

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM  
HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2015 FROM 7.05 PM TO 8.10 PM**

**Councillors**

Ian Pittock

Beth Rowland

**Diocesan Representatives**

**Parent Representatives**

Phiala Mehring

Parent Governor Representative

**Representatives from the Local Community**

**Schools Representatives**

Nicci Morris

Hillside Primary School

**Also Present**

Sue Riddick

School Admissions Lead Officer

Luciane Bowker

Democratic Services Officer

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That David Babb be elected as Chairman of the School Admissions Forum for the remainder of the 2015/16 academic year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Phiala Mehring be appointed as Vice Chairman of the School Admissions Forum for the remainder of the 2015/16 academic year.

**3. APOLOGIES**

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

Apologies for absence were submitted from David Babb and Patricia Cuss.

**4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Phiala Mehring declared a personal interest relating to the Forest Academy draft proposals on the basis that she was a governor at that school.

**5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. It was noted that Phiala Mehring had been present at that meeting.

**6. PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES**

The Forum received and considered the proposed admission arrangements for voluntary aided schools and academies report which was set out on pages 9-46 of the Agenda.

Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer presented the report and went through the schools' consultation proposals as described below.

### **All Saint's CE Aided Primary School**

The school had been advised by the Diocese to consult on an amendment to criterion ii and clarification relating to all other admissions on page 4 and the waiting list in particular, together with clarification to the wording relating to the two places per year group for children attending the resource with complex needs. Sue explained that the changes were not substantial. The consultation had opened on 16 November 2015 and would close on 15 January 2016.

### **St Teresa's Catholic Primary School**

The school proposed to reduce the number of criterions from 11 to 10 by merging categories 3 and 4. This would make it fairer when offering places to practicing Catholics allowing offers to be made to those who were nearer to the school. The Diocese had also suggested changes to the practicing criteria and removed the need for the clarification on regular or irregular attendance, making the definition broader than before.

Members questioned the legality of placing '*Non-Catholic Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children in the care of the Local Authority*' lower down in the list of criteria. Sue explained that religious schools were exempt under the Code and were permitted to consider looked after and previously looked after of the faith ahead of that of other faith criteria and then to have non-faith looked after and previously looked after children ahead of other criteria.

The consultation had opened on 4 November 2015 and would close on 16 December 2015.

### **Evendons Primary School**

The school was consulting on the removal of criterion C relating to priority for children of a member of the Founder's team. This was no longer necessary as all members of the Founder's team had obtained a place for their children at the school. The school had also changed wording to that used by Wokingham Borough Council in its 2016/17 policy. Minor changes were proposed to clarify the administration of applications, waiting lists and appeal arrangements. Members noted that the admission number for Evendons was 50; Sue stated that this was due to the size of classrooms. The consultation had opened on 12 November 2015 and would close on 31 December 2015.

Sue stated that Oakbank was considering changes that would require consultation and it was their intention to start the process sometime in the future.

Members were informed that Earley St Peter's CE Aided Primary School and St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School would not be consulting on any changes to their policies.

Phiala Mehring tabled a paper containing the draft proposal consultation on changes to admission from 2017 relating to the Forest Academy. The proposed changes were:

- 1) *To embed year 11 exam results into the application process for the sixth form (listed in appendix B of the documentation)*

Phiala explained that this change would make the application process for sixth form clearer and easier to understand. It was important that parents understood that there were

a minimum number of pupils required to enable the school to run any given course. Phiala stated that the school had received guidance from Sue to draw up the proposal.

2) *To increase the admissions number for years 7 to 9 from 200 to 210*

Phiala pointed out that the admission number of 200 was historical, however in view of the financial constraints that were predicted in the coming years, it would be financially beneficial to increase the admission number to 210.

3) *Altering the school's catchment*

The school proposed to extend its designated area so that any child in the Borough would be accepted to the school. The following points were made during the discussion of this point:

- Sue pointed out that the tie breaker was a substantial change which needed to be consulted upon and explained what this meant in practice;
- Sue pointed out that where *exceptional medical or social needs* was mentioned in the tie breaker, it was necessary to make it clear if this was relating to the children or the family;
- Sue suggested that the school notify the Holt in particular of the proposed changes as the admission arrangements to both schools in the past had been linked. Phiala stated that as a courtesy the Holt would be informed of the proposals;
- Sue stated that the school should be aware that there would potentially be some sensitivity with Reading and Bracknell relating to the proposed change in designated area.

Phiala welcomed Sue's input and informed that she would recommend the amendments to the school. Phiala asked for Sue's help to ensure the school was making the changes correctly.

**RESOLVED** That: The report be noted.

**7. CONSULTATION ON 2017/18 PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES**

The Forum received the consultation on 2017/2018 proposed admission arrangements for voluntary controlled and community schools and co-ordinated admission schemes report as set out on Agenda pages 47-142.

There were six proposed changes to previous year's arrangements, which were not subject to consultation as listed below.

**An amendment to Criterion B to make clear that it applied to the medical and social needs of families**

Sue explained that this change made it clear that it referred to family and not children.

**Amendment to the residency requirements**

This was to strengthen the requirements for proof of residency. Sue pointed out that rigorous checks would be made to determine the child's home address and strong evidence of special arrangements would be required.

Sue explained that there was a paragraph making it very clear that when an applicant moved to a more favourable location after the allocation, the address originally declared on the application would be used.

Sue also pointed out that applicants would be asked to declare that the address used was expected to be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school.

In response to a question, it was clarified that where a child was living in temporary accommodation such as a Bed and Breakfast, the B&B address would be used for the school admissions application process. However the child's name would not go on a waiting list until the permanent residence was found unless there was evidence to support that this arrangement was likely to be a longer term arrangement, in which case an admissions panel would be able to decide based on the evidence provided.

### **Clarification following the issuing of guidance by the Department of Education relating to applications from Crown Servants**

Sue explained that it was unclear exactly who fell into the crown servant category and there were not many instances of school applications for families of crown servants in the Borough.

Councillor Ian Pittock pointed out that crown servants referred to MI5, MI6, Buckingham Palace and embassies; civil servants referred to other government bodies. However, it seemed that for school admission application purposes, the legislation intended the term crown servant to cover civil servants as well.

The Forum examined the paragraph about *Service Families* on page 76 of the report. It was noted that the garrison did not exist anymore so it was suggested that the wording be changed to '*army married quarters*'. The Forum also asked that references to Hazebrouck Barracks be made to reflect that this was the former Hazebrouck Barracks.

### **Clarification that parents will be asked to confirm annually, at the end of each academic year, whether they wish their child to remain on the waiting list for the following year**

Sue stated that the wording had been strengthened and parents would be asked to reapply to the following academic year in order to continue on the waiting list. If a response was not received the child would be removed from the waiting list.

### **Proposal to increase the designated area of Nine Mile Ride Primary School to address the anomaly that a small area of the Borough was not currently included in the designated area of any other school**

Sue stated that this issue had come to light when an application was received and it was found out that the address did not have a designated school attached to it. Nine Mile Ride School had been consulted and was in agreement to amend its designated area to include this small area. It was the Local Authority's intention that every area of the Borough belonged to a designated school area.

### **The inclusion of further information relating to places for two year olds into the F1 policy**

New rules included the entitlement of 15 hours of childcare per week. Sue pointed out that care providers were not allowed to take children before 7am or after 10pm.

Beth Rowland asked that the wording on the first paragraph on page 99 be changed from *'turn two'* to *'become two'*.

#### **8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND FORWARD PROGRAMME**

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be on 27 January 2016.

The Forum was informed that the admissions arrangements would be submitted to Executive on 18 February 2016.

#### **9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

Luciane Bowker, Democratic Services Officer suggested the Forum reviewed its membership in view of the current number of vacancies.

The following representations were currently vacant:

- one parent governor representative
- two local community representatives
- one primary school representative

It was agreed that the Forum should also include:

- one academy representative
- one junior representative;
- one free school representative

**RESOLVED** That: the relevant officers would be contacted to recruit more members to the Forum.