

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM
HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2014 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.15PM**

Present:-

Local Education Authority Representatives:

Ian Pittock

Diocesan Representatives

David Babb (Chairman)

Parent Representatives:

Phiala Mehring

Schools Representatives

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

Also present:-

Sue Riddick, School Admissions lead Officer,

Piers Brunning, Service Manager, Policy, Strategy & Partnerships,(Children & Adults)

David Armstrong, School Place Planning and Support Team Manager

24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 11 March 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Beth Rowland, Local Education Authority, Elaine Stewart, Aldryngton Primary School and Emma Reynolds, Bulmershe School

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL ADJUDICATOR

The Forum received a copy of the draft Local Authority's Annual Report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), as set out on Agenda pages 9 to 32. The Report used the template provided by the OSA, and included additional detailed information on the transfer groups.

In presenting the report, Sue Riddick informed the Forum that the Local Authority's Annual Report had to be submitted by 30 June 2014, and that it gave information relating to all schools in the Borough including free schools and academies. She indicated that this draft would be amended before submission to update some of the transfer and appeal numbers, with minor corrections and any changes agreed by the Forum. Once finalised, the report would be published on the Council's website.

The OSA report template requested details on:

- Interest of Looked after Children;
- Children with disabilities;
- Children who have special education needs - with and without a statement;

- Co-ordination of admissions
- the use of the Fair Access Protocol;
- Admission appeals
- Publication of the report
- Queries made on admission arrangements of own admission authority schools
- Fraudulent applications
- Summer born children
- Composite 6th form prospectus
- Admission Forum

Under the Local Authority Issues section, the transfer group statistics are provided in full, which showed that there were 54 primary places and 118 secondary places available in the Borough.

The following amendments were suggested by Sue and Forum Members should be made:

- Page 13 - question 2(e) - how well are the interests of children with disabilities served?– tick “in part’ and add sentence in the Comments section to say that The review identified a gap in provision for secondary aged children with ASD
- Page 13 - in the Comments section, remove reference to The Piggott in the sentence at the bottom of the page about the ‘medical physical psychological, social needs’ criterion, as the Academy had done that two or three years ago;
- Page 14 - in the Comments section second paragraph – the last line should read ‘...not approached to admit a child *with* a statement.’;
- Page 24 update the secondary appeal figures: 120 lodged, 20 settled, 11 withdrawn, 85 appeals heard, 6 upheld, 79 not upheld.

Sue mentioned that the report is an opportunity for Local Authorities to highlight issues for change that should be included in the Schools Adjudicator’s report to the Secretary of State for Education. She pointed out that comments on page 16 had been included in the report to suggest improvements that could be made to the School Admissions Code.

RESOLVED: That the Local Authority’s Annual Report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator 2014 be approved, subject to the agreed amendments.

28. UPDATE ON 2014/15 TRANSFER GROUPS

The Forum received and considered a report giving an update on the entry to primary school, primary to secondary transfer and the transfer to year 3 in junior schools, as set out on Agenda pages 33 to 35.

In presenting the report, Sue Riddick commented that since the initial allocation, the number of school places available at Wokingham Borough schools was: 118 secondary and 59 primary. The report included more detailed information about the current waiting list situation. For Maiden Erlegh and St Crispin’s not all applicants living in the designated area were allocated a place, and there are several schools where siblings living outside the designated area were not allocated a place.

In an attempt to reduce the number of late primary applications, letters were written to younger siblings known to be attending pre-schools.

The level of recent in-year applications for places in September 2014 is high: 127 primary and 58 secondary

RESOLVED: That the update report on the current situation with admissions in the transfer groups to primary school, primary to secondary transfer and the transfer to year 3 in junior schools be noted.

29. SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY 2015-16

The Forum received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 37 to 41, giving details of proposed changes to the Council's main Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Education Transport Policy Statement that are being consulted on.

David Armstrong highlighted the rationale behind the proposed changes to the policy which were to ensure that transport entitlement for children of statutory school age applies equitably across all categories of schools across the Borough; and that post-16 students will have the same level of transport entitlement whether they stay on into sixth forms or transfer to a college placement. The consultation has just gone out to schools and runs until 17 July.

Forum Members asked how parents were being notified, as they are the ones who will be affected. David indicated that schools had been asked to pass on the information about the consultation to their parents; it was on the Council's website; and a press release was being prepared. Members were concerned that there was only a short time for people to respond.

Ian Pittock suggested that the primary schools needed to be encouraged to tell their parents. He also expressed concern that the policy was unfair to those who lived in the south of the Borough, as they were furthest away from all the designated area schools in the Borough, and often chose to go to Yateley School.

RESOLVED: That the consultation on the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy be noted.

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

If you need help in understanding this document or if you would like a copy of it in large print please contact one of our Team Support Officers.