

CONSTITUTION OF HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Introduction

The constitution of the LAF has been established under the provisions of the Education (Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2002.

In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Herefordshire Local Admissions Forum (LAF) was set up. The School Admissions Code 2007 is made under Section 84 of the School Standards Framework as amended by Section 40 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Relevant Area

For the purpose of organising a local admissions forum, the Local Education Authority has determined that the relevant area will be the County of Herefordshire. If the discussion covers a cross-border issue the Forum may invite a representative from the appropriate authority.

Role of the Forum

- a) consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the local authority;
- b) promote agreement on admission issues;
- c) review the comprehensiveness, effectiveness within the local context, and accessibility of advice and guidance for parents by the local authority, both through the published composite prospectus (see Appendix A attached) and the delivery of Choice Advice (see Appendix B attached) within the area of the forum;
- d) consider the effectiveness of the authority's proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements, and advise on whether the authority's proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements differ substantially from the previous year;
- e) consider the means by which admissions processes might be improved and how actual admissions relate to the admission numbers published;
- f) monitor the admission of children who arrive in the authority's area outside a normal admission round with a view to promoting arrangements for the fair distribution of such children among local schools, taking account of any preference expressed in accordance with arrangements made under section 86(1) of the School Standards Framework Act 1998 and in accordance with this School Admissions Code 2009;
- g) promote the arrangements for children with special educational needs, children in care and children who have been excluded from school;
- h) monitor the effectiveness of local authority Fair Access Protocols;
- i) In discharging fair access responsibilities, an objection will be referred to the Schools Adjudicator where either it identifies admissions policy, practice or oversubscription criteria of a school that may be unfair, unlawful or that contravene the mandatory

provisions of the Code, or where its advice has been disregarded by admission authorities;

- j) Review the impact of local admissions policies on achieving fair access;
- k) Consider any other admission issues that arise;
- l) Any other matters that the Forum deems to be relevant.
- m) The Local Admissions Forum will publish an annual report, which covers:
 - (i) a breakdown of preferences met by ranking and the main factors affecting whether preferences were met;
 - (ii) the number of admission appeals made for schools in the area;
 - (iii) the ethnic and social mix of pupils attending schools in the area, and factors which affect this;
 - (iv) the extent to which existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of vulnerable children;
 - (v) how well In-Year Fair Access Protocols are working and the number of children admitted to each school under the protocol;
 - (vi) whether primary schools are complying with infant class size legislation;
 - (vii) details of other matters that affect how fairly admission arrangements serve the interests of local children and parents; and
 - (viii) any recommendation/s that the forum wishes to make in order to improve parental choice and access to education in the local authority's area.

Membership

The Membership of the Forum must not exceed 20 Core Members.

CORE MEMBERS

- (i) 2 elected Members of Herefordshire Council
- (ii) 2 Community School Representatives (1 Primary and 1 Secondary)
- (iii) 1 Voluntary Control School Representative
- (iv) 1 Voluntary Aided School Representative
- (v) 2 Foundation School Representatives
- (vi) 1 Academy School Representative
- (vii) 1 Church of England Representative
- (viii) 1 Roman Catholic Representative
- (ix) 3 Parent Representatives

- (x) 1 Armed Forces (Local Community Representative)
- (xi) 1 Consortium of Special Needs (Local Community Representative)
- (xii) 1 Choice Advisor (Local Community Representative)
- (xiii) 1 School Governor Representative
- (xiv) 1 Independent Sector Representative

The quorum for the Forum will be a third of the appointed core members.

Tenure of Office

Core members of the Forum will serve for a period of four years and their tenure of office is determined by paragraph 9 of Statutory Instrument 2008 No.3091.

Substitutes

Each nominating group may arrange for a substitute to attend when its normal representative cannot do so in line with paragraph 10 of Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 3091. That arrangement is designed to ensure that groups can be represented, though it is important for there to be as much continuity as possible from one meeting to the next.

Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Forum will be elected at the first meeting by the core members and thereafter the term of office will be considered annually.

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman the meeting will elect a Chairman from the core membership group for the meeting.

Calendar of Meetings

The Forum will meet at least twice a year.

Timing of Meetings

Meetings will start at times acceptable to the Forum, and will normally be limited to two hours duration.

Convening and Notice of the Meetings

All meetings will be convened by the Secretary of the Forum who is an Officer of Herefordshire Council nominated by the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic. Written notice of meetings and the agenda will be sent to members of the Forum 7 days before the meeting (or 3 clear days in the case of an Extraordinary meeting) with any relevant documents to the Agenda items 7 days in advance of the meeting.

Non-receipt by any members of notice of a meeting will not invalidate the meeting.

Agenda

The Agenda will be prepared by the Secretary, in consultation with the Chairman and the Lead Officer nominated by the Director of Education.

Items may be placed on the agenda by any member of the Forum by notice in writing to the Secretary received at least 10 clear days prior to the meeting.

Papers relating to the agenda items will be sent to members with the agenda. The Chairman may agree that papers should also be tabled at the meeting.

Late Items/Any Other Business

Immediately before the minutes of the previous meeting have been approved, members should inform the meeting of any item they wish to raise under any other business. The meeting will decide whether any items so identified may be raised under any other business or deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of meetings, including a record of persons attending, will be drafted by the Secretary.

The draft Minutes of the meeting will be considered for approval or amendment at the start of the following meeting. Any dissenting view will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting, if that is the wish of one or more members present.

Decision Making

Decisions should normally be made through consensus.

In the event of an item receiving two separate motions, the matter would be resolved by simple majority voting with each representative entitled to one vote. The Chairman will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

The Forum may decide that, before reaching a decision on a matter affecting particular schools, it would be appropriate to hear representations from the school(s) affected. Such representations may be made by written submission, but could also include oral presentations, lasting no more than five minutes, or such time limit to be set by the Chairman, per school, with the opportunity for members of the Forum to ask questions before reaching a final decision.

Declarations of Interest

It is recognised that all Schools Group members will have an interest in at least one school. It is important that members should declare if the item under discussion could make a material difference to that school, or where they may have a personal or prejudicial interest. Notwithstanding this, a member may continue contributing to the discussion, but should not take any part in any decision made concerning that particular proposal which uniquely changes funding for their particular school/schools. (An advice note concerning declarations of interest is attached at Annex 1).

Rights of Press and Public to attend Meetings

The press and public will be entitled to attend meeting of the Forum but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information as if meetings of the Forum were those of the local authority.

The Secretary will arrange for a public announcement of meetings of the Forum, and will also arrange for minutes and papers relating to the Forum meetings to be available for inspection in Council Offices and Public Libraries after the draft minutes have been approved by the Forum.

Members of the public may submit written questions provided they reach the Secretary at least 48 hours before the relevant meeting.

ANNEX 1

ADVICE NOTES CONCERNING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There are many instances where a decision on an issue will have an effect on all schools, be it on a pro rata basis, and as such members would not declare an interest. Where a decision on an issue 'uniquely' affects one particular school, at which the member is, for example, the employee of that school, or where the employee's children attend, then it would be appropriate for an interest to be declared.

In considering the declaration of an interest, a Member of the Forum should apply the following test: would a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, reasonably think that the member might be influenced by the interest?

A prejudicial interest would include the situation whereby a proposal uniquely affects either a school at which they are for example an employee or which their children attend.

Any member who requires advice/guidance concerning declarations of interest or any other issue concerning the Forum should contact the Clerk in the first instance on telephone number 01432 383408.