

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM
HELD ON 9 JUNE 2015 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.00 PM**

Councillors

Ian Pittock

Beth Rowland

Diocesan Representatives

Parent Representatives

Vice Chairman

Representatives from the Local Community

Patricia Cuss

Early Years Forum
Arborfield Garrison

Schools Representatives

Celia Thatcher

Nicci Morris

Grazeley CE Aided Primary
Hillside Primary

Also Present

Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

It was noted that Nicci Morris had been appointed to replace Elaine Stewart.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman Phiala Mehring chaired the meeting.

30. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from David Babb, Chairman.

31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**33. LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOLS
ADJUDICATOR 2015**

The Forum received a copy of the draft of the Local Authority's Annual Report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), as set out on Agenda pages 9 to 33. 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 2015, and that it gave information relating to all schools in the Borough including free schools and academies. The template contained minor changes in emphasis on certain issues each year. This year more information had been requested on the use of the Fair Access Protocols and the admission of summer

born children, with less about appeals. She indicated that this was a draft and could be amended in light of any comments made by the Forum.

A few typographical errors were noted..

In relation to Section G – Local Authority Issues, where detailed statistical information about the transfer groups was provided, the following issues were raised:

- It is likely that the number of those children having to be diverted to a school not applied for will not reduce this year, as has happened in the past, because there have been a huge number of late and in-year applications for places. There is a serious shortage of places in Earley schools and parts of Woodley and in the south west of the Borough.
- There are new 'hot spots' this year, but next year they may be in different parts of the Borough; it is difficult to predict where.
- The areas with places changes each year, last year there was a low number of 'diverts'.
- There seemed to be a high number of people who only put down one preference, which if that cannot be met, means they may be allocated a school away from their local area. Parents should be encouraged to put more preferences; the Headteachers and Early Years representative suggested that schools and settings could help with getting out that message.
- The Admission's Team held three sessions for parents around the Borough to explain the admissions process and give guidance. Early Years settings and schools could help to get the message across to parents.
- There may be a need for the authority to produce a parents' guide to applying to 6th form. Such applications are not yet coordinated and there is no national closing date for applications.

RESOLVED: That the Local Authority's Annual Report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator 2015 be approved, subject to the correction of the identified typographical errors.

Forum Members said that the information provided in the report was very useful, and Sue Riddick was thanked for her hard work in preparing it.

34. UPDATE ON TRANSFER GROUP ALLOCATIONS FOR 2015

The Forum received and considered a report giving an update on the allocations for first entry to primary school, primary to secondary transfer, and the transfer to year 3 in junior schools, as set out on Agenda pages 35 to 56. The report included copies of the tables sent to parents with their allocation letters, which give detailed information about the initial allocations on 1 March (secondary) and 16 April (primary/junior).

From information contained in the previous item, the report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, it was noted that there had been an increase in the numbers of applications at both primary and secondary level. To meet increased need for primary places, 45 places were created by planned expansion of Shinfield Infant School (30) and Grazeley CE Aided Primary School.(15)

At the time of writing the report, there were 186 secondary places available at schools within the Borough; 12 places in Year 3 in junior schools and 56 reception/first entry places. At a similar stage in 2014 there were 118 secondary, 21 Year 3, and 59 reception places.

At primary level there were definite 'hot spots' where all children living in the designated area could not be allocated places. There are several schools in Earley. - Aldryngton, Radstock, and Hawkedon; with Lambs Lane, in Shinfield; and South Lake, in Woodley.

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.

35. UPDATE ON OWN ADMISSION AUTHORITY DETERMINED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 57 to 58 giving an update on the determined admission policies of own admission authority schools.

Sue Riddick reported that now all own admission authority schools were fully compliant with the requirements of the School Admissions Code in relation to their admission arrangements. There were one or two minor issues where detailed clarification was being sought.

In answer to a question about the admissions process for the new secondary school in Arborfield, Sue indicated that for the first year, they would not have to be part of the coordinated scheme, but she would be speaking to the sponsors to encourage them to join in.

RESOLVED: That the update report on the 2015/16 admission arrangements for own admission authority schools be noted.

36. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY FOR THE 2017/18 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

The Forum received a brief verbal report from Sue Riddick raising the issue of possible changes to the 2017/18 Admission Arrangements.

Following the revisions to the 2014 School Admissions Code, the timetable for consultation and determination of the arrangements has been brought forward, and is now as follows:

- Consultation on proposed arrangements must be a minimum of six weeks, and must be completed by 31 January;
- 28 February is the deadline for determination of the admission arrangements.

Sue indicated that in light of the planned provision of a new primary school to serve the new housing development on the TRL site in Crowthorne, there would be a proposal to remove that part of Hatch Ride Primary's designated area, and a small part of Oaklands Primary's designated area which are currently within Bracknell Forest Borough Council. A small grey area will be clarified.

Also that the criteria regarding Looked After Children, might be changed.

Own Admission Authority schools had been informed of the new timetable and will be reminded.

In response to a question about the possibility of Beechwood Primary expanding, Sue said that it would not require consultation, only the agreement of the Governing Body and the Local Authority.

In relation to the current problems in the Earley 'hot spot', a suggestion had been made that the number of preferences could be increased to 6; and there could be a joint designated area.

RESOLVED: That the suggestions be noted.

37. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates for planned future meetings of the Forum were noted:

1 December 2015 and 27 January 2016.

The consultation on the draft Admission Arrangements for 2017/18 academic year will be considered at the December meeting.