

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2012 FROM 7.00PM TO 8:10PM**

Present:-

Local Education Authority Representatives:

Beth Rowland

Diocesan Representatives

David Babb (Chairman)

Parent Representatives:

Phiala Mehring

Representatives from the Local Community

Anita Birtles (deputising for Patricia Cuss) - *Early Years Forum*

Captain Rob Gisby (deputising for Colonel Derek McAvoy) – *Arborfield Garrison*

Schools Representatives

None present

Also present:-

David Armstrong, Policy and Schools Access Officer

Piers Brunning, Service Manager Children's Services Infrastructure Development

Brian Grady, Strategic Commissioner, Children, Young People and Families

Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 22 February 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Jean Batman (Grazeley CE Aided Primary School), Pauline Helliard-Symons (Local Authority Representative), Hilary Winter (The Piggott CE Aided Secondary School)

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Phiala Mehring declared a personal interest in Item 10.01 proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements for 2013/14 in relation to the suggestion of removing the single sex oversubscription criteria on the grounds she was a governor of The Forest School which could be affected by this change.

16. SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS 2013/14 AND COORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2013/14

The Forum received and considered a report and annexes set out on Agenda pages 16 to 117 on the Wokingham Borough Council School Admission Arrangements for 2013/14 which comprised:

- Explanation of the proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and the Coordinated Admissions Schemes for 2013/14, pages 16 to 21.
- The Proposed Coordinated Schemes for Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools incorporating the Borough's Admission Policies for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, pages 31 to 58.
- Draft Foundation One (F1) Admission Policy for Nursery School and Nursery Classes in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools including Foundation Stage Units or Partnership Foundation Stage Units, pages 59 to 75.
- Proposed Sixth Form Admissions Policy for Borough Community Secondary Schools, pages 76 to 85.
- Proposed Local Coordinated In-Year Admissions Scheme for Community, Voluntary Controlled, and own Admission Authority Primary and Secondary Schools in Wokingham Borough 2013/14, pages 86 to 101
- Details and explanation of proposal to create a shared designated area for Beechwood Primary School and Highwood Primary School for the 2013/14 Admission Arrangements, pages 102 to 106.
- Details and explanation of proposal to create a second priority designated area for The Coombes CE Primary School for the 2013/14 Admission Arrangements, pages 107 to 111.
- Details and explanation of proposal to extend the designated area for The Colleton Primary School, pages 112 to 117.

Sue Riddick presented the report which gave a details of the proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the coordinated scheme, and circulated a document setting out the text of the comments made in response to the consultation.

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

1) Oversubscription Criteria

Criterion A – Looked After Children – All Admission Authorities are required to extend this priority to include previous looked after children, a detailed definition will be given.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Criterion B – Serious medical, physical or psychological grounds for admission - Amend the wording from ' the *only* school that can meet the child's needs...' to 'the *most suitable* school that can meet the child's needs..'

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Criterion F – Single Sex Criterion - applies to The Forest School only - Proposal to remove this criterion was objected to by the Governing Body of The Forest School and two individuals.

In light of the comments made the intention is to keep this criterion for 2013/14.

The Forum agreed to retain the Single Sex Criterion

Criteria D and F – Sibling Criteria – proposed amendment to extend sibling protection to include siblings of children who were allocated a lower ranked preference school when their designate area school was full. Subsequent siblings can be considered as criterion C – ‘siblings living in the designated area’ if requested. This would alleviate the risk of siblings not being offered a place at the same school.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Residential requirements – revisions to make clearer; extend deadline for receipt of information; and remove reference to payment of child benefit.

In relation to Service Families, Captain Gisby pointed out that some service families would not be attached to the Garrison, so the wording of that paragraph should reflect that.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Tiebreaker – revision to explain more comprehensively how measurements are applied.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Admission Numbers – notification of increases at three primary schools, Colleton, Winnersh and Hawkedon, though the requirement to consult on increases has been removed. Consultation on decrease in number at Bearwood Primary School from 41 to 40.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

2) Co-ordinated Schemes

In-year – the requirement to co-ordinate in-year applications has been removed. However a proposal is made for a locally agreed co-ordinated scheme for community and voluntary controlled schools, including own admission authority schools where there is an agreement to do so.

In response to a question Sue Riddick indicated that some of the adjoining admission authorities are also setting up locally agreed co-ordinated schemes.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Transfer to year 3 in a junior school – proposed not to provide hard copies of the composite prospectus, but to make the guide available on the website or on request.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Multiple birth or children with birth dates in the same academic year – children who are twins or multiple births or siblings born in the same academic year will be offered a place even if this will result in the school going over its admission number. Twins/multiple birth children can be admitted as exceptions to infant class size legislation.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Waiting Lists – proposed to close waiting lists for Year 10 and beyond in community and voluntary controlled schools on 30 September.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Timetable – proposed timetable has been adjusted to reflect the statutory deadline for applications, with the offer date for primary schools being set for 16 April, which will be the new national primary offer date from 2014.

The Forum agreed this change for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

Designated Areas – following internal review there are proposals to make specific changes:

- Create a shared area for Highwood and Beechwood Primary Schools to accommodate children living in an area which is not currently attributed to any school.
- Create an area of second priority for The Coombes Primary School to give those children unsuccessful in their application for Farley Hill Primary School priority for an alternative local school after those from within The Coombes single designated area.
- Proposed extension to the area for The Colleton Primary following the proposal to remove the shared area with Polehampton CE Infant and Junior Schools, with consequent changes to the area for St Nicholas CE Primary School.

The Forum agreed to these changes for inclusion in the Admission Arrangements.

17. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

CE Voluntary Aided Schools – Consultation on Admission Arrangements

The Chairman, David Babb asked the Forum for its views on the issue that some of the CE Voluntary Aided Schools had not consulted on their admission arrangements strictly in compliance with the requirements of the new School Admissions Code, in that they have not directly consulted the parent body.

Forum members agreed that it was important that the consultations on even small changes were carried out properly so that parents were fully informed.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to the Voluntary Aided schools involved on behalf of the School Admissions Forum to indicate that it had been noted that the consultation on their admission arrangements had not be carried out strictly in compliance with the School Admissions Code.

Future of the School Admissions Forum

A question from Captain Gisby about the Terms of Reference of the Forum led to a short discussion about the future of the Forum, during which the following points were made:

- There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a School Admissions Forum (SAF);
- It is up to each Local Authority to decide how to go forward; some have abolished their SAF;
- A Forum in a revised form could be used to discuss and guide officers on broad strategy and priorities;

Officers will provide a report on the future of the Forum for the next meeting.

Update on Secondary School Allocations

Sue Riddick gave a brief update on the secondary school allocations. By the closing date, 1673 applications had been received, with 1274 of them submitted on line. Of the total 80% were offered a place at their first preference school, with a further 14% offered a place at their second preference school. She was aware that Oakbank School, the new free school, had offered places to 82 pupils in Year 7.

18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of proposed meetings for the new municipal year were noted as follows:

18 June, 26 November 2012

13 February, 13 March 2013.

The Chairman indicated that as the June and November meetings were on Monday he would not be able to attend.

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

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