

MINUTES of the meeting of Local Admissions Forum held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Wednesday 14 July 2010 at 6.30 pm

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

Mr C Barker, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins Mrs E Kearns, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Barker, Robertson and Mephram, Mrs A Robertson, Mr J Watt and Mrs C Weston,

In attendance: None

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor JW Hope be elected Chairman of the Forum for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: That Councillor JW Hope be elected Chairman of the Local Admissions Forum for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: That Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Local Admissions Forum for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Box, Mrs O Denson and Mr N Parker.

4. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mr J Watt substituted for Mrs O Denson.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18 March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

9. AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBERS.
Councillor JW Hope MBE, Prejudicial, School governor at Almeley Primary School.

7. REVISED CONSTITUTION FOR LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

The Democratic Services Officer presented a report which proposed an amendment to the Forum constitution to include a members Code with regard to declarations of interest. He drew Members attention to the current protocol whereby members are guided by the guidance issued by Herefordshire Council which was set out on the cover of Agenda for Admissions Forum meetings. He advised, however, that the Admissions Forum was bound by its own constitution and, therefore, was not obliged to adhere to protocols and procedures contained within the Herefordshire Council's constitution. He emphasised that in order to protect the integrity of Forum members and the Forum itself, there was a need to formalise the protocol with regard to interests of members.

RESOLVED: That the Admissions Forum approves

- (a) the proposed amendment to the constitution as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report; and**
- (b) the requirement for members to complete a Notification of Interests form.**

8. ANNUAL SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR REPORT

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report which requested consideration of the draft Annual Schools Adjudicator report, shown in the appendix to the report, as required by The Schools Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admissions Forums ((England) Regulations 2008 (the Regulations). He informed the Forum that all local authorities had to produce the report which the Schools Adjudicator would assess and determine accordingly the authority's performance. He advised that the report had already been submitted to the Adjudicator to comply with a timescale as required by the Admissions Code.

The Forum noted an issue of concern by a member that the Choice Advice Service was unable to be involved with Looked After Children.

With regard to a point raised regarding the percentage of local authority funding for free school meals (FSM), the table on page 37 refers, the Assistant Director, Planning, Performance and Development was of the view that the allocated funding was the percentage take up of FSM but that he would confirm that view following the meeting.

In relation to a the suggested substantial 2 per cent difference between those eligible for FSM and those taking up FSM in 2010, the Assistant Director, Planning, Performance and Development advised that he would investigate the reasons for the difference.

A member was of the view that the Schools Adjudicator question about service families was in the member's view an after thought. The member considered that the question should be more thorough and that he would be writing to the Adjudicator suggesting ways in which the question could more appropriately encompass service families.

In response to other points raised, members were informed that

- eligibility for free school meals was being promoted with Benefits.
- because of the timescale for submission to the Adjudicator, some information regarding school appeals, page 24 refers, was unavailable.
- the answer to (i) on page 32 was 'yes'.
- transport costs of home to school for each school are set out in the Parents Information Booklet.

RESOLVED: That the draft report and be noted.

The Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the next item of business.

9. **AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBERS**

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report regarding proposed changes to Planned Admission numbers at Almely, Canon Pyon and Madley primary schools.

In response to an issue raised regarding the proposed reduction in PAN at Canon Pyon primary school, the Admissions and Transport Manager was of the view that the proposed closure of Dilwyn primary school would not increase the pupil numbers at Canon Pyon primary school despite the proposed reduction in PAN at that school.

RESOLVED: That the individual school requests for PAN changes at Almeley primary school , Canon Pyon Voluntary Controlled primary school and Madley primary school be approved.

10. **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS BOOKLETS**

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report which requested approval of the Information for Parents Booklets for 2011/12.

In response to an issue regarding Church placed Forms being administered by schools and the confusion it was causing parents, the Head of Access and Capital Commissioning advised that he would review how the Forms were being administered with a view to the authority carrying out the administration.

With regard to the In-Year Fair Access Protocol Placement Panel, the Assistant Director, Planning, Performance and Development informed the Forum that he would look into the suggestion that the Choice Advisor did not have a role on the Panel and, therefore, should be deleted from the membership.

The following suggested amendments to the Booklets were agreed

- paragraph 3.4 – delete ‘Carol Weston’.
- reference to be made to the ‘Bishop of Hereford’s Bluecoat school’ throughout the Booklet for correctness.
- the return of Form PA1 by 31 August.
- it should be stated in paragraph 4 on page 129 that these are Anglican schools.
- there should not be reference to Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the prospectus of schools as SEN is not an over subscription criteria and that appropriate wording be included to explain the SEN criteria.

In response to a suggestion regarding an addition to the booklets which addresses the Service Community, the Admissions and Transport Manager informed members that he would discuss the proposed addition with the Armed Forces representative with a view to including appropriate wording.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the amendments in the bullet points above be incorporated in the Information for Parents Booklets;
- (ii) the administration of Church placed Forms be reviewed with a view to the Forms being administered by the Authority;
- (iii) the Choice Advisor's role and membership in the In-Year Fair Access Protocol Placement Panel be reviewed; and
- (iv) the addition of appropriate wording in the Booklets which addresses the Service Community;

11. INFORMATION REGARDING TRANSFERS OUTSIDE NORMAL ADMISSION ROUNDS

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report regarding statistics in relation to secondary school 'in-year' transfers. He informed members that the report was at the request of the Forum and provided information covering the last three years. He advised that currently, that the authority is not advised of transfers at schools outside the normal admissions rounds but with effect from September 2010 new computer software will be in place which will inform authority of transfers as they happen for each school.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

12. STANDARD APPLICATION FORMS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2011/12

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report which requested approval of the layout and content of the "common application form" to be used for the co-ordinated secondary transfer arrangement for September 2011, SA1, and the PA1 form for primary co-ordination to be introduced from the same time.

After discussion members agreed to the following amendments:

- The deletion of the final sentence at E2 on page 183.
- The reference to 'Bishops of Hereford Bluecoat School' be amended to read "Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat school".
- The notes on page 283 to contain information which clarifies what 'VA' is and the types of VA schools.

RESOLVED: That subject to the amendments detailed in the bullet points above, the SA1 and PA1 application forms be approved.

13. PROPOSED TERM DATES FOR 2011/12 AND 2012/2013 ACADEMIC YEARS

The Admissions and Transport Manager presented a report regarding proposals to adopt the School Term Dates for both 2011/12. Schools had been consulted on the proposals and arrangements in neighbouring authorities had been taken into account. The preferred versions after consultation were detailed in Appendices 6A and 6C attached to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) Option A as detailed in Appendix 6A for proposed School Term Dates for 2011/2012 be approved; and
- (b) Option A as detailed in Appendix 6C for proposed School Term Dates for 2012/2013 be approved.

14. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a matter raised regarding St.Mary's RC High school's compliance with the School Admission Code, Minute No.30 of the meeting held on 18 March refers, the Admissions and Transport Manager informed the Forum that the School did comply with the Code.

The Choice Advisor raised drew members' attention to the In-Year Fair Access Protocol. In her view, headteachers were being experiencing undue pressure to provide appropriate travel arrangements for children. She suggested that travel arrangements for children as required by the In-Year Fair Access Protocol should be decided by an independent panel which would take the pressure away from Headteachers.

The Assistant Director Planning, Performance and Development acknowledged the member's concerns. He advised that there was an appeals process for parents with regard to transport for their children and that decisions on transport in relation to the In-Year Fair Access Protocol were not the responsibility of the Admissions ad Transport team. He would take the matter up with the Chairman of the In-Year Fair Access Protocol Group.

It was noted that when put into practice, In-Year Fair Access Protocol protocol did not always achieve its aims.

After further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that a report be submitted to the next meeting detailing how the In-Year Fair Access Protocol protocol has worked since its inception.

The Chairman reminded members that this was the last meeting that Mr Barker would attend prior to his retirement. On behalf of the Forum, he thanked him for his contribution to the Forum and wished him a happy retirement.

The Chairman also congratulated Councillor Toon on her election as Mayor of Hereford.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

CHAIRMAN