

Leeds Admissions Forum

19th April, 2007

PRESENT:

Councillor P Gruen
Councillor M Coulson
Mrs S Knights – Parent Governor (Special)
Mr I Faulkinham – Parent Governor(High)
Mr J Young – Igen
Mr R Finnigan – RC Diocese
Mrs T Richardson – Social Services
Mr D Shipley – Community School Representative
Mr B Stott – Community School Representative
Mrs S Redding – Aided School Representative
Mrs D Wood – Controlled School Representative
Mr J Steel – (School Member)

OFFICERS

Mrs R Vahey – Education Leeds
Mrs V Buckland – Education Leeds
Mr C Wrench – Education Leeds
Mrs D Leonard – Legal Services
Miss L Pilgrim – Governance Services
Mr J Grieve – Governance Services

54 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Secretary to the Forum submitted a report explaining the process for electing the Chair and Vice Chair to the Leeds Admission Forum.

The Secretary to the Forum sought nominations for the position of Chair. Sue Knights nominated Councillor Gruen. Bob Stott seconded the proposal

RESOLVED – That Councillor Peter Gruen be elected Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for a one year period concluding April 2008.

(Councillor Gruen assumed the Chair)

The Secretary to the Forum sought nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Councillor Gruen nominated Sue Knights. Councillor Coulson seconded the proposal

RESOLVED – That Sue Knights be elected Vice Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for a one year period concluding April 2008

55 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN SUB COMMITTEE

The Secretary to the Forum submitted a report explaining the process for electing the Chair and Vice Chair to the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee.

The Secretary to the Forum sought nominations for the position of Chair. Councillor Gruen nominated Bob Stott. Sue Knights seconded the proposal

RESOLVED – That Bob Stott be elected Chair of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee for a one year period concluding April 2008.

The Secretary to the Forum sought nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Bob Stott nominated Vivian West. Councillor Gruen seconded the proposal

RESOLVED – That Vivian West be elected Vice Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for a one year period concluding April 2008

56 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair began by thanking Forum Members for their support on his reappointment as Chair. In commenting upon the work of the Forum the Chair said it was very much an advocacy roll, challenging Education Leeds for the benefit of parents and communities. Non performing schools would be made more accountable. The introduction of a work program would assist the Forum in scrutinising particular issues and developing models of best practice.

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harker, Councillor Shelbrooke, Mrs F Beevers, Mrs E McAllister, Mr P Forbes, Ms. P Hill, Mrs. V. West and Mr. J. Daulby.

58 MEMBERSHIP OF LEEDS ADMISSIONS FORUM

The Secretary to the Forum submitted a report outlining the current position on membership of the Forum and invited nominations from the core membership for further members. The Secretary informed the Forum of new appointments recently been made by the authority:

- Mr. J. Steel - Head teacher Prince Henrys Grammar School (Schools Member).
- Mr. J. Daulby - Head teacher John Smeaton High School (Schools Member).
- Mrs. E. McAlister - Head teacher Brodetsky Primary School to replace the previous Headteacher (Schools Group)
- Mr. J. Young - Operations Manager of igen (Local Community Representative Vacancy).

Two nominations were also presented to the Forum under the category of 'Other Members'. for appointment. Mr. J . Faulkingham was a governor of NW SILC and Mrs. L. Bryant was a member of the delegation from Colton Parents Primary school which had previously attended a meeting of the Forum. The Secretary advised the Chair that Mrs Bryant was unable to take up the Vacancy on the Forum for 'Primary School Governor' as she was not a Member of the Education Scrutiny Board. The Forum noted that there was no representative from any of the Further Education (FE) Colleges despite approaches made to the colleges in the past. It was agreed that the FE colleges should be contacted again to allow for their input into the 14-19 review. A Member of the Forum suggested that John Fryer from the North West Management Board should be contacted to join the Forum and that expressions of interest should be invited from foster carers. The Chair suggested that other vacancies on the Forum should be advertised and asked Members to advise the Secretary of appropriate candidates for Membership of the Forum.

RESOLVED -

- i. To note the appointment onto the Forum of Mrs E McAllister (Jewish Aided School Representative) and Mr J Young (Local Community Representative)
- ii. That the recommendation that Mr. J. Faulkingham and Mrs. L. Bryant be appointed as 'Other Members' be approved.
- iii. That Further Education Colleges be invited to nominate a representative to the Forum. Any nominations should be directed to the Secretary to the Forum in the first instance.

59 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th February 2007 were considered by the Forum. In passing comment Mr. Young advised that his first name had been spelt incorrectly and Miss. Wood indicated that she had been present at the meeting.

RESOLVED - That subject to the inclusion of the above amendments the minutes of the last meeting of Leeds Admissions Forum held on 6th February 2007 be approved as a correct record.

60 MATTERS ARISING

Viv Buckland advised that in relation to minute 43 that all Colton Primary School children had been offered a school of their preference and it was hoped the same would happen for the next admissions round.

With regard to minute 47 Chris Wrench advised the Forum that there were no problems, in principle, of including SILCs in the online application process. This would be picked up in the review into the admissions process for SILCs.

The Forum was advised that the Executive Board had not approved the Admissions' Forum recommendation to break the link between siblings going into the sixth form

and those transferring into year 7. The Secretary reminded that Forum that their role was advisory and that the Executive Board was entitled to reject the Forum's recommendations. The Executive Board recommended that 'the proposal to break the sibling link when the older child is in the sixth form be not approved and that Education Leeds be requested to give further considerations as to how difficulties in administering the current arrangements might be more appropriately addressed'. It was the wish of the Forum that further information be obtained as to why the proposal was rejected and reported back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED - That further information be obtained as to why the proposal was rejected and reported back to the next meeting.

61 VOLUNTARY AIDED ADMISSIONS POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

The minutes of the last meeting of the Voluntary Aided Schools Admission Policies Sub-Committee held on 19th February 2007 were considered by the Forum. In passing comment Mr. Wrench said that schools had until the end of April to send a finalised copy of their admissions policies and that these would be discussed at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. The policies would be brought back to the Forum if there were any areas of concern.

RESOLVED - That the Minutes be noted.

62 VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICIES SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the progress made by the Voluntary Aided Admissions Policy Sub-Committee. Addressing the report Chris Wrench informed Members of a correction to the report indicating that Ripon and York was a Church of England Diocese and not Catholic. Mr. Wrench suggested that the final report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum..

RESOLVED - That the successful work of the Sub-Committee and comprehensive advice given to voluntary aided schools be noted.

63 CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the last meeting of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub-Committee held on 15th March 2007 were submitted for Members information. The Chair of the Sub Committee, Mr. Stott reported that a Secondary Inclusion Panel for the East wedge had since been established and would have its first meeting in May 2007. Commented on minute 27, Mr Stott said that local authorities were required to have implemented their In Year Fair Access Protocol (formerly Hard to Place Pupil Protocol) by September 2007. It was reported that data on permanently excluded pupils and children missing from education a report would be submitted to the Forum in the future.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub-Committee be noted.

64 UPDATE ON THE CURRENT ADMISSIONS ROUND

The Chair welcomed Amy Williamson, Choice Adviser, Education Leeds to her first meeting of the Forum. Miss. Williamson outlined her role in assisting parents with the transfer of pupils to year 7. Although her role did not involve attending the Appeals she was available to provide advice on the procedures followed and the preparation of their case. Improved links had been made with head teachers at primary schools and parents. Viv Buckland advised that the service which was provided by Amy complimented the work carried out in the Admissions Team and there had been a significant decrease in the number of parents who did not return their common preference form within the deadline. The Forum welcomed the work of the Choice Adviser as a positive step which aided parents in both the transfer and appeals process.

Viv Buckland presented a report which provided a summary of the admissions round in 2007. The Admissions Policy had been amended in respect to children who lived outside of the Leeds Boundary. Previously a child from another district was a priority for a Leeds school if it was their nearest Leeds school despite the fact that they may have lived closer to a school in their own district. Extra district children who had a closer school in their own authority now only qualified under the distance criteria the same way that Leeds children did. This had a noticeable affect on Woodkirk and Priesthorpe High Schools where 35 and 22 Leeds children were offered places under the new policy who would not have received the places under the old policy.

The Forum was advised that all children in the south of the city had received a place at a south Leeds school due to schools agreeing to over allocate for this year. The Authority was unable to allocate all nearest children to Roundhay and Temple Moor. All children in the Colton area had been allocated either Temple Moor or Garforth and both Boston Spa and Brigshaw had filled due to placements which indicated the decline in demographics as both schools remain popular and successful.

Primrose had proved very popular and not all nearest children had been allocated a place at the school. Children who had failed to get a place were allocated to the next nearest school with places, if parents preference could not be met, which was usually City of Leeds.

Education Leeds were in the process of undertaking research in east Leeds to establish if property prices play a significant part in the ability to obtain a place at an oversubscribed school. The work was required as the new School Admissions Code required local authorities to consider this factor where places are allocated on a distance based policy. A report would follow once the research had been completed.

A letter from North Yorkshire County Council, attached to the report, clarified an issue which the Forum had raised with the North Yorkshires Admissions Policy which appeared to operate a 1st preference first policy. The letter clarified that the Authority operated an equal preference policy.

RESOLVED - That the positive improvements to the admissions round be noted and welcomed.

65 UPDATE OF THE ADMISSIONS CODE OF PRACTICE

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the major changes introduced by new School Admissions Code. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 required that all local authorities should promote fair access to educational opportunities, promote high standards and the fulfilment by every child of their educational potential, secure choice and diversity and to respond to parental representations. The impetus of the new Code was to ensure 'fair access'. The report outlined a number of practical changes that both schools and Education Leeds would need to implement to conform to the new changes such as details regarding when a child must be included on roll at a new school. The new Code states that a child must be included in a school's admission register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the child would attend the school. Admissions authorities are also required to ensure that for primary schools siblings (including twins and triplets etc.) could attend the same school as long as they comply with infant class size regulations. Previously the local authority was able to allow twins a place within the regulations on the basis that it was not a reasonable decision to split them. Education Leeds would provide a report on any amendments required to the admissions policy at a future meeting.

RESOLVED –

- i. That the contents of the report be noted.
- ii. That Education Leeds be instructed to re-examine the Council's current admission policy in the light of fair access and to report back to a future meeting.

66 IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS

The Forum received a report from Education Leeds which advised on the implementation of the In Year Fair Access Protocol (formerly the Hard To Place Protocol). All local authorities were required to have such a protocol in place by September 2007 and significant progress had been made with in Leeds in developing this protocol with relevant agencies.

The Protocol would be monitored by the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub-Committee. Members would receive information in relation to the number of children covered in each area of the protocol, how quickly those children were allocated spaces in schools and the distribution across schools. Bob Stott, Chair of the Sub-Committee, advised the Forum that admissions to Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) were dealt with separately to other schools but it was hoped that Area Management Boards could evolve to have an improved relationship with the PRUs in order to obtain places. The Admissions Forum would receive regular updates from the Sub-Committee on its findings in order to assist the Forum in its role.

RESOLVED –

- i. That the very positive progress made with schools in the introduction of the Fair Access Protocol be noted
- ii. That the information proposed to assist the Forum in carrying out its duties be welcomed.

67 FAIR BANDING

The Forum received a report from Viv Buckland which provided information on banding which was one of the permitted oversubscription criteria that admission authorities could use according to the new School Admissions Code. There were a number of variations of banding which could be used and Education Leeds were currently completing a modelling exercise based on the criteria used by the David Young Community Academy (DYCA). The DYCA utilised varied size bands and reflected the range of ability of the applicants to the school.

The initial output from the modelling indicated that the number of pupils who would be allocated their first preference would drop to 25% (this figure was lower for certain ethnic groups). There was little affect on the allocation of children in receipt of Free School Meals. The Forum was advised that it was too early in the modelling stage to provide a conclusive report on how such a policy would affect Leeds. A number of other alternative policies were in the process of being modelled to try to improve fair access for children. A future report would be submitted to the Forum in due course.

RESOLVED – To note the information presented on Fair Banding and that further information would be presented to a future meeting

68 DRAFT ADMISSION FORUM WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2007 AND 2008

The Forum received a work programme for the forthcoming meetings of this municipal year. The Admissions Code had been split up in order to provide reports to the Forum as information became available from the DfES. Items would be added as further information became available.

RESOLVED - That the Draft Work Programme for 2007/08 be approved and adopted

69 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

School Admission Appeals

The Chair, in referring to the school admission appeal process enquired as to the number of requests for admission appeals into reception year and year 7 from September 2007. In providing a response officers reported that appeals would commence in late April. In terms of numbers, request for appeals were still been received but it was anticipated it would be a similar number to that of the previous

year approximately 1500. Roundhay High School continued to be a very popular school with 8 days of appeals scheduled and Pudsey Grangefield High School had 6 days of appeals scheduled. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

70 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That future meetings of the Leeds Admission Forum be scheduled as follows:

Wednesday 26th September 2007

Tuesday 26th February 2008

Wednesday 23rd April 2008

All meetings to commence at 4.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds.