

MINUTES

County Admissions Forum

Thursday 13th October 2005
6.30 p.m., Committee Room B, County Hall

Admission Forum Members		Others Attending:	
Mrs Mary Calvert	Present	Mr Lao Cooper	Present
Mrs Pat Cherry	Present	Mr Jim Dalton	Present
Mrs Terrie Clift	Apologies received	Dee De Bruin	Present
Mr Stephen Drake		Mrs Amanda Derrick	Present
Mrs Jane Furnival	Present	Mr Justin Donovan	Apologies received
Mrs Janet Goldsmith	Apologies received	Mr John Harris	Present
Cllr Robert Gordon	Present	Cllr Derek Hills	Present
Mrs Helen Hyde	Apologies received	Mr Stephen Hozier	Present
Cllr Tanis Kent	Present	Mrs Jill Jackson	Present
Aislinn Lee	Apologies received	Cllr Barbara Lamb	Present
Cllr Richard Roberts	Present	Mr Lindsay Martin	Present
Mrs Maureen Roe	Present	Mrs Sarah Vize	Present
Mr Alan Scouller	Present		
Mrs Jeanette Shire			
Cllr Richard Smith	Apologies received		
Cllr Leonard Spencer (substitute for Richard Smith)	Present		
Mrs Brenda Southorn	Present		
Mr Rodney Tucker	Present		

	ITEM
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence:</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Terrie Clifft, Mr Justin Donovan, Mrs Janet Goldsmith, Mrs Helen Hyde, Aislinn Lee and Cllr Richard Smith,</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 16th June 2005</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.</p>
3.	<p>eAdmissions Project</p> <p>Amanda Derek introduced Dee De Bruin who is the Senior Marketing and Communications Officer who has been focusing on promoting online admissions in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Amanda Derek last attended the admissions forum a year ago. It was reported that since April 2005 the eAdmissions national project is now sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).</p> <p>A letter is being sent to all LAs outlining the importance of online admissions.</p> <p>Hertfordshire is rated as having excellent status, with regard to online admissions.</p> <p>The eAdmissions project is funded until December 2006.</p> <p>There are currently 16 members of staff in the eAdmissions project team.</p> <p>The eAdmissions national project is supporting LAs using information such as the LA toolkit which includes a minimum feature list, legal compliance guidelines and lessons learned. Research is being carried out by the eAdmissions national project relating to take-up and is supported by Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>There are three main admissions software suppliers, Arete, Capita and Tribal. Usability studies are currently being performed on the online admissions software.</p> <p>There are currently 10 LAs working on the Marketing and Communication Strategy. Funding has been provided by the eAdmissions national project. Examples of marketing collateral being produced include, T-shirts, advertising on buses and teddy bears.</p> <p>Bristol City has committed 50 pence to Barnardos for every online application received.</p> <p>The aim of the Marketing and Communications workstream is to investigate what types of advertising work in different LAs.</p> <p>In Hertfordshire parent/carer research was carried out, focusing on</p>

	<p>improving the promotion of online admissions in the admissions booklet and related parental information. Results include promoting online admissions on every page and the application form going at the back of booklet, instead of at the front of the booklet.</p> <p>There has been various marketing collateral including online leaflets being distributed through libraries and schools and calendars showing cut off dates and term dates. There have been interviews on the radio, and in general press, CSF news and the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (HGfL).</p> <p>There has been contact with Headteachers through Hertfordshire's admissions teams and the online admissions has been promoted at some information evenings as well as Black and Asian Conference and Governors Conference.</p> <p>In Bedwell the eAdmissions national project has helped support parents and carers who do not have computers through schools and parent centres.</p> <p>The latest figures where given for online admissions.</p>
4.	<p>Admissions Update 2005 / Year 7 Children out of School</p> <p>When producing the satisfaction rate figures, it was confirmed that the satisfaction rate increases when only ontime applications are taken into account.</p> <p>The report was introduced. Under 2.1 the total number of pupils who did not attend school for September 2005 should read 43 not 33. The figure as at 12 October, was however now 33.</p> <p>Officers were congratulated on the work that had been achieved.</p>
5.	<p>Update on matters relating to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA): Determinations in respect of Hertfordshire Schools</p> <p>The paper was introduced. With regard to the In-Year Variation request, the OSA noted that Hertfordshire was in a good position to do such forward planning. The OSA had agreed the in-year variations for all eleven schools for admission 2006.</p> <p>Where the Published Admission Number (PAN) was less than the Indicated Admission Number (IAN), Hertfordshire was required to publish notices for 39 schools. Two schools, Woodlands Primary and Richard Hale, received objections relating to PANS. The OSA agreed that for Woodlands Primary the PAN should remain at 30.</p> <p>For Richard Hale the OSA considered the PAN, and determined it should be increased from 150 to 161 for 2006 admissions. A query was raised as to whether Richard Hale's PAN should be increased further due to the popularity of the school.</p> <p>It was reported that there is going to be a scheduled review in Hertford and Ware which was part of the reason why the LA felt it was not appropriate to adjust the PAN. This area will be considered through the review.</p>

Objections had also been received by the OSA from three primary schools, St Peter's CofE Voluntary Aided, Maple Cross JMI and Shepherd Primary, relating to Rickmansworth School's admission arrangements. The OSA determined that Rickmansworth School should operate its 2005 admission arrangements for 2006 admissions. Appendix 5 demonstrated how Hertfordshire County Council will go forward with the school to address the Mill End and Maple Cross area.

The Chairman invited the County Councillor for Rickmansworth, Mrs Baraba Lamb, to address the Forum. She stressed the problems affecting the children in the Maple Cross and Mill End areas of her division whose nearest non-faith Hertfordshire School was Rickmansworth School, in Croxley Green, which was heavily oversubscribed, followed by Westfield, in Watford. She recognised that the Harefield Academy (formally John Penrose School) was the nearest school for many of these children but families had often ranked only Hertfordshire schools for which they were disadvantaged by the distance rules.

Officers will report back to the Admissions Forum on the progress being made in this area. It was also agreed that officers would report back on the progress being made with schools in other LAs.

It was agreed that a subgroup of the Admissions Forum would be created, if necessary and as required.

It was recognised that if admission rules are changed to help one community it is likely that this will disadvantage another.

6. Update on progress concerning LAC/SEN

The paper was introduced. Some voluntary-aided and foundation schools had not prioritised LAC/SEN in their criteria for 2006 admissions.

Various approaches have been undertaken to support and work with schools. The report outlines the progress that has been made throughout the summer.

Headteachers will go back to the Governing Bodies of voluntary-aided and foundation schools noting comments made by officers.

There are currently 208 Looked After Children in the county between Years 7 and 11 inclusive. The number of children in each transfer year group would therefore be approximately 40.

The Diocesan Authorities are following up with schools who are not prioritising LAC of the faith. Hertfordshire County Council is still working with both Diocese with regard to LAC not of the faith.

It was stated that Headteachers and Governing Bodies should give SEN their highest priority and concern was expressed about the difference between some schools in the number of SEN children admitted.

7. **School Admissions: DfES Code of Practice. Consultation**

The report was introduced. The draft Code of Practice had been distributed with the agenda.

The draft Code Of Practice clarified and strengthened the guidance relating to the strategy for Hard to Place Children.

The report highlights the comments the LA is proposing to make, including:

- the need for a national closing date and tighter guidance on the number of preferences that can be made (3.3)
- greater clarity for Looked After Children not of the faith. It is recognised that Looked After Children of faith must be prioritised (3.4)

The LA welcomes the guidance with regard to the hard to place protocol (3.7)

It was noted that:

1. random allocation can be used as a tie breaker after criteria such as Looked After Children and siblings to decide between applicants (3.5)
2. it has been identified that the LA should consult with their community and voluntary-controlled schools before going out to wider consultation (3.6)
3. It is recognised that there are certain circumstances where it might not be appropriate to admit a child with challenging behaviour (3.8)

The views on the proposed response from the Admissions Forum were sought.

It needs to be made clear as to what the position is with regard to Looked After Children not of the faith.

Roman Catholic schools should consult the Diocese before a wider consultation.

The LA will ensure there is a hard to place protocol in place as soon as possible, but not by 1 September. Hertfordshire plans to consult with all schools on the Hard to Place Protocol and will report back to the Admissions Forum at its next meeting.

Hertfordshire has been given a complimentary note in response to Code of Practice from the Archdiocese of Westminster. With reference to 4.24 of the Draft Code of Practice the Archdiocese would not want schools to fall back on the first preference first scheme because of the benefits of an Equal preference system. Hertfordshire will add this comment as well.

The proposed response was agreed with the exception of the comments made above.

8. **Consultation on Relevant Areas 2007/08**

LAs are required to consult every 2 years. The 21 Relevant Areas have worked well in that regard. It is recommended that we consult on this model, but adapt it slightly where priority areas have developed over the last few years. The Relevant Areas would now include parishes/towns that are outside of Hertfordshire, but included in our priority areas.

The Admissions Forum may be aware that generally priority areas and relevant areas do not align. Parents and carers may not have the right to object as they are not in the relevant area, but live in the priority area. We will need to look at the single sex priority areas to and how these align with relevant areas. There may also be changes in patterns of allocations and applications which may affect our relevant areas in the future.

The proposal is to consult on relevant areas as described above whilst conducting further modelling work.

The relevant areas are for consultation purposes, this does not change admission rules.

A query was raised as to whether we should be considering how school reorganisation affects the priority areas for secondary admissions.

Issues like this are always kept under review. The Hitchin/Letchworth priority area was changed to help Letchworth pupils.

The Admissions Forum will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed community rules for 2007.

The Admissions Forum agreed with the consultation proposals.

9. Confirmed dates of Next Meetings:

Thursday 23rd February 2006

Thursday 15th June 2006

Thursday 2nd November 2006 – Revised Autumn Date

Thursday 15th February 2007

To be held at 18.30 hrs – Committee Room B, County Hall

To be confirmed:

Thursday 14th June 2007