

## MINUTES

### County Admission Forum

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007  
6.30 p.m., Committee Room B, County Hall

Admission Forum Members		Officers Attending:	
Dr Steven Burton	Apologies	Mr Lao Cooper	Present
Mrs Pat Cherry	Present	Mr Jim Dalton	Present
Mrs Terrie Clifft	Present	Mr Justin Donovan	Apologies
Mr Brian Coulshed	Present	Mrs Julia Findley	Apologies
Cllr Robert Gordon	Present	Mr John Harris	Apologies
Cllr Tanis Kent	Present	Ms Jayne Howard	Apologies
Cllr Aislinn Lee		Mr Stephen Hozier	Apologies
Cllr David Lloyd – Chair	Present	Mrs Jill Jackson	Present
Mrs Maureen Roe	Present	Mr David Ring	Present
Mr Alan Scouller	Present	Mrs Sarah Vize	Present
Cllr Richard Smith	Apologies		
Mrs Brenda Southorn	Apologies		
Cllr Richard Thake	Present		
Mr Rodney Tucker	Present		
Mrs Jane Winterbone	Present		
Cllr Derek Hills (reserve for Richard Smith)	Present		

	ITEM	Who
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Dr Steven Burton, Mr T Griffiths, Cllr Richard Smith and Mrs Brenda Southorn.</p> <p>Cllr Derek Hills attended in place of Richard Smith.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Steve Holmes will become a member of the Admission Forum.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting would be amended to note that Maureen Roe was not present at the previous Admission Forum.</p> <p>With the exception of the above the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Matters arising from minutes</b></p> <p><b>Aptitude testing sub committee</b></p> <p>An initial meeting had taken place with regard to aptitude testing arrangements. It was reported that the working group had a good initial meeting. Mr S Johnson, from Watford Girls School chaired the group.</p> <p><b>Admission arrangements for 2008</b></p> <p>A query was raised with regard to the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). Parents/carers should be informed why it is necessary to complete a SIF. There was also some concern over the delay in communication between the Diocese and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) over the use of the SIF.</p> <p>Information regarding the use of the SIF has been communicated at the Forum meetings held in the spring term. HCC had wished to achieve wording concerning the SIF which was mutually agreeable to both the Diocese of St Albans and the Archdiocese of Westminster. Discussion had taken place with the Archdiocese of Westminster and wording was agreed. This wording was being adopted by individual schools. There were several schools where referrals had been made concerning the supplementary information text. It was therefore very helpful to have achieved agreed common wording. As individual schools amended the wording concerning the SIFs, HCC would write to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), requesting that the referral be withdrawn.</p> <p><b>IT Developments</b></p> <p>It was reported that a summary action plan has been produced following the recommendations of the auditor's report. The actions from this plan were reported to the Admission Forum.</p> <p>It has been decided to postpone the 'go-live' date for Tribal, and continue with the current admissions system for a further year. It was reported that this decision was made to allow for a parallel-run to take place with our current 'in-house' admissions system.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Admissions Update 2007</b></p> <p>The report was introduced to the Admission Forum.</p> <p>The report shows high levels of satisfaction, with some movement after allocation day through continuing interest.</p>	

	<p>The report highlights some areas of the authority where there has been pressure on places, for example in the St Albans area.</p> <p>A query was raised as to why the Secondary transfer figures in Watford Rural had gone up. It was recognised that after allocation day, people move into Hertfordshire. It was agreed that the figures for Watford Rural would be re-checked to ensure their accuracy. The results of this investigation will be reported back to the Admission Forum.</p> <p>There was some discussion surrounding the appeals process. Some members felt that appeals were being heard too late, whilst others felt that that this allowed time to go onto continuing interest before having to go to appeal is beneficial.</p> <p>The Forum wished to have an update on the appeals process. This would be organised with the Customer Focus Team in the format of the annual report, once this was published.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Compliant arrangements for 2008 admission and referrals to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator – Update</b></p> <p><b>Referrals</b></p> <p>The report was introduced, and is an update on the review and evaluation process of all 129 admission arrangements. There have been a number of withdrawals since the paper was produced.</p> <p>A referral has been made to the Office of the School’s Adjudicator (OSA) from Leventhorpe with regard to HCC’s Rule 3 sibling definition for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools.</p> <p>Dr Peter Matthews has been appointed as the Adjudicator for referrals relating to Hertfordshire.</p> <p><b>Feedback from the Admission Forum on the process for 2008 arrangements</b></p> <p>There were some issues raised with the way in which HCC made referrals to the adjudicator. It was felt that although all schools were individually contacted over the same issue, where it might be more appropriate to communicate with the Archdiocese.</p> <p>A comment was made that perhaps in some cases there were issues around timing and the language used. It does appear</p>	

	<p>that some of the exchange of letters were not timely. It was suggested that the involvement of a number of Officers may not have helped the process.</p> <p>It was suggested that where a general problem arises, that the Local Authority should involve the Diocese.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>It was confirmed that HCC wished to work with the Diocese and individual schools to achieve compliance.</p> <p>For 2009, HCC wishes to achieve compliant arrangements through improved planning. Initial meetings would be arranged with the Diocesan representatives to collaborate in this preparation work. It is planned these meetings will take place in late June/July.</p> <p>The Admission Forum noted the report, and wishes to offer support and guidance to schools where referrals have been made and remain with the adjudicator.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Co-ordination beyond 1 March 2008 – Update</b></p> <p>The Admissions Forum was asked to approve the progress HCC were recommending with regard to coordination beyond 1 March.</p> <p>It was highlighted to the Admission Forum that coordination beyond 1 March is now a requirement and that detailed development work is underway.</p> <p>HCC will be contacting all schools once the detail of the process has been agreed. There is one change to make to the proposal. Bottom of first page. Parents/carers to send the response form to HCC rather than the school.</p> <p>The Admission Forum agreed to the approach.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Nursery and Primary Admissions 2008/2009 – Distribution of Booklets</b></p> <p>The Admission Forum is asked to support the method of parents/carers accessing information for nursery and primary admissions 2008.</p> <p>Last year a Nursery letter was sent to parents/carers (approximately 12,000) instead of booklets. Only 2,000 parents/carers asked for a paper copy of the booklet. 90% of parents/carers applied online.</p> <p>Following feedback received to the nursery pilot, for 2008 admissions a leaflet would be distributed to all parents/carers</p>	

	<p>seeking nursery and primary places. In this way parents/carers would have information on the application process and clear signposting to the online service.</p> <p>In addition, there will also be encouragement given to parents/carers to apply online using school computers, where parents/carers do not have access to a computer at home.</p> <p>This process was discussed at the Early Years Forum. There were some concerns expressed about those parents/carers who do not have access to a computer. The process also needs to be explained in parents/carers first language.</p> <p>The Admission Forum agreed with the above approach.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Choice Advice</b></p> <p>Choice Advice is a new duty which has recently been introduced. The Local Authority believes that it should be called 'Admissions Advice'.</p> <p>Two Admissions Advisors have been appointed. They will be starting in July/August, working through to March next year.</p> <p>Their focus will be to support families who find it difficult to access the secondary transfer process and the target groups will be: traveller communities, areas of deprivation, referrals from schools, one to ones, and small groups of families.</p> <p>The admissions advice should be independent from the Local Authority and therefore these advisers will be part of the Parent Partnership service.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Exclusions Appeals – Update</b></p> <p>There was a concern raised over the high number of appeals being upheld. It was agreed that the Admission Forum needs to monitor the situation.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the West Area of the number of appeals upheld but where the child was then not reinstated.</p> <p>Statistics are available regarding those pupils which are reinstated, and those which are not.</p> <p>Governors are now taking advantage of training to fulfil their duties with regard to excluding pupils.</p> <p>The Admission Forum asked the Local Authority to look into these issues and report back.</p>	

	<p>It was reported that training for Headteachers and Governors is very good.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Fair Access Protocols – Update</b></p> <p>An update was given with regard to the implementation of the Fair Access Protocols.</p> <p>Approximately 150 pupils have been admitted through the Fair Access Protocols.</p> <p>The new set of arrangements is working well particularly in North Hertfordshire. . There are however a few outstanding issues. Officers will keep the Admission Forum up to date on progress.</p> <p>It was reported that there are some schools that are taking a disproportionate number of pupils.</p> <p>It was reported that there is a cross boarder issue, where there are hard to place pupils coming from across the boarder, these do not appear in the figures (Bedfordshire). There is currently little dialogue with the boarding authority.</p> <p>A query was raised as to what is going to happen with those schools, which have gone over their Published Admissions Number (PAN), is it going to disadvantage some other schools. The local group of schools would wish to consider how to manage this, due to the exceptional nature.</p> <p>It was confirmed that pupils (other than those defined in the fair access protocol) are only re-allocated to a school, once the total number of allocations fall below the PAN.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings:</b></p> <p>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 18.30 hrs – Committee Room B</p>	