

MINUTES of the meeting of Local Admissions Forum held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 18 March 2010 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor JW Hope MBE (Chairman)
Councillor AM Toon (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mr C Barker, Mrs E Kearns, Mr T Mepham
Mrs A Robertson and Mrs C Weston.

In attendance: None

23. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that it was with his regret that he had to inform members of the sad loss of Phillip McKinnie who had died recently. Mr McKinnie had been a member of the Forum since 2005 as the Consortium of Special Needs representative.

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs O Denson, Mr N Parker and Mr T Plumer.

25. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5 November 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

- (i) The name 'Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins' be replaced with the name 'Councillor AM Toon' in the resolution of Minute 14;
- (ii) The word 'prejudicial' being replaced with the word 'personal' in the second paragraph of Minute 18.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2011/2012 CONSULTATION

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report which informed Members of the results of the consultation of the proposed Herefordshire Admission Arrangements for 2010/2011 as required by The School Admissions Code pursuant to section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. He emphasised that three responses had been received from the consultation and that these were detailed in paragraph 3. He informed members that as a consequence of the new School Admissions Code which was effective

from February 2010, an additional section had been added relating to 'Admission of children below compulsory age' on page 17.

To clarify an issue raised, the Forum was informed by the Admissions and Transport Manager that walking routes, as referred to in Priority 5 on page 13, were defined as made up paths. Therefore, a footpath across a field was not a made up route.

RESOLVED: That the proposed arrangements, shown in Appendix 1, be determined for the 2011/2012 academic year.

29. AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBERS

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report which informed the Forum of proposed changes to the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) at Broadlands, Clehonger and Much Birch Primary Schools and John Masefield High School. Since the report had been circulated, he was able to advise the Forum of the following:

- Broadlands primary school would offering 8 places which compared to 15 places offered in 2009.
- Clehonger CE primary school would be offering 17 places which compared to approximately 9 places offered in 2009.
- Much Birch Voluntary Controlled (VC) primary school would be offering 28 places and a waiting list was in place.
- With regard to John Masefield high school the catchment area number had been revised to 93 and the out of area number revised to 15. There were also 6 System Allocation places. System Allocation places are as a consequence of parents not being offered any of their three preferences.

The Admissions and Transport Manager also informed members of the numbers of places being offered at other schools in the cluster/neighbouring primary schools. He also advised that Herefordshire had the highest percentage of first preferences met for secondary schools in the West Midlands. The percentage for first preferences met for primary schools had not yet been evaluated.

The Forum discussed

- the growing trend of falling rolls.
- the effects of parental preference and the revised Code of Practice.
- the issues facing schools that are relatively large but still face pressures due to the overall fall of numbers.
- the particular issues at schools which had been highlighted with the requests for a reduction in PAN at three of the schools in the report, alongside contextual information for the surrounding schools.

RESOLVED: That the requests for changes in PAN at Broadlands Primary school, Clehonger CE primary school, Much Birch VC primary school and John Masefield High school as detailed in the report be approved.

30. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

St Mary's High School – 2010/2011 Transfer Admission Round

At the request of a member, the Forum discussed the increase in published admission numbers at St Mary's RC High school from 135 to 150. The Forum noted that the school had stated that parental preferences were the reasoning for the increase plus the fact that the school was capable of accommodating them.

The Admissions and Transport Manager informed members that St Mary's school had been advised of the impact the increase in their admission numbers would have on other schools in the neighbouring area. The school Governing body considered this information alongside its wish to maximise parental preference in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code and determined, as the admission authority for the school, that it could offer 150 places for September 2010. The local authority was, therefore, obliged to recognise the increase and offer 15 additional places.

In response to an issue raised by the Vice-Chairman, the Admissions and Transport Manager informed the Forum that he had not received information from the school with regard to the school's compliance with the 2010/11 Schools Admissions Code.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the Vice-Chairman be authorised to meet with the Admissions and Transport Manager to discuss St Mary's RC High school's compliance with the 2010/11 School Admissions Code; and**
- (ii) if the school does not comply with the 2010/11 Code, a letter be written to the school requesting further information to enable an appropriate assessment to be made in respect of the new Code and admission numbers.**

The Chairman took the opportunity to give Mr C Barker his best wishes on his impending retirement.

The meeting ended at 7.13 pm

CHAIRMAN