

Notes on the informal meeting held on Monday 12 March 2007, prior to the Admission Forum

Present: Dr Steven Burton (Rickmansworth School), Edgar Anderson (Rickmansworth School), Terri Cliff (Garden Fields School), Jane Winterbone (Highfield School), Sarah Vize, Alison Delyth

1. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the way in which the new requirement to **co-ordinate admissions beyond 1 March** could be developed sensibly in Hertfordshire. Discussions were exploratory at this stage.
2. Attached, for information, is a copy of the letter sent to the Chairs of Governors at all VA and Foundation schools inviting comments by 21 March.
3. The advantage of the current system is that VA and Foundation schools can offer places from their Continuing Interest list promptly i.e as soon as they know a vacancy exists.
4. The disadvantage is that it is possible for parents to receive two or even three new offers in a short space of time. This increases the uncertainty for parents and the amount of turbulence in the system as a whole.
5. The LA continues to co-ordinate admissions for community and VC schools until 31 August. The Continuing Interest list for community and voluntary-controlled schools rolls over to the In Year admissions process.
6. With central co-ordination, the LA would need to maintain a good pace of movement.
7. Suggestions emerging from the discussions:
 - Schools continue to maintain their Continuing Interest lists
 - On a specified day each week VA and Foundation schools would notify the LA of acceptances and rejections
 - On a specified day each week, the LA would let the school know how many new offer letters to issue (offer letter to be copied to primary school and LA)
 - For offers beyond 1st March parents would be given 5 school days from receipt of the offer to respond
 - If no response after 5 school days, the child's primary head teacher to be approached to help chivvy; this has the added advantage of the primary school being able to alert the offering school of any exceptional circumstances which might have affected a prompt response
 - If after 10 school days, there is no response the offer of the place is withdrawn (nb original offer must stand during this period)
 - Timescales to be extended to 10 + 5 days if a school holiday period is involved
 - Post 1st March Offer Letter will need to explain the deadlines and ask parents to remove their child's name from the continuing interest list of any

lower ranked schools – in both cases this is to maintain pace and to assist other parents

8. Other points made

- Turnover in Hertfordshire is not high but bureaucracy must be kept to a minimum
- For schools it is very important that there are not unfilled vacancies in September when a Continuing Interest List exists
- The LA will need to ensure that efficient systems exist for the regular exchange of information
- A related issue is that of the length of time schools maintain their Continuing Interest lists; – further work would take place concerning this for 2009 admissions
- How are Continuing Interest lists maintained? Including dealing with late applicants/new arrivals/mid year admissions – further work would take place concerning this for 2009 admissions