

Leeds Admissions Forum

23rd April, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor Gruen in the Chair

Councillor M Coulson
Councillor R Harker
Councillor A Shelbrooke
Mr J Young – IGEN
Mrs F Beevers – Ripon & Leeds CE Diocese
Mr D Shipley – Community Schools
Mr B Stott – Community Schools
Mr M Woods – Aided Schools
Mr J Daulby – John Smeaton Community College
Mrs S Knights – Special School Representative
Mr N Faulkingham – Primary School Representative
Mr J Fryett – Other Member
Mrs L Bryan – Other Member

In Attendance

Mrs V Buckland – Education Leeds
Mrs C Jordan – Education Leeds
Mrs D Leonard – Legal Services
Mr J Grieve – Governance Services

37 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 Clerk to the Forum sought nominations for the position of Chair. Councillor Coulson nominated Councillor Gruen. Sue Knights seconded the proposal

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

(Councillor Gruen assumed the Chair)

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

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

38 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair began by thanking Forum Members for their support on his reappointment as Chair.

The Chair reported that he was in attendance at the formal opening of the John Smeaton Community College following the school's rebuild. The Chair paid tribute to John Daulby, Headteacher and all his staff commenting that the event was very well organised and had been a great success. The Chair also thanked Councillor Harker, the Executive Board Member for Learning for his opening speech which was informative and well received by those in attendance.

The Chair also welcomed Mr & Mrs Stagg who were in attendance to observe the proceedings of the Leeds Admission Forum

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr R Finnigan, Mr P Forbes, Mr S Camby, Mrs G Ladden and Ms S Ulyett

40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th February 2008 be accepted as a true and correct record

41 MATTERS ARISING

There were no issues raised under matters arising

42 CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE

It was reported that the minutes of the of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee held on 15th April 2008 were not yet available

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee held on 15th April 2008 be circulated to all Members of the Leeds Admission Forum at the earliest opportunity

43 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR - CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S 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 Clerk 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

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

RESOLVED – That Fiona Beevers be elected Vice Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for a one year period

44 VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICIES SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the of the Voluntary Aided School Admission Policies Sub Committee held on 7th March 2008 be received and noted

45 ADMISSION POLICY CONSULTATION 2009/ 2010

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report which set out the results of the consultation on the admission arrangements for 2009/2010.

Addressing the report Mrs Buckland, Head of Service, Admission and Transport, Education Leeds said that all Aided and Foundation schools had now submitted their admission policies to the local authority. The local authority were required to publish a public notice by May 1st to confirm that all admission policies had been determined and where they could be viewed. Mrs Buckland said that this provides parents with the opportunity to submit any objections they may have to the School's Adjudicator. The local authority were required to submit a report , along with copies of all admission policies and supplementary information forms to the School's Adjudicator before the end of June objecting to any arrangements which do not fully comply with the School Admissions Code.

It was reported that Jim Knight, the Schools Minister had recently written to all Local Authorities and Chairs of Governors of Voluntary Aided and Foundations Schools reminding admission authorities of their duty to ensure compliance with the new statutory admissions framework and to advise of government intensions to take further measures to make sure that in future all admission arrangements were lawful.

Mrs Buckland said that all admission authorities in Leeds are working positively with the local authority with respect to all aspects of the School Admissions Code. A small number of minor infringements of the code had been noted in a few proposed policies, however these had been amended when brought to the attention of the schools. The Local Authority was not aware of any admissions authority proposing to determine non compliant admission arrangements for 2009.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the positive way in which the Local Authority, Diocese and schools had worked together to ensure full compliance with the School Admission Code
- (ii) That in the event of any potential objections to the Schools Adjudicator, the Chair be advised with a view to taking intervention measures

46 SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS - ANALYSIS 2006/07

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report providing the pattern of parental appeals for the academic year 2006/07, both for admission in September 2007 and also those relating to in year transfers

Addressing the report Mrs Buckland said that the data indicated that all ethnic groups were able to access the appeals process and there was no significant evidence of any biased for or against any particular ethnic group. Primary appeals were relatively unsuccessful due to infant class size legislation, and due the number of accessible school places there were fewer appeals than for secondary. Secondary appeals for annual cycle places were successful in around 30% of cases. This appropriately reflects the need for an appeals process to determine the exceptional cases that are unable to be considered adequately within the admissions policy.

In passing comment on In Year Appeals, Councillor Harker said that in year transfers accounted for a large number of appeals, that said, it was his opinion that these were being dealt with very satisfactorily

RESOLVED – To note the breakdown of appeals by ethnicity and school

47 NEW DCSF GUIDANCE ON ADMISSIONS

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report setting out details of proposed new guidance from the Department of Children, Schools and Families on admission arrangements

Addressing the report Mrs Buckland said that the DCSF were introducing amendments to the Education and Skills Bill at Report Stage to place a further duty on local authorities to report to the Schools Adjudicator on admission arrangements in their areas; to extend the Adjudicator's powers so that he/she can act where he/she considers that any admission arrangements are not compliant with the statutory requirements; and to improve the process of consultation on admission arrangements to ensure that parents and communities can contribute to the development of admissions policies for their schools.

In conclusion Mrs Buckland said that no difficulties were anticipated in complying with the proposed new duties and Education Leeds would expect to have all the required information for the Adjudicator well before the end of the deadline

The Chair suggested that compared to other local authorities, Leeds had an excellent compliance record.

RESOLVED – To note the proposed new duties and await the receipt of the consultation document

48 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no issues raised under any other business

49 ADMISSION FORUM WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/2009

Members received and considered the Forum's Work Programme for the period 2008/09

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the scheduled Work Programme for 2008/09
- (ii) To update the Work Programme to reflect the decisions made at today's meeting

50 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – The date and time of the next meeting to be determined at a later date and that Forum Members be advised accordingly