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REPORT TO LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

Date 2 February 2010

Venue: Civic Hall

Time: 4.00pm

Subject: Initial Preference Summary for September 2010

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members of the Admission Forum on the initial preferences and the impact on demand for September 2010.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Although there is a general demographic decline in young people entering secondary school over the next few years there are approximately the same number entering in September 2010 as there were in September 2009. Demand overall has therefore remained broadly similar.

The birth rate has been rising for the last couple of years and we now have a small, but increasing number of primary schools who are unable to accommodate their nearest children. The number of primary schools oversubscribed on first preferences is increasing with 79 schools to date, but we still have some surplus places in the primary sector.

Due to the timing of this meeting we are only able to report on the expectations based on demand as the initial allocation has not yet taken place.

3 Main Issues

3.1 Primary

There are slightly more schools this year where nearest children are unlikely to be offered places. However we are still receiving a number of changes including new preferences as well as information on children who have moved out of the area and no longer require places. At present there are 22 schools where we may face difficulty offering nearest children a place. The situation is being monitored to ensure that children who would be unable to access a school within a reasonable distance are identified.

As ever there are a small number of schools who are experiencing a very high sibling year and this does affect the places available for other children. Parents who might otherwise expect to gain places at some schools may face disappointment, but in a number of cases this is a one year problem. 30 of our community or voluntary controlled

schools have first preferences where 50% or more of their admission limit are siblings, with 33% of preferences across the City being siblings. We continue to have around 1000 more places across the primary sector, spread throughout the City, than there are preferences. This ensures that whilst we may not meet parental preferences in all cases we should have reasonable alternatives available. We have seen an increase of around 370 applications over the same time last year. We anticipate that there will be a large number of applications which arrive after the offer day, as this typically occurs, and these will be managed accordingly. We believe that the change in legislation to introduce a national closing date for applications will improve this position in the future if the government take the opportunity for national advertising, as they do with tax returns.

Secondary

We are still facing oversubscription at Roundhay, although there a number of the neighbouring schools are experiencing a decline in preferences and there are sufficient places in the area. Continuing to build on last year's popularity John Smeaton is oversubscribed again on first preferences. There is a significant increase in preferences at Allerton High although there appears to be no issue with children who have the school as their nearest, the additional demand is coming from families further afield.

There are no obvious causes for concern in the secondary sector for this forthcoming September. Although there are changes to patterns of demand, and relative popularity with parents, the oversubscribed schools are under no greater pressure from nearest families and demand is largely from further afield. Some popular schools are less well subscribed this year and this is mostly reflective of local demographic changes, rather than any concerns parents are expressing about the schools.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1** The early indications with Reception preferences is that there an increasing number of hotspots however there continue to be sufficient primary places available within the City. Issues may arise with late preferences after the offer day, and parents at that stage may find that the nearest school we can offer is some distance away. With secondary applications the hotspots are significantly reducing and whilst demand remains high for some schools the issue of accessing a nearest school is continuing to fall. There are fewer pressure points in terms of nearest children although we would continue to expect that some popular schools will remain oversubscribed leading to unmet demand. This is a natural consequence of an equal preference system whereby parents are encouraged to be aspirational in expressing their preferences.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1** That Admissions Forum note the report and that it is written prior to the initial allocation taking place, therefore liable to changes.