

# THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

King Charles Centre, Surbiton

Tuesday 13 October 2009

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present:

### **Members**

Janice Anastasi (**Vice Chair**)

Keith Burleton

Tom Cahill

Sunil Chotai

Marianne Cohen

Tracey Coton

Councillor Dennis Doe

Michael Hall

Rev Fr Martin Hislop

Sharon Mehta (**Chair**)

Councillor David Ryder-Mills

### **Officers**

Hatija Bhatia (Principal Admissions & Governance Officer and Secretary to the Forum)

Julie Ely (Strategic Manager of Statutory Assessment & Support for Learning)

Tina Herring (Service Director, Learning & School Effectiveness)

Claire Lawrence (School Admissions Officer – IT)

### **Other attendees**

Martin George - Surrey Comet and Kingston Guardian

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Welcome to Sunil Chotai, appointed at the previous meeting.

Apologies from Dr Carol Jerwood, Amtul Lally Malik, Sinead Noble and Michael Reading

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Re item 6 children with special educational needs (SEN), the Chair fed back to Forum Members that parents of children with SEN who had been involved with the Parent Partnership organisation were impressed by the quality of the

support they received and that there were no specific concerns about timing of advice and the secondary transfer process.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009 were approved.

#### **4. EXPANSION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES (Appendix A)**

The Service Director, Learning & School Effectiveness explained that this report sets out to update the Forum as to the current position. The main points are:

For Primary admissions, both in September 2008 and 2009, the Local Authority (LA) was able to react to the increased demand for places which enabled all children who applied for Kingston Borough schools to be offered a place and start school in September. The actual take up of places varied from the 2009 projection by only 10 places.

Projections show that the LA will need 12 additional classes for September 2010. Details will be made public by 23 October 2009 enabling parents to be fully informed before submitting primary school applications by 4 December, the closing date.

There is a need to expand the supply of primary school places by 450 places per year with effect from September 2011, which is an increase of 28%.

Current data shows that increased demand is a definite long term upward trend. The most significant reason for permanent expansion of primary school places is an increasing proportion of the birth cohort applying for school places. Reasons for the change in demand are set out in detail at paragraph 18 of the report.

In July 2009, after considering the Strategy for the permanent expansion of primary school places, the Council's Executive requested the LA identify further sites for new schools. This work progressed over the summer and when the LA receives the final report from the land agents, this will be made public.

On 1 Dec 2009, a report will be taken to the Council's Executive setting out proposals for the permanent expansion of 450 places. Statutory consultation will begin in early 2010.

The Council's Executive met on 29 September 2009 to discuss the outcomes from the consultation proposed new secondary school. *(Please refer to Appendix A, paragraph 25 of the report enclosed with the Agenda, for the list of the Executive's agreements).* Appendix A, Annex 1 *(of the report enclosed*

*with the Agenda*) contains the summary of responses from the consultation. The majority of respondents indicated their support for both of the proposed sites for a new secondary school. However, any proposals would be subject to the statutory planning process and any planning application would be assessed against all relevant planning policies.

The main points of discussion were: clarification that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) team have been liaising with all secondary schools; a broad desktop feasibility of sites had been undertaken and actual plans would be developed by building specialists working alongside education professionals to ensure the final plans for an 8-form entry school complied with building guidance and regulations as well as meeting pupils' needs. It was noted that the status of the North Kingston Centre, which is not a listed building, would allow use as a school without 'change of use' consent.

In response to questions about the reliability of data used to forecast demand, the Service Director, Learning & School Effectiveness explained that the GLA data (based on house hold yield) used previously been accurate over many consecutive years and that although the North of the borough had not been well served, the overall picture in Kingston had been one of surplus places. Recent forecasts have been developed looking at actual resident 4-year olds and the increased primary rolls.

## **5. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 (Appendix B)**

The Principal Admissions & Governance Officer outlined the main points of the report, also highlighting the arrangements for in-year applications set out in Annex 3:

In accordance with The School Admission Regulation 2008, admission authorities are no longer required to consult annually but every three years. This is unless the proposed admission arrangements for the following year are different to those determined in the previous year's consultation.

The statutory change requiring cross borough co-ordination for In - Year primary and secondary admissions across LAs from September 2010 and for Primary Admissions from September 2011 has resulted in revised primary and secondary admissions schemes for 2011. The Local Authority (LA) is consulting with schools on agreeing the draft In Year Admissions scheme which has to be finalised by January 2010.

There are no proposals to change the criteria for community schools.

Following questions from members of the Forum, the Principal Admissions & Governance Officer clarified that home to school distances were measured to

the centimetre. The starting point in the property is determined by address point data supplied by Ordnance Survey and the end point is the (nearest, if more than one) school gate. In the event of two or more distances being the same at the "cut off" point for any one school, random selection by the drawing of lots, is used as the final tie-breaker, details of which are published. This process is independent of LA officers.

Forum members asked if there was going to be a common form for applying for Sixth Form places for Sept 2011.

**Action Point:** The Principal Admissions & Governance Officer agreed to check and feedback at the next meeting.

The Chair asked for clarification regarding closing dates in the Secondary (Annex 1) and Primary (Annex 2) schemes for 2011 admissions. The Principal Admissions & Governance Officer advised that the closing date for Secondary applications has historically been the Friday before half term in October and primary schools check to make sure parents submit their applications by the closing date. The new statutory date for Entry in September 2011 is 31 October 2010 and will remain so each year. All Pan London LAs will work with schools to try and encourage parents to submit Secondary applications by 22 October 2010 before schools break for half term. For Primary admissions from September 2011 onwards, the statutory closing date is 15 January 2011. For 2011, 15 January falls on a Saturday, which is less helpful for parents.

## **6. INFORMATION ITEMS (Appendix C)**

### **a) Update on admissions for September 2009**

The Principal Admissions & Governance Officer advised the Forum that out of the original applicants who applied for a primary school place for September 2009, there are no children without a school place. Currently there is one child below statutory school age, without a known destination. This family recently moved to the area and the parent has decided to await the outcome of possible waiting list movement for the time being. At the 13 October, there are 17 vacancies in the Cluster where the child lives and 60 vacancies in reception classes in total across the borough.

The two Secondary children without a known destination have been referred to the Education Welfare Service. At the 13 October, there are 75 vacancies in current Year 7 at Kingston Borough schools.

Councillor Doe advised the Forum that he had received very positive feedback from parents regarding the service provided by the School Admissions team. Parents regarded the lines of communication with the team as being open and direct.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date of the next meeting is **24 February 2010** at the **King Charles Centre, Surbiton**. Start time is 06:30 pm.

**Please note this has been changed from 23 February 2010.**