

# **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS ADMISSION FORUM**

**15<sup>th</sup> June 2007 (10.00 am)**

## **CORE MEMBERSHIP**

Persons absent are marked with “A”

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)

Andrew Wingard Education Department

A John Thorn - Early Years officer

A Tricia Clayton - SEN Officer

John Martin - Education Transport Officer

### **COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS**

A Ms T Head

AMr D Maddison

### **VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS**

A Mr P Patterson (primary)

Mr A Glover (secondary)

### **FOUNDATION SCHOOLS**

Ms S Jowett

### **CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE**

Revd Dr H Worsley (Vice Chair)

### **ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE**

A Mr E Hayes

### **PARENT GOVERNORS**

A Ms P Burbidge

A Ms L Wooding

### **LOCAL COMMUNITY**

A Mr A Sadiq – Race Equality Council

Ms K Kilner – Nottingham City LEA

Ms E Cosgrove – Parent Partnership Project

(1)

## **OTHER MEMBERS**

Maj E Crew – Army Welfare Service  
A Mr J Wilson – Learning and Skills Council

## **SCHOOL MEMBERS**

Mr G Evans – Magnus C of E School  
Mr J Loughton – Joseph Whitaker School  
Mr R McDonough – West Bridgford School  
Mr D Wilson – Christ the King RC School

Also present:

Mr D Owen – Secretary

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr J Thorn, Ms T Clayton, Mr D Maddison and Mr E Hayes and Mrs Head.

## **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007 having been circulated were agreed as an accurate record.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

Andrew Wingard confirmed that the local authority had published the names of the five schools that had not determined their arrangements.

Andrew reported that there had been good feedback on the choice advice training. He reiterated the process that is followed to sustain the independence of the advice that is offered.

Sue Jowett said that there had been no reference to fair access protocols in the George Spencer arrangements as these are mandatory. It was pointed out that the same is true of looked after children, but this has to

be included in the over subscription criteria. Karen Kilner commented that Nottingham City include all references to ensure transparency.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **a) Area Representation**

Andrew Wingard reminded members that at the last meeting, to facilitate the logistics of every maintained school (other than special schools) having the right to appoint a member it had been agreed to consult about a system of area representation.

He had written to all schools with this proposal, suggesting that most of the representatives should be from community schools to reflect the current balance between categories of schools. He had received 2 responses. It had been pointed out that the admission arrangements for foundation schools are more diverse than those of community schools.

A number of schools had nominated a representative.

Andrew said that on reflection he was not proposing to proceed with a system of area representatives. Instead a page had been created on the County Council website on which will be published the agenda, supporting papers and minutes of the Forum. Schools will then be able to make an informed decision whether or not to send a representative to the meeting. Schools will be asked to give advance notice if they are sending a representative to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the meeting.

### **b) Foundation Schools**

Andrew said that he had received representations about foundation school membership given the increasing number of foundation schools.

Derek Owen explained the statutory basis of the Forum's Constitution, and the current membership numbers that had been determined by the LA. The LA can appoint up to 3 members to each core group other than the LA core group that can have up to 5 members. The LA group and the local community group are the only groups at present that have their maximum numbers. As he was not involved at the time Derek could not expand on how the current numbers had been determined. He said that if the foundation schools within the Forum's

area wanted to increase their present core membership beyond 1 they will need to make a submission to the LA. It was agreed that Andrew will provide Sue Jowett with the names of all new foundation schools in the future. She will liaise with the current schools with a view to putting together a submission to the LA.

### **c) General**

Andrew pointed out that under the statutory regulations a member's term of office is for a maximum of 4 years, but a member can be reappointed for a further term. It is therefore time for the LA to review the Forum membership for those members whose term expires this year, and the LA can review the size of the core groups as part of that exercise. Andrew will write to those members who are affected.

It was agreed that a copy of the current constitution be circulated to all members.

## **ADJUDICATION ISSUES**

Andrew reported on the outcome of possible adjudication issues arising from the arrangements that had been proposed by some admission authorities as highlighted at the last meeting.

- a. Chilwell School – this issue has been resolved
- b. Cotgrave School – the issue of the supplementary form has been resolved
- c. George Spencer School – an objection has been lodged with the Adjudicator. The Adjudicator has been asked to allow some time for local resolution, and if this is achieved the objection will be withdrawn.
- d. Joseph Whitaker School – an objection has been lodged with the Adjudicator. The LA is proceeding with this objection as it involves an issue of principle. The current admission arrangements were determined before the school took foundation status, and the issue is whether the school is bound by the LA policy relating to mid-term admissions. Under current policy community schools, even though full, have to admit a pupil who moves into the area mid-term when there is no suitable alternative school within 3 miles. The Joseph Whitaker School is unwilling to do this, and has refused to comply with a directed admission. The Governing Body has itself referred the specific case to the Adjudicator. Rob McDonough said that admission authorities are following this case

with interest, as the LA policy has no regard to the capacity of a school to admit such a pupil. The Forum asked for a progress report to the next meeting.

## **TRANSPORT ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006**

John Martin tabled and spoke to a paper outlining the transport provisions in the Act.

The paper summarised the 4 new elements affecting local authorities. These are:

- 1) A duty to promote sustainable travel modes for travel associated with education – a strategy document will be published by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007
- 2) Extension of travel support to low income families
- 3) The making of suitable travel arrangements for “eligible children” in a LA’s area
- 4) Opportunities for School Travel Pathfinders – Nottinghamshire LA is looking to bid for a pathfinder jointly with 4 other Las.

## **ISSUES ARISING FROM CURRENT ADMISSIONS ROUND**

- a. Andrew said that he would be seeking advice from the DfES on whether he could give admission authorities more information on the ranking of requests, as this would save those authorities a lot of time.
- b. Andrew reported on the software problems that had been experienced in processing online applications.
- c. The LA is researching the increasing number of refusals for primary places
- d. Howard Worsley referred to a specific school where the head teacher feels the admission criteria do not adequately address the inclusive character of the school, and that the appeals process results in socially selective admissions. Andrew said that he had had a good meeting with the head teacher and chair of the admissions committee at which these concerns were discussed.

- e. Andrew said that the LA aimed to provide briefings on admission issues for clerks to governors of VA and foundation schools. Howard Worsley welcomed this, and said that he would like to be present. He would promote these to C of E schools.
- f. Rob McDonough and Tony Glover thanked the LA for co-ordinating the consultation process.
- g. Rob McDonough said that the ranking data was very late, and not in a user friendly form
- h. Rob McDonough said that he was interested in moving away from the co-ordinated arrangements each year after the statutory offer date of 1<sup>st</sup> March in order to streamline the process. Andrew said that he would be interested in discussing this for admissions following the 2009/10 admissions year.
- i. Tony Glover asked if schools could receive the final offer information earlier. Some mistakes were made in making offers, and in the City it was too late to withdraw the letters as they were already in the mailbag and about to be collected. David Wilson said that this had resulted in some children having to travel greater distances, and some staff losing their jobs. All agreed that release of the information earlier would provide more scope to resolve any problem.
- j. Glenn Evans referred to schools that don't follow their published criteria. It was agreed that this should be considered at the next meeting.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Andrew said that work had been commissioned from data analysis staff. He anticipated bringing a draft Annual Report to the spring term meeting.

## **DATES FOR MEETINGS 2007/8**

The following dates were agreed with venues to be confirmed:

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007 10.00 a.m.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008 10.00 a.m.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008 1.00 a.m.

## **ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Fair Banding – requested by Howard Worsley
- Co-ordinated arrangements post 1<sup>st</sup> March
- Constitution
- Adjudication issues
- Update on current admission round issues identified in these minutes
- Admission Authorities that don't follow their criteria

The meeting concluded at 12.20 p.m.