accompanies the offer letter why they were unsuccessful in their application for higher ranked preferred schools. It was suggested that the school robustly indicates, at that stage, whether the appeal is likely to be an infant class size appeal, potential infant class size appeal or not considered to be an infant class size appeal, in the statement provided to the local authority with the ranking to ensure clarity to parents.

Proposed School Policy

Deferment - Parents no longer have the right to defer entry; the Code (2.16) states that 'parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred'. The expectation is that they can do so within the academic year.

Category 3 – Sibling – Is it reasonable to 'state at the time of application'. One option might be to state 'at the deadline for applications', this allows for in-year application to be handled if the starting school and sibling in-year applications are submitted at the same time. The new wording is not compatible with how the schools handles late applications which states that late applications will not be allowed 'without a genuine reason for doing so, e.g. the family has recently moved to another address for a school not previously requested'.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

Changes of preference – the new Code states that 'any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside the normal admissions round'. So your statement may require revision to accommodate changes of preference outside the normal admissions round.

In-year – It is noted from the proposed policy that the school is intending to handle its own in-year applications. For information, Wokingham Borough Council has agreed to continue to liaise with Reading Borough Council where they receive applications for Wokingham schools within the proposed in-year co-ordinated scheme. It has been agreed that all offers will be made by Wokingham Direct to the parent with a copy to Reading to reduce any delays in offering school places. Where a preference is expressed for a school operating outside the co-ordinated scheme on the application form received by Wokingham, parents will be advised to complete the single preference form for the school

and to send direct to the school, as it is not appropriate for the school to see the ranking of preferences for other schools on Wokingham Borough Council's four preference (if determined) application form. Parents may of course then hold more than one offer.

Where a school is not part of the co-ordinated scheme, the school will need to advise the local authority of both the application and its outcome and this should be advised within the policy. Schools must also inform parents of their right of appeal against the refusal of a place.

Acceptance - parents should have two weeks to accept the offer of a school place for both in-year and starting school applications.

Category 1 - relating to looked after children or previously looked after children. The school might want to consider what evidence should be provided by parents to verify an application made under this criterion e.g. special guardianship order, adoption order or residence orders (1.7 refers) and to make any requirements clear within the policy. It is also recommended that the school identifies what is meant by the term looked after child or previously looked after child (the Code wording is on page 9 – notes 17 to 20 inclusive).

Nursery Policy

Comment above relating to tiebreaker and Category 1 also applies to this policy.

The tiebreaker should also be amended as detailed above.

Nursery Application Form

It would be useful to point out to parents that a separate application process applies for entry into F2 Reception.

The Chairman said that the new code was not clear as to whether the school had to reserve the place, if the parents deferred the entry.

Sue Riddick commented that she would look into the issue.

Elaine Stewart enquired if the terms "catchment area" and "designated area" were interchangeable.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the terms can be used interchangeably

FINCHAMPSTEAD CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

Category 3 – Siblings at the time of application - it is not unusual to receive a transfer application at the same time as in-year application for a child who will become a sibling at a school and therefore 'the time of application' may not be advisable as it would preclude the school from considering them as siblings

For information, child benefit will not be available to all families.

Note 5 – it is noted that the school is not intending to offer to twins and multiple births. Please note that any appeals for twins or multiple births cannot be considered under infant class size regulations if this applies.

Appeals – the new Appeals Code includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeals. It is recommended that the school makes this clear in its arrangements. Dates should be made available on the school website.

Rachel Wardell enquired if “academic year” and “birth year” means the same thing.

The Chairman commented that they are not necessarily the same and the admissions policy refers to the “school year”.

GRAZELEY PAROCHIAL CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

This is the first year the school has not consulted on any changes. Whilst the school is not consulting on any changes; it is noted that it has made changes to:

Criterion 2 – to include parents moving into the area who have formerly attended church and transfer to one of the churches listed will also be eligible for consideration under criterion 2 but will need to provide a supplementary information form from both churches

Criterion 3 – Siblings at the time of application - it is not unusual to receive a transfer application at the same time as in-year application for a child who will become a sibling at a school and therefore ‘the time of application’ may not be advisable as it would preclude the school from considering them as siblings.

Criterion 6 – the definition has changed for identification of Christian affiliation – it is possible to identify churches who are members of Churches Together or the Evangelical Alliance by searching on their website, it would not be so easy for a parent to determine whether their church ascribes to the doctrine of the Trinity or for the school to agree it and as this is more subjective, it may be helpful to define what this means and how they apply it.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

Clarification should be provided in the policy that the SIF is returned to the school to match the wording provided on the form.

Appeals – the new Appeals Code includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeals. It is recommended that the school

makes this clear in its arrangements. Dates should be made available on the school website.

Acceptance forms to be returned by 30th April 2013.

Note 6 – Previous looked after children are not mentioned. The school might want to consider what evidence should be provided by parents to verify an application made under this criterion e.g. copies of the special guardianship order, adoption order or residence orders (1.7 refers) and to make any requirements clear within the policy. It is also recommended that the school identifies what is meant by the term previously looked after child (the Code wording is on page 9 – notes 17 to 20 inclusive).

Sue Riddick commented about Criterion 6 and the reference to the “doctrine of the Trinity” and whether or not it should included as most parents may not know what it means.

The Chairman stated that the Church of England think it is a perfectly acceptable definition and that it could remain.

Piers Brunning enquired if the Church of England would be prepared to identify those churches referred to in Criterion 6.

The Chairman stated that by identifying churches by name this could exclude those churches that are not named.

Piers Brunning commented then why didn't they consult, have they fulfilled their legal obligations.

The Chairman stated that putting the information on the website, is not enough as information as to how to comment and a deadline for comments should be included.

SONNING CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

This is the second year the school has not consulted on any changes. Whilst the school is not consulting on any changes; it is noted that it has made changes to:

Criterion 3 – Siblings at the time of application - it is not unusual to receive a transfer application at the same time as in-year application for a child who will become a sibling at a school and therefore ‘the time of application’ may not be advisable as it would preclude the school from considering them as siblings.

Criterion 4 – It is noted that a new clause has been added to this criterion which has not been consulted on relating to families who have recently (what? Moved)

Criterion 5 – please see criterion 3 above; another new addition.

For information, child benefit will not be available to all families.

How will the school handle applications from siblings born in the same academic year?

Phiala Mehring enquired if Criteria 4&5 in the admissions policy were in the right order, or should it be 5 and then 4.

Sue Riddick commented that the Criteria are based upon those living in the area and then goes all the way down to those not living in the area.

SHINFIELD ST MARY'S CE AIDED JUNIOR SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

In-year – It is noted from the proposed policy that the school is intending to handle its own in-year applications. Whilst there is no requirement to co-ordinate in-year applications, Wokingham Borough Council is proposing to continue with a locally agreed in-year co-ordinated scheme (similar to that which operated prior to the requirement to co-ordinate fully with other local authorities) allowing parents to apply direct to Wokingham Borough Council and will also be available to own admission authority schools. The authority will also continue to liaise with neighbouring local authorities where they receive applications for Wokingham schools within the proposed in-year co-ordinated scheme. It is being proposed that all offers will be made by Wokingham School Admissions direct to any parent with a copy to the home local authority to reduce any delays in offering school places.

Where a preference is expressed for a school operating outside the proposed co-ordinated scheme on the application form received by Wokingham, parents will be advised to complete the single preference form for the school and to send direct to the school, as it is not appropriate for the school to see the ranking of preferences for other schools on Wokingham Borough Council's four preference (if determined) application form. Parents may of course then hold more than one offer.

The school states must ensure that the local authority is aware of the availability of places too to be able to provide information to parents regarding availability of places in all schools (Code 2.21).

10.6 The new arrangements regarding in-year applications do not apply until 2013/14 and therefore the co-ordinated scheme applies for 2012/13.

Criterion 1 – Looked after children and previously looked after children. Whilst the criterion is correct, note 2 requires amendment. The school might want to consider what evidence should be provided by parents to verify an application made under this criterion e.g. copies of the special guardianship order, adoption order or residence orders (1.7 refers) and to make any requirements clear within the policy. It is also recommended that the school identifies what is meant by the term previously looked after child (the Code wording is on page 9 – notes 17 to 20 inclusive)

Note 3 – the school may wish to revisit the requirement for child benefit as this benefit will no longer apply to all families.

Supplementary form – It is noted that the policy states the form should be returned to the school, in order to minimise confusion please remove reference to Wokingham Borough Council at the bottom of the page.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the information was submitted late, and that additional information on the policy will need to be included.

ST DOMINIC SAVIO CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

It is noted that the school is removing the Catholic Parish of Christ the King, Whitley.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

Siblings from the same birth year – whilst the school advises that twins or sibling from multiple births are permitted exceptions; the school does not have a policy on how siblings in the same birth year will be handled.

Appeals – the new Appeals Code includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeals. It is recommended that the school makes this clear in its arrangements.

Applications outside the normal admissions cycle – there is no requirement for parents to apply for schools outside the Borough via Wokingham Borough Council. Parents will need to find out what local arrangements exist in the area they are moving to and residents in other authorities may apply direct to Wokingham Borough Council instead of going through their home authority as part of the proposed locally agreed co-ordinated scheme.

Rachael Wardell stated that the comments relating to “baptisms” in the opening paragraph of the policy, was not a welcomed view.

Sue Riddick commented that the arrangements in the policy had since been amended.

ST SEBASTIAN’S CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

This is the first year the school has not consulted on any changes.

Whilst the school is not consulting on any changes; it is noted that it has made changes to:

Criterion 2 and 4 – Siblings at the time of application - it is not unusual to receive a transfer application at the same time as in-year application for a child who will become a sibling at a school and therefore ‘the time of application’ may not be advisable as it would preclude the school from considering them as siblings.

Church attendance has been changed relating to footnote 2 to include previous church attendance for families that have moved into the area.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the paperwork arrived late and has missed the 8 week consultation period.

PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2013/14 FOR THE FOLLOWING ACADEMIES

Sue Riddick presented information relating to the admission arrangements for 2013/14 as was included in the Agenda pages 109 to 125 for the following academies –

THE PIGGOTT

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

It is noted that the denominational certificate was not submitted.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

Criterion B – Siblings at the time of application - it is not unusual to receive a transfer application at the same time as in-year application for a child who will become a sibling at a school and therefore 'the time of application' may not be advisable as it would preclude the school from considering them as siblings. It is noted that the school intends to include siblings who were former pupils but the school has clearly stated how those former pupils are defined.

Criterion E – Feeder schools. As the school is usually oversubscribed from higher criteria, it is questionable whether its inclusion is transparent and made on reasonable grounds in accordance with 1.15 of the Code. All but one feeder school (St Nicholas CE Primary School) falls within the designated area of The Piggott and therefore the majority of children attending the feeder schools would normally qualify under higher criteria, an option not available to children from St Nicholas CE Primary School which is not included within the designated area of the school.

Acceptances – this forms part of the co-ordinated admission scheme and therefore acceptances should be returned to the local authority. The school admissions team will ensure that the school is aware of any rejected offers and will then allocate from the waiting list on the school's behalf (in liaison with the school). This will minimise confusion for parents and ensure prompt movement of waiting lists.

The local authority will maintain the waiting list until 31 December 2012 when the list will be transferred to the school.

In-year – It is noted that the school seeks to admit children who move to the school's designated area in-year. Such children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria and will be ranked on the school's waiting list if oversubscribed. The admittance of children over and above the admission number is made only through allocation to children with Statements of Special Educational Needs; as permitted exceptions prescribed in the School Admissions Code, by an Appeals Panel or through the application of the local authority's Fair Access Protocols. Schools are not permitted to set its own protocol to admit children outside of those arrangements and to do so would inevitably compromise

the school at appeal and lead to conflicts when placing children in accordance with law and through Fair Access Protocols.

In-year appeals – it is easy to understand the reasoning for wanting to charge appellants who subsequently withdraw their appeals; administration charges cannot be levied. This would be impossible to apply.

Sixth form – criteria for entry to the school – the first paragraph should state that the governors will, in any case, admit all applicants who are already at the school and 15 external applicants, if there are sufficient applications and provided they meet the minimum requirements for the relevant courses.

The school needs to ensure that all applicants, internal and external, are treated in the same way.

Is the tiebreaker the same as defined in year 7 or using a different system?

Criterion A – must be amended to include previously looked after children and then criterion B in criteria for admission on courses.

The school must ensure it complies with Code 2.5 regarding proof of birth date and ensure that it does not see 'long' birth certificates.

Appeals for sixth forms must comply with the timetable on page 10 of the new School Admissions Appeals Code.

LA – the definition needs amending regarding in-year applications.

The Chairman commented on the following section –

“...the Governors will admit children who apply for in-year admission to a year group in the school as the result of a house move into the School’s designated area, when that move reasonably requires a change of school and when the number of pupils in that year group does not exceed the admission number for that year group by 10 pupils or more”.....

Under the new code schools can admit above the Published Admission Number (PAN) in year and this would mean that the school could admit such students without explicit reference in the policy.

Rachael Wardell commented that in relation to the Appeals process and parents withdrawing their appeal and being levied in the sum of £280, that it would create problems for low income families as well as it would be difficult to “police” if parents fail to pay.

Hilary Winter commented that this would give parents an opportunity to think twice about appealing as well as withdrawing. The costs include staff time and administrative costs including printing.

David Armstrong commented that it is not a “permitted charge” and should be taken out.

MAIDEN ERLEGH

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

It is noted that the school intends to remove Criterion B – children who have a serious medical, physical or psychological condition.

Tiebreaker – the local authority is currently consulting on an amendment to the wording which provides more accurate information about how the measurement is taken. It is recommended that the school adopts similar wording reflecting the system used by the local authority.

For information, child benefit will not be available to all families.

In-year – in line with the proposed locally agreed scheme, applications can be made direct to Wokingham Borough Council.

Appeals – the new Appeals Code includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeals. It is recommended that the school makes this clear in its arrangements. Dates should be made available on the school website.

Please add that there is no automatic right to a further appeal for admission within the same academic year unless there is an exceptional situation resulting in a significant change of circumstance relevant to the application.

6th form admissions – it is noted that the school is proposing the requirement for a pass at C or above in English or Mathematics GCSE as an additional entry requirement to the 6th form. Please note that the school must apply entry requirements equally to both internal and external applicants to fill ad hoc courses.

Comments relating to tiebreaker above may also apply.

The school must ensure it complies with Code 2.5 regarding proof of birth date and ensure that it does not see 'long' birth certificates.

Appeals to the sixth form must follow the timetable on page 10 of the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that it is being proposed to remove Criterion B.

Beth Rowland commented that she felt strongly about this issue and enquired if its removal was compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The Chairman commented that equalities legislation applies across the board, in that, if it is not in, then there is nothing to discriminate against.

Phiala Mehring informed the Forum that the issue has caused a lot of concern among the parents, as they were unaware of any developments.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that Wokingham Borough Council had been notified by letter about the dates and the consultation and currently they were fulfilling their requirements.

The Chairman commented that even if the policy is approved, anyone can still object to the Schools Adjudicator.

HOLT AND ST THERESA'S

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that both The Holt and St Theresa's had not submitted any policies, however, they will still need to consult and it will still need to be determined.

PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2013/14 FOR THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED FREE SCHOOL

Sue Riddick presented information relating to the proposed admission arrangements for 2013/14 as was included in the Agenda pages 132 to 174 for the following free school –

OAKBANK SCHOOL

Sue Riddick made the following comments regarding the proposed admission arrangements on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for consideration by the governing body prior to determination.

- The policy refers to footnote 1 under point 6 but there is no footnote reference; neither is there a footnote 2.
- Point 9 – Code 2.5 states that admission authorities may ask for proof of address where it is unclear whether a child meets the published oversubscription criterion but must not ask for any evidence that would include information prohibited in Code 1.9 or 2.4. Admission authorities may only ask for proof of birth date but must not ask for a 'long' birth certificate or other documents which would include information about the child's parents. Therefore this section does require clarification to ensure that it does not breach this mandatory requirement of the Code. Checks on dates of birth are more appropriate after the allocation as part of the registration or acceptance procedure.
- Point 12 – The regulations state that parents should be given two weeks to accept the offer.
- Point 13 – Appeals procedure – this point must comply with the timetable published on page 10 of the new School Admissions Appeals Code.
- Point 17 – Waiting lists – clarification is recommended on how the waiting list will operate for criterion 6 children where random allocation is the tiebreaker; will this be carried out whenever a place becomes available, how will places be randomly allocated, by whom and witnessed by?
- 20.1 – Children with a statement do not form part of the oversubscription criteria and should be a separate statement within the policy.
- 20.2 – Children in public care are required to be the first criterion of any admission arrangement.
- 20.3 – This policy only refers to 2013/14 admissions; therefore this criterion is not relevant to this policy.
- 20.5 – Whilst I do understand the concept of percentage of remaining PAN; clarification is still required what the school will do where the percentage split does not provide for a whole child. If, for example, the Spencer's Wood and Swallowfield segment is undersubscribed by seven places, how will the remaining places be allocated to the two remaining segments which both have an equal 30% split?

- 20.6 and 26 - my previous comments relating to allocating by random allocation applies.
- 21 – Whilst the school has defined what is meant by the term ‘sibling’, is it the school’s intention to exclude foster siblings?
- 23 – The tiebreaker should be expanded to include an explanation on how this is measured; by what system.
- 27.1 – My previous comments relating to children with statements and looked after children apply.
- 27.2 - Should have a note 4 reference regarding the change for previously looked after children.
- The revised segment map does not provide for a complete line for the border with the Three Mile Cross and Shinfield segments in the fourth outer circle.

It is advised that as the arrangements are radically different to those adopted by other schools in the local authority, it is a concern that parents will not easily understand how places for the school will be allocated, which is a clear overall principle behind setting arrangements in the new School Admissions Code. However, the comments previously made will assist the school having a compliant policy if the decision is taken to continue with the proposed arrangements.

It should be also noted that the new Code requires local authorities to publish on its website by 1 May the proposed admission arrangements for any new school or Academy which is intended to open within the determination year. As all admission authorities will be determining their arrangements for 2013/14 and submitting those by 1 May, 2012; it would be appreciated, if the school is awarded its Funding Agreement, that the 2013/14 arrangements are forwarded by that date.

Phiala Mehring enquired about when the funding will be approved.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that it is not known, but that it is sometime between February/March, but it is imminent.

The Chairman commented that the proof of birth date should not be part of the application process, as it is not a requirement until an offer of a place is made and accepted.

Rachael Wardell commented that Sue Riddick was working with the Oakbank School and that since the initial policy had been drafted there have been a number of amendments and subsequent comments proposed by Sue Riddick to get the policy compliant.

The Chairman enquired if there was a description for the word “founder” used in the oversubscription criteria.

Beth Rowland also enquired if the question could be asked of the school, regarding the meaning of the word “founder” in this context.

Rachael Wardell commented that in the question and answer section of the consultation document it states “if enforced, the criterion will only apply to five families and a maximum of six pupils over a period of two years”.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Admission Arrangements for Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies for 2013/14 be noted;
- 2) the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2013/14 for the proposed Free School be noted;
- 3) Sue Riddick be thanked for the ongoing support and advice to the various schools relating to the proposed admission arrangements for 2013/14

5. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on 14 March 2012 at 7.00pm in the Civic Offices, Shute End.

6. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

NEW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE

The Chairman informed the Forum that there was at times differing information relating to the dates and interpretation of the New School Admissions Code.

Sue Riddick commented that it is even more complex for those schools with their own admission arrangements and most of the detail would be available in the regulations.

Hilary Winter enquire if the new code would have an impact on the appeals in the summer.

Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the new appeals code would come into effect in February 2012 and as long as those who are appealing submit their appeals after the appropriate date then the new code would apply.

Beth Rowland requested that copies of the new code be made available to members of the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted and that the Democratic Services Officer circulate copies of the new code to members of the Forum.

NEW STRATEGIC COMMISSIONER

Rachael Wardell informed the Forum that the newly appointed Strategic Commissioner will be attending the School Admissions Forum in the future.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum thanked Rachael Wardell for the support and advice offered to the Forum over the last year.

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

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