

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 9th November 2009 at 10.00am at Home Brewery Building, Arnold, Nottingham

Present

Councillor Chris Barnfather
 Mrs G Thackrey
 Mr D Smith
 Mr D Maddison
 Mr C Johnston
 Mr D Wilson
 Mr R McDonough
 Mr J Boland-Lee
 Mrs S Barker
 Mr S Smith
 Mr J Rudd
 Carol Prince (for Ms J Maw)

Representing

Local Authority
 Local Authority
 Community Schools
 Voluntary Controlled Schools
 Voluntary Aided Schools
 Voluntary Aided Schools
 Foundation Schools
 Roman Catholic Diocese
 Church of England Diocese
 Parents
 Parents
 Community

Absent

Ms T Head
 Mr M Griffiths
 Ms J Maw
 Mr J Loughton

Community Schools
 Academy
 Community
 Foundation Schools

In attendance

Mr P Robinson - Secretary
 Mr S Hollingsworth – Children and Young People's Department

1	Election of Chair	
	Cllr Chris Barnfather was elected Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.	
2	Election of Vice-Chair	
	Mr J Boland-Lee was elected Vice-Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.	
3	Membership	
	<p>This was the inaugural meeting of the newly constituted Forum and members were advised that, at the present time, the following vacancies were being carried in the categories indicated:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 Voluntary Controlled - 1 Parent - 3 Community 	

	<p>Mr Hollingsworth reported that the Forum may wish to consider appointing to the Community category from the Further Education sector, the business community or from SEAC, the latter having been represented on the previous Forum. In addition, a request to be considered as a member in the Community category had also been received from Mr T Glover who had also served on the previous Forum. Following discussion on the balance of organisations that would best represent the Community on the Forum, it was AGREED that Mr Glover and a representative of SEAC be appointed as members of the Forum.</p> <p>With regard to other vacancies Mr Hollingsworth and the Secretary would investigate further and report back to a future meeting. The Chair also felt that it would be appropriate to invite observers to meetings on an ad hoc basis where such observers could assist the Forum in its deliberations. Forum members agreed with this approach which would be cleared through Mr Hollingsworth in consultation with the Chair.</p>	<p>PR</p> <p>SH/PR</p> <p>Chair/SH</p>
4	Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies were received from Ms Head (Community Schools), Mr Griffiths (Academy), Ms Maw (Community) and Mr Loughton (Foundation Schools).	
5	Minutes of the last Meeting and Matters Arising	
	<p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd June 2009 were agreed as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.</p> <p>It was noted that the Nottinghamshire Admission to Schools Booklet had now been circulated. There were no other matters arising.</p>	
6	Adoption of Constitution	
	<p>The decision of the County Council on the Forum Constitution, as set out in the extract of the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2009, was NOTED.</p> <p>In formally ADOPTING the Constitution, Forum members sought clarification on two matters. Firstly, whether any future amendments to the Constitution would require the approval of Cabinet and, secondly, the number of places to which Academies would be entitled should more be established in the County.</p>	PR/SH
7	Fair Access Protocol	
	Mr Hollingsworth reported on the background to the production of the draft Protocol for the County which had been circulated to	

	<p>a wide range of partners for comments. The consultative process was in its early stages and concluded on 15th April 2010. He added that, depending on the responses received, it might be necessary to bring forward the next meeting scheduled for March 2010 in order that the Forum could consider any feedback from schools.</p> <p>Forum members made a number of both specific and general comments for consideration as part of the consultation exercise. Specifically in terms of the draft circulated they commented:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there was no facility for the Protocol to override the Admissions Code and the Protocol needed to reflect this • The underlying issue to be acknowledged was that the Protocol existed to protect vulnerable children • Managed moves needed to be closely scrutinised in order that they were valid • Paragraph 5.3 would benefit from the inclusion of the word “legal” before “direction” • Care needed to be taken that through following paragraph 5.7 (religious affiliation) schools did not take on a religious character by stealth. <p>In general terms some Forum members were concerned that the Protocol might be used by the Local Authority to override the Admissions Code and as a means of extended co-ordination of admissions.</p> <p>Mrs Thackrey commented that she was aware of these views and that, following discussions with DCSF, the County Protocol had been drafted in a manner that was capable of achieving as much general agreement as possible amongst those responsible for administering it. She assured the Forum that there was no intention of using the Protocol as a means of extended co-ordination. She appreciated the additional tensions that had been raised on, for example, how sensitive personal information would be gathered and had referred these issues to the DCSF and would continue to pursue these aspects.</p> <p>Mr Hollingsworth would have regard to the comments made by the Forum when finalising the document at the conclusion of consultation.</p> <p>In concluding the debate the Chair said that any further written comments (in addition to those raised above) would be welcomed from Forum members.</p>	<p>GT</p> <p>ALL</p>
--	---	----------------------

8	Nottinghamshire County Council Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Admissions 2011/12	
	<p>Mr Hollingsworth reported that the County scheme was being amended to take account of the new Admissions Code and, with the inclusion of information on the areas indicated in the draft, would be shortly be issued for formal consultation.</p> <p>In response to questions from Forum members, it was acknowledged that the co-ordination of in-year transfers would be a challenge, particularly as it was understood that no additional resources would be available for this purpose. It was also acknowledged that the issue of false/fraudulent claims of address was a significant problem. In this latter connection, Mr Hollingsworth added that the County Council would be undertaking more investigative work and would continue to work closely with other admission authorities on preventative measures.</p> <p>The initial views of the Forum on the Scheme were NOTED.</p>	
9	Nottingham City Council Co-ordinated Scheme for Admissions 2011/12	
	<p>A copy of the City Council's scheme was tabled. Consultation on the scheme was being undertaken from 2nd November 2009 to 5th January 2010 which was ahead of the County's timetable. If Forum members wished to make any comment on the City scheme then these could be sent to Mr Hollingsworth who would lodge them with the City.</p>	
10	In-year Co-ordinated Scheme	
	<p>In order to respond to the requirement to produce a scheme the Forum's views were sought on whether to draft a separate document or include within existing co-ordinated scheme documentation. The Forum's preference was to include in existing paperwork was NOTED.</p>	
11	Local Authority Report to the Schools Adjudicator	
	<p>Further to discussion at previous meetings the content of the report from the County Council was NOTED. The composite OSA report, which took account of all Local Authority reports produced, was now available.</p>	
12	Early Years Consultation	
	<p>Mr Maddison reported that following the discussion at the last meeting he had met with County Council Officers during the summer. Of the options set out in the consultation issued by the County, he favoured option 2 (all community and voluntary controlled schools being allowed to set their own admission policies to up to 3 terms earlier than statutory school age) on</p>	

	<p>the basis that this gave schools the flexibility to act in a way which they felt best served the interests of pupils and the local school community. The Forum noted this view from which it did not dissent.</p> <p>The County's consultation exercise had now closed and 47 responses had been received from schools and 100 from the private and voluntary sector, which had yet to be analysed. The outcome of the consultation would be issued at the conclusion of this exercise.</p>	
13	Choice Advisers	
	The Forum NOTED that the County Council was in the process of deciding how many Choice Adviser posts to establish, but that this was expected to be about 1.5fte.	
14	Regional, National and Local Admissions Groups	
	The notes of the meeting of the East Midlands Regional Admissions Group held on 9 th July 2009 were NOTED . The involvement of County Officers in other related Groups (DCSF Fair Access Consultative Group and City/County Admissions Group) provided the Forum with an additional source of useful admissions related information. In particular, the forging of closer links with the City on admissions issues was welcomed.	
15	Dates of Future Meetings	
	The dates of future meetings were confirmed as 1 st March and 21 st June 2010 (both Mondays, commencing at 10.00am), subject to it being noted that it may be necessary to bring forward the March meeting for the reasons referred to earlier in the meeting.	
	The meeting closed at 12 noon	