

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.25PM**

*Present:-*

**Local Education Authority Representatives:**

Beth Rowland

**Diocesan Representatives**

David Babb (Chairman)

**Parent Representatives:**

Phiala Mehring

**Representatives from the Local Community**

Captain Rob Gisby – *Arborfield Garrison*

**Schools Representatives**

Elaine Stewart – *Aldryngton Primary School*

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

Jean Bateman – *Grazeley CE Aided Primary School*

*Also present:-*

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

*Sue Riddick, School Admissions Lead Officer*

*Anju Sharma, School Place Planning and Support Delivery Officer*

*Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer*

**22. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 13 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons

**24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**25. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ADMISSIONS SCHEMES 2014/15**

The Forum received and considered a report, set out on pages 5 to 12 of the papers circulated separately, detailing the outcomes of the consultation on the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2014/15 considered the advice it wished to give to the Local Authority on its final proposals. The 2014/15 Admission Arrangements will be determined by the Executive at its meeting on 28 March 2013

Sue Riddick presented the report which included an analysis of the responses to questions raised in the consultation and details of the proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the coordinated scheme. She indicated that there had been a good 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 B – Serious medical, physical or psychological grounds for admission -***

Proposal to add 'social needs' to criterion B to allow cases to be considered where there are social needs but the child does not meet the definition of looked after or previously looked after children. This criterion is only used in exceptional cases and will read:

*“Children who have medical, physical, psychological, or **social needs** as the grounds for their admission to a particular school.*

*This must be supported by written evidence, relating specifically to the school you are applying to under this criterion, from an independent professional aware of the child's case (e.g. doctor, hospital consultant, psychologist, or **social worker**) which must explain the reason why the school in question is the most suitable and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school.*

*When submitting applications under category B (serious medical, physical, psychological or **social needs** grounds for admission) your application cannot be considered if you do not declare that you are applying under this criterion and you do not provide written independent professional evidence. All supporting documentation must be received by **15 January** for consideration prior to the main allocation of places. An admissions panel will consider the supporting evidence provided and will advise the applicant of its decision; the panel's decision is final. Any evidence received by the school admissions team after **15 January** will not be taken into account in the main allocation of places but may, if agreed by panel, affect the applicant's position on a school's waiting list.”*

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

#### ***Criterion G – Denominational***

Proposal to delete this criterion, which only applies to Voluntary Controlled Schools and it is the view of the Diocese that the ethos of these schools is to serve the whole community.

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

#### ***Criteria D and F – Sibling Criteria – for primary and in-year admissions***

Proposal to change the wording to avoid ambiguity in the definition of siblings as it applies across the two school should the infant school have a nursery.

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

It was noted that the option to give priority to all siblings including out-of-area siblings ahead of non-sibling designated are applicants was not being proposed as a change for 2014/15

## 2) Co-ordinated Schemes

**Designated Areas** – following internal review there are proposals to make changes to designated areas:

- Create a single shared area for The Colleton Primary and Polehampton CE Infant and Junior Schools to enable parental preferences in the Twyford area to be met and mitigate the risks of siblings being split.

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

It was noted that the proposal to create a single shared designated area for Walter Infant, St Paul's CE Junior, Wescott Infant, and Westende Junior Schools was not being proposed as a change for 2014/15

### **Change of Preference**

Proposal to revise the wording in the schemes in respect of changes of preference after the National Offer Day.

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

### **Online Acceptance of School Places**

Proposal to allow for parents to accept offers of school places online from 2014/15.

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

## **26. UPDATE ON APPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY TO SECONDARY TRANSFERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on pages 11 to 16 of the papers circulated separately, giving an update on the current situation regarding the allocation of places for those transferring from primary to secondary school in September 2013.

Sue Riddick presented the report and referred to the attached tables which gave a detailed breakdown of the allocation numbers. These tables are sent out with the decision letters and are available on the website.

She reported that of the number of applications received this year had increased from 1673 last year to 1713; and that the percentage of applications being allocated their first preference this year had increased from 79% to 86%. She pointed out that we would never achieve 100% getting their first preference because of the number of parents who apply for grammar schools in Reading Borough. It was noted that the percentage of applications made online had fallen this year from 79% to 69%.

A correction to the report on page 11 was noted – the number of places available at The Emmbrook School was 47 not 5 50 as stated in the report.

**RESOLVED:** that the update on Primary to Secondary Transfer allocations be noted.

## **27. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on pages 17 to 19 of the papers circulated separately, giving suggestions for the continuation of the School Admissions Forum, and revised Terms of Reference.

Piers Brunning presented the report which proposed that, although there was no longer a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have a Schools Admissions Forum, the Forum should continue to meet, but with a broaden remit to consider school organisation and sufficiency at a strategic level.

There was general agreement that the Forum should continue as suggested and the proposed Terms of Reference were reviewed.

When discussing Membership, Hilary Winter pointed out that by the beginning of the new academic year there will be 5 Secondary Academy/Free Schools and 3 Primary Academy/Free Schools, so there should a representative from that grouping.

It was suggested that the Membership should be as follows:

<i>Wokingham Borough Council Local Authority</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>School reps including (academy/free)</i>	<b>6 in total</b>
– <i>primary (by type of school)</i>	<b>4</b>
– <i>secondary</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Church of England Diocese/Schools representative</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Roman Catholic Diocese/Schools representative</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Parent representatives</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Representatives of the community</i>	<b>3 in total</b>
<i>Arborfield Garrison (UK services representative)</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Other faith groups representative</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Early Years Forum representative</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Neighbouring local authority representatives</i>	<i>invited to attend if a specific issue affects their area</i>
<i>Other educational bodies or providers</i>	<b>0</b>

Tricia Harcourt will contact the Roman Catholic Diocese again to ask them to nominate a representative, and if they have no-one available, suggest that a Headteacher or Governor from one of the two Roman catholic Schools in the Borough could be asked to be their representative. The Headeacher groups will be asked to suggest people to fill the current vacancies to give a spread of representation across the range of school types.

Jean Bateman indicated that she would be retiring at the end of the Summer Term, so a replacement for her category of Aided Primary would be required.

For clarity it was suggested that in Section 2 - Membership Categories the sentence about school representatives should indicate that the Headteachers or Governors would be nominated by their respective groups and then appointed by the Local Authority.

The remaining sections of the proposed Terms of Reference, including the 'Purpose of the Forum' Section were agreed.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1) the School Admissions Forum continue as an advisory body on matters of school admissions and the strategic organisation of schools to provide sufficient school places.;
- 2) the Terms of Reference of the Forum as set out in the report on pages 18 and 19, be agreed, with the membership of the Forum as set out above, and in the Membership Section the sentence about the appointment of school representatives be amended to indicate that the Headteachers or Governors would be nominated by their respective groups and then appointed by the Local Authority

**28. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS AND FORWARD PROGRAMME.**

The dates for planned meetings of the Forum for the 2013/14 municipal year were noted as follows:

17 June, 2 December 2013

10 February, 11 March 2014.

It was suggested that a forward programme of items for consideration at the meetings be prepared, including the following:

17 June:

- update on Primary allocations
- review the Annual Report.
- Update on the providers for the new Primary schools
- Update on the Secondary Strategy

2 December:

- Issues for consultation on the 2015/16 Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Schemes.

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

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