

# SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

25 JUNE 2008

(6:30pm – 7:40pm)

## Members of the Forum

### LEA Group: (3)

Councillor Don Jordan  
\* Councillor Nick Kilby  
Councillor David Ryder-Mills

### Diocese: (6)

\* Michael Hall, Guildford Diocese  
Carol Jerwood, Southwark Diocese  
\* Kevin Edmonds, Southwark Diocese  
Monica Tett, Archdiocese of Southwark

### Vacancy x 2

### Community: (3)

\* Rita Martin, Kingston Youth Council

### School Member

\* Janice Anastasi, Malden Manor Primary and Nursery School

### Parent Governors(2)

### Vacancy x 2

### Community Schools: (3)

David Bradley, Coombe Girls' School  
\* Michael Reading, Lovelace Primary School

### Foundation Schools: (2)

Robert Fogg, The Hollyfield School  
Rev Fr Martin Hislop, St Luke's C of E Primary School

### Voluntary Aided Schools: (3)

Tom Cahill, Richard Challoner School  
Sharon Mehta, St Paul's C of E Junior School (Chair)  
Vacancy - Primary

### Faith and Minority Ethnic Groups

\* Lally Malik, Muslim Community  
Marianne Cohen, Jewish Community

\* Absent

Apologies for absence were received from Janice Anastasi, Michael Hall, Kevin Edmonds Rita Martin, and Michael Reading

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

### 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

**RESOLVED** that Sharon Mehta and Janice Anastasi be appointed Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the municipal year 2008-2009.

## Members of the Forum

### Richard Burt

The Chair announced the recent death of Richard Burt who had been a member of the Forum since July 2006.

## **Other**

Marianne Cohen was welcomed to the Forum and the Chair introduced Tina Herring who is currently undertaking the responsibilities of the vacant post of Head of Learning & School Effectiveness.

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of 11 February 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **3. POSSIBLE CHANGE TO THE SIBLING CRITERION**

At the last meeting a possible change to the sibling criterion for community schools was discussed and clarification was sought on the implications of effect of restricting this to children who have siblings in Years 7 to 10 only at the time of application.

It was confirmed that applicants with siblings in Years 11 or 12 at the time of application, and whose siblings are anticipating staying at the school at the time of admission, will not be unduly disadvantaged. The change could, however, result in increased uncertainty for the pupils applying with siblings in, or moving to, Years 11 or 12. It was resolved that the criterion should continue to be applied as it is now.

## **4. SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008**

The Forum was updated on the latest situation on the number of Kingston children currently without an offer of a school place and the number of school places vacant for September 2008.

There were 3 secondary age children without a place one of whom of which has recently moved into the borough. This is significantly better than at the same time last year when there were 15 children without a known destination.

There are 102 vacancies – 33 at Chessington Community College, 18 at Coombe Boys and 51 at Southborough.

Members noted the significantly increased popularity of Coombe Boys, reflected in the schools low level of vacancies.

It was noted that 93% of offers had been for one of the preferred schools listed and 60% had been first preference offers.

**It was agreed to note the positions on places for September 2008.**

## **5. PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008**

As all members were aware primary school places in London had been oversubscribed for September 2008. Locally Kingston and surrounding local authorities had received an unanticipated increased demand for places and were liaising closely on sources of data, monitoring and planning for future years.

The planning data received from the Greater London Authority, which includes local birth rates and housing developments, and which is relied upon in calculating the number of places likely to be required, did not indicate the actual increase in demand.

To provide the capacity needed an additional 210 places are being provided at 7 schools - Alexander Infant, Burlington Infant and Nursery, Coombe Hill Infant, Christchurch C of E Primary ( Surbiton), Fernhill Primary, Lovelace Primary and Maple Infant School.

As at the meeting date there were 29 children without a place, 29 children holding double offers of places and 39 vacancies. Taking account of the double offers there are potentially 68 vacancies.

Monica Tett asked if any of the Catholic primary schools were being offered additional classrooms and officers confirmed that there had not been any specific representations for additional places at catholic primary schools.

Some concerns were expressed that parents had not been alerted to this shortage of capacity earlier in the process and how it was going to be dealt with, this had caused anxiety. However all members were aware of the contact there had been with parents, through letters and a public meeting.

The particular efforts made by the School Admissions Team to advise parents and allay concerns were also recognised and appreciated.

Members focused on the arrangements for this year, the additional capacity which might be needed for future years and the longer term effects on Primary and Secondary School capacity. Officials outlined plans in place to anticipate additional reception classes needed for September 2009. These plans seek to inform parents earlier in the process.

The timetable for applications and offers was being standardised to be in line with neighbouring boroughs as follows

Publication of Admissions Booklet	13 October 2008
Closing date for applications	5 December 2008
Outcome letters to be sent to parents	25 March 2009

Schools would be encouraged to make greater use of the Admissions Booklet and the guidance on preferences, so that unrealistic preferences are minimised.

On future secondary school building, the Executive has agreed the strategy on the Building Schools for the Future programme – this is aimed at entering the programme in 2009- 10 as opposed to the national start date 2014. For Primary Schools a bid for investment of £47m is being made to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

**It was agreed to note the positions on places for September 2008 and the arrangements being put in place for September 2009.**

## 6. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items were noted

- a) In-year Fair Access Protocol (formerly Hard to Place Protocols)
- b) School Term and Holiday Dates 2009/10
- c) Scrutiny of Admission Arrangements 2009
- d) School Admissions consultation. Members were asked to send any comments on the consultation to Hatija Bhatia by 23 July these would be co-ordinated – with any conflicting views reconciled as far as possible – and submitted on behalf of the Forum.

**Monica Tett** – the Chair announced that Monica Tett may be leaving the Forum over the course of the year.

**Support to the Forum** – following the reorganisation of various internal Council procedures, the Forum will in future be wholly supported from within Learning and Children's Services. The Chair thanked the Democratic Services team for its past support.