

Leeds Admissions Forum

Tuesday, 1st March, 2011

PRESENT: Mrs S Knights in the Chair

Councillor J Dowson – Leeds City Council
Mrs S Norfolk – Leeds Primary Care Trust
Ms F Woolaston – Community School
Ms A Williamson – Choice Advice Service

In Attendance

Mrs V Buckland – Education Leeds
Ms Simms – Education Leeds
Mrs A Oldroyd – Legal Services
Mrs J Lounds – Legal Services
Mr J Grieve – Governance Services

40 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the March meeting of the Leeds Admission Forum

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor P Gruen, Mrs L Bryan, Mr R Raj, Mr J Daulby, Mr P Forbes, Mrs Beevers, Mr R Hamilton, Mr R Madelely and Mrs H Lewis

QUORUM

The Clerk reported that with only five Members in attendance the meeting was inquorate

It was the wish of Members that the meeting continued as scheduled, any decisions made at today's meeting being ratified later when the meeting was quorate

42 UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP - LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

The Secretary to the Forum reported that currently, there were two outstanding vacancies; one was for a Foundation School representative, and it was reported that nominations were being sought. The second vacancy was in the Local Community Category. At the last meeting it was suggested that a SEN representative occupy this vacancy, this suggestion was currently being explored by Officers.

43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th February 2011 were accepted as a true and correct record

44 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no issues raised under matters arising

45 CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee held on 16th February 2011 were submitted for information and comment.

In passing comment the Chair suggested that the introduction of the new Education Act may have implications for the future operation of the Sub Committee but at this stage it was too early to speculate.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the minutes be noted

46 UPDATE FROM THE CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE ON THE OPERATION FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS

Members considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the operation of the Fair Access Panels and the admission of children during the academic year 2010/11

The Chair said that the report had been discussed at the recent Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

47 FAIRNESS OF ADMISSIONS POLICIES SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Fairness of Admissions Policies Sub Committee held on 16th December 2010 and a subsequent meeting held on 3rd February 2011 were submitted for information and comment.

Mrs V Buckland, Head of Service, School Access Service referring to the meeting held on 3rd February 2011, said that the Garforth Academy Admission Policy and also the Update on Annual Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2012 had been discussed at length

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Fairness of Admissions Policies Sub Committees held on 16th December 2010 and 3rd February 2011 be received and noted

48 INITIAL PREFERENCE SUMMARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

Members considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provides an indication of the initial preferences and the impact on demand for September 2011

In providing background information, Mrs V Buckland reported that entry into secondary school in September 2011 and September 2012 was expected to be the smallest cohorts of children in the City. There were about 300 fewer children applying this year for year 7 places. The government introduced a national closing date for applications for both primary and secondary applications. Whilst the national offer day for secondary remains 1st March, the closing date for applications for primary is not until 15th January, putting the offer date to 20th April this year. There was no national primary offer day but it was likely to be mid April each year.

Main Issues

Secondary

Education Leeds had been able to offer 86% of parents their first preference school, an increase of 2% from last year. Of the 779 parents who had not been given their first preference, over a quarter of them were asking for Roundhay. Despite being advised that they were not likely to be offered a place, parents continued to ask for the school. In these cases parents are very strongly advised to be realistic with at least one of their preferences. The other most oversubscribed schools were Abbey Grange, Allerton High and Pudsey Grangefield.

All children who expressed a preference for their nearest school were able to be offered one. Many traditionally popular schools were not full this year due to the small cohort entering year 7. Approximately 100 children did not express any preference despite advising their primary schools and follow up work by the Choice Adviser. A further 200 parents who did express a preference were not able to be allocated any of them. None of these families asked for their nearest school as one of their preferences. There were a total of 7624 places allocated.

Primary

At this stage only preliminary overview can be provided. Approximately 8200 preferences were received, which is similar than this time last year. However the closing date last year had been October and a great deal of chasing up had taken place by February. This year due to the later closing date, the chasing up the remaining preferences is only just beginning .

At present a similar number of schools were oversubscribed to that as last year. There were a number of schools where it would be expected to see more preferences, the Admission Team would shortly be contacting all nurseries with children known to be on their roll who had not yet expressed a preference.

In conclusion Mrs Buckland said secondary demand had fallen and there were no areas of the city where nearest children were unable to gain a place. Birth rates were rising for Reception and due to legislative changes the offer day would not be until 20th April so detailed information was not yet available.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That a further report providing a update be brought to the next Forum meeting.

49 UPDATE ON THE ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

Members considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the responses to the consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2012.

In addressing the report Mrs Buckland said that the consultation was seeking views on the following issues:

- **Coordinated scheme – primary and secondary.** The coordinated scheme primarily affects the sharing of information with other local authorities and own admission authority schools. Much of it is guided by national closing dates and the national offer day for secondary. Of the 105 responses received by the deadline, 31 responded to the question on the coordinated scheme. Of these 29 were in agreement and two against. The two who were not in favour were not own admission authority schools or local authorities.
- **Coordinated scheme – in year.** From January 2010 each local authority should have in place a published coordinated scheme for in year transfers. The coordinated schemes specifies how an admission authority would deal with applications and the timeframes for response. There were 34 responses of which one was 'ambivalent', 27 were in favour, four against and two did not specify but made comments about needing to ensure the applications were dealt with swiftly.
- **In-year Waiting Lists.** There were 52 responses to the question of whether to hold in year waiting lists. Of these 43 were in favour and nine against. Six of those in favour and two of those against were from own admission authority schools who could choose for themselves whether or not they wished to operate a waiting list. 23 responses were from parents; one was against and 22 in favour.
- **Changes to the sibling priority at secondary school.** There were 58 responses to the question of whether priority should be for 'nearest siblings', 'nearest', other siblings, then other children by distance. Last year no children would have been affected by this change in policy. Again this year there

would not have any affect as all children applying for secondary school had been able to be offered their nearest school if they asked for it. As birth rates rise the situation wouldl change and the issue would become one of fairness.

There were 22 respondents in favour of changing and 36 who were opposed. Parents accounted for 33 of the responses. Ten parents were in favour and 24 were against.

Of the comments received those in favour felt the change would be fairer to everyone and stated that children were more independent, were inclined to travel to school on their own, and the issue of having children at more than one school had to be overcome when the oldest child moved to secondary school anyway. Those against were concerned about building a relationship with the school, and felt it would be unfair if they had to consider sending their children to different schools if they moved house.

- **Changing the sibling priority at primary level.** This item attracted the greatest level of response with 98 submissions. Of these 14 were in favour and 84 were against. Parents accounted for 68 of the responses with five in favour, and 63 against.

It should be noted that an analysis showed that such a change would have affected only 36 children last year, out of 2700 siblings. Of the 2403 that hade already applied this year 31 had not asked for the same school as their older sibling as the first preference. This is the typical proportion each year.

- **Changes to school admission numbers:**

Primary	Current A/L	Proposed A/L	
Middleton St Mary's	50	60	1 objection from a local resident
Middleton Phillips	25	30	
Micklefield CE Primary	30	20	
Corpus Christi Primary	50	45	
Oulton Primary	50	60	
*Richmond Hill Primary	60	90	
Wykebeck Primary	45	60	
Bracken Edge	45	60	
Cottingley Primary	40	45	
Secondary			
Allerton High	180	185	
Rodillian	210	240	1 objection from a local school about affects on others

105 responses had been received, compared to 11 last year. These comprise 70 from parents, 20 from governing bodies or head teachers, seven from own admission authority schools, three from appeal panel members, two from elected members, and one each from a Diocese, a member of school staff and a local resident. With regard to admission number changes there were only two comments opposed to any of the changes.

A local resident had objected to the expansion of Middleton St Mary's, and had also objected to the planning department regarding some building work at the school. There was both need for and demand for the additional places the school are looking to offer. It was proposed to proceed with the increase and allow the planning process to appropriately deal with the objections raised regarding transport and residential issues

There had been one objection to the increase at Rodillian from a local school. It was the view of Officers that demographically no increase was required in secondary places in the area in 2012, and the request to increase had come from the school. Education Leeds were aware of issues with staff parking in bus bays at the school and had received a written assurance from the Headteacher that this would be resolved. However, the issue may require planning permission for additional parking, and it was too early to know whether this would be likely to be granted. On balance it would be prudent to turn down the request for an increase until such time as the issue with parking was resolved and the need for places arises. It would be possible for the school to request additional pupils in September 2012 without an increase in their admission number, should such demand exist and should the issue with the bus bays be resolved. The school could then formally request a permanent increase for September 2013.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That no view be offered in respect of the Coordinated scheme - Primary and Secondary Schools
- (ii) That no view be offered in respect of the Coordinated scheme - In year
- (iii) To support the proposals for an In-Year Waiting List
- (iv) That no view be offered in respect of the changes to the sibling priority at Secondary School
- (v) That the Forum do not support a change to the sibling priority at Primary level.
- (vi) To support the proposed changes to school admission numbers as set out in section 3.11 of the submitted report

(The Chair declared a personal interest in (vi) above, her son was currently a pupil at Allerton High School, one of the schools proposing changes to the school admission numbers. The Chair did not take part in the discussion or voting thereon)

50 MIGRATION OF CHILDREN FROM COLTON TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHIN GARFORTH

Members received an update from the Director of Children's Services on the migration of children from the Colton area to Primary Schools in Garforth

Mrs Buckland reported that over the past academic, year 2 pupils from the Woodlesford area and 4 pupils from the Rothwell area had transferred to Primary schools in Garforth, no transfers had been made from the Colton area.

In summing up the Chair said that children transferring from Colton Primary Schools to Primary Schools within Garforth no longer appeared to be an issue.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That transfers to Primary schools within the Garforth area continue to be monitored

51 INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION SERVICES

Members considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an explanation as to how the Education Service would be integrated as a function into the Department of Children's Services and the continued support of the Admission Forum

In providing background information Mrs Buckland said Education Leeds was a private company wholly owned by Leeds City Council. It had been in existence for the last ten years and the contract was due to end on 31st March 2011.

Mrs Buckland said that Schools Admissions were a statutory function which must be carried out by the local authority. As such there are no fundamental changes expected to take place as a consequence of Education Leeds re-entering Leeds City Council. There were a small number of changes outlined in the recent Education Bill which had recently had its second reading in the House of Commons. The most significant changes affecting the Admission Forum would be that the body would no longer be statutory. Should the Education Bill be enacted in its current form then the local authority would have to decide whether to continue with an Admission Forum.

A questionnaire from Comprehensive Future (the campaign for fair school admission policies in England) had been sent to all Chairs of Admission Forums.

Further changes were anticipated as the government had indicated that they would be bringing forward a new School Admissions Code for consultation in the spring. Details were not yet available. For the foreseeable future Admissions Forum would continue to receive the same level of input and support from the Admission team as it currently does.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

52 ADMISSION FORUM WORK PROGRAMME

Members received and considered the Forum's Work Programme for 2011/12

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the scheduled Work programme for 2011/12
- (ii) To update the Work Programme to reflect the decisions made at today's meeting

53 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no issues raised under any other business

54 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting of the Forum will take place on Tuesday 14th June 2011 at 4.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds.