

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

15 October 2008
(6.30pm – 7:30 pm)

Members of the Forum

LA Group: (3)

Councillor Nick Kilby
Councillor Don Jordan
Councillor David Ryder-Mills

Diocese: (3)

Michael Hall, Guildford Diocese
Carol Jerwood, Southwark Diocese
Kevin Edmonds, Southwark Diocese,
Keith Burleton Archdiocese of Southwark
Vacancy x 2

Community: (3)

Rita Martin, Kingston Youth Council
Awaiting nomination (Korean Residents'
Society)

School Members

Janice Anastasi, Malden Manor Primary
and Nursery School

Parent Governors: (2)

(who are also Members of the Scrutiny
Panel and Overview Commission)
Vacancy x 2

Community Schools: (3)

Sharon Mehta, Latchmere School (Chair)
Michael Reading, Lovelace Primary School
Vacancy x 1 (Secondary)

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
Vacancy x 2 (Primary)

Faith and Minority Ethnic Groups

Amtul Lally Malik, Muslim Community
Marianne Cohen, Jewish Community

Attendees:

Janice Anastasi	Hatija Bhatia (School Admissions & Governance)
Keith Burleton	Julie Ely (SEN Assessment & Support for Learning)
Marianne Cohen	Jenny Haynes (Lead Strategic Manager for Partnerships & Workforce Development)
Carol Jerwood	Tina Herring (Acting Directorate Head of Learning & School Effectiveness)
Councillor Don Jordan	Claire Lawrence (Minutes)
Sharon Mehta (Chair)	
Michael Reading	
Councillor David Ryder-Mills	

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Hall, Robert Fogg, Kevin Edmonds and Amtul Lally Malik.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held 25 June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

Possible change to the Sibling Criterion

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer clarified that for 2008 admissions into Year 7, there were 12 applicants for Coombe Girls' School with siblings in Year 11 at the time of application. For 3 of those applicants, their siblings that did not continue at the school ie into Year 12. Of those 3, 2 siblings would not have qualified for a place under the distance criterion therefore, changing the rule would offer greater disadvantage and officers concluded that the current ruling should remain for 2009.

2. PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES (Appendix 4)

The Lead Strategic Manager for Partnerships and Workforce Development advised the Forum that the purpose of this report was to inform the Forum of the work that has and is taking place to ensure there are sufficient primary provision for children applying for school places for 2009 admission. Officers confirmed that there were sufficient school places for all children admitted in 2008. The Council had relied on the Great London Authority (GLA) data which had been accurate in the past (officers advised that in paragraph 6 of the report, "1% - 2% correlation" should read "1% - 2% error rate") but were taking further action for this coming year which included discussions with Head Teachers and Governors.

The Forum was advised that although previous projections had varied, the Council had secured 150 extra primary school places (5 classes) across the Borough for 2008 admission. Information about any additional Reception class places for 2009 would be in the public domain during week commencing 20 October 2008. The Acting Head of Learning and School Effectiveness advised that she was grateful to all schools that responded and agreed to accommodate additional places. She outlined the variables within data sources available for projection, explaining that the benefit of 2 year data would be more secure. If there were more applications than places, then the Council would make further requests to schools. Officers reassured the Forum that for this coming year, data gathered by the Council was much more robust.

Councillor Don Jordan asked how long it would take to establish which schools will permanently require additional classes. The Lead Strategic Manager for Partnerships and Workforce Development responded that information from the October 2008 school census will be fed into population projections to create a more detailed information base. In addition, the GLA are reviewing the methodology used for projections. The data on fertility rates,

thought to be decreasing, shows that this is now on the increase. Officers will be reviewing permanent classroom requirements early in the New Year. The aim is to determine during the spring term if any additional building is required. Councillor Don Jordan commented that since additional Reception class places have been added, he had received very few complaints from parents, which had been an indicator of good communication with parents.

Councillor David Ryder-Mills asked if the 5 additional Reception classes were "a one off" or permanent.

The Forum was advised that the Council cannot commit to any temporary additional Reception class places other than for the coming year. There are other factors that need to be taken into consideration along with careful planning consideration although officers have an idea which schools could be possible candidates in the future

Councillor David Ryder-Mills went on to ask if in any negotiations with the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) regarding funding, is London is being treated as a special case.

Officers confirmed that no funding has been identified at the moment.

Councillor David Ryder-Mills asked if there was any indication that parents who may have chosen private schools, have now applied for state maintained schools because of the current financial climate.

Members were advised that Kingston Borough private schools were full for this year and the percentage of registered births that translated into the need for a primary school place had increased from 79% to 84% for admission in September 2008. Officers added that some neighbouring boroughs for example Sutton, recorded a higher percentage of children going into the maintained sector.

3. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2010 (Appendix A)

The Forum was advised that there were no changes in criteria for Community schools. Any outcomes of the DCSF consultation on school admissions would be known in early 2009. Any resulting changes may impact on the consultation process and possible arrangements for 2010/2011. For September 2009 admission, Community schools waiting lists are held in criteria order.

Councillor David Ryder-Mills commented that some of his constituents were concerned that they would not gain a place at a school of their choice because they live too close to the river and asked if there was any evidence of this. Are there any special circumstances similar to those for Malden Rushett parents for Ellingham Primary School?

Officers advised that they had not been advised of any concerns from parents about this matter. If there was evidence of a growing concern then the matter would be investigated.

Michael Reading commented that Malden Rushett parents were given priority for Ellingham Primary School because that is the **only** primary school near to them.

Councillor David Ryder-Mills asked what plans there were to give more casual access (to school places) to Service Personnel as he had been approached by a couple of families in his ward.

Officers confirmed that there is provision for Service Personnel to apply for schools up to 4 months in advance. Families would also be told which schools had current vacancies and advised of their appeal rights.

It was noted that there is an error in paragraph 14 within the timetable. The date for Admissions Forum comments on proposed admission arrangements should read 24 February 2009.

4. RELEVANT AREA FOR ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS (Appendix B)

This report informed the Forum of the requirements to consult on the Borough boundary to remain as the relevant area for admissions consultations.

5. SUPPORT FOR TRANSFER FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL (Appendix C)

The Forum was advised that this is the second year that Kingston Welcare is delivering the Choice Advice Service through the four Kingston School Clusters. Outcomes were higher in some areas and Year 7 exclusions fell this year.

Michael Reading asked if there was any feedback from Kingston Welcare on how to improve the admissions process and how the service is funded. Officers advised that there is central Government funding for the Choice Advice Service and they had received positive feedback from Kingston Welcare about the admissions process, however continuous feedback is sought to improve the service.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS (Appendix E)

The following items were noted:

i) Children without a school place for September

All Secondary and Primary School children who had applied originally, now have a known school place. Families arriving in the area subsequently had also all been offered a place. Officers were asked how many places were vacant and Members were advised approximately 50 primary and 80 secondary.

ii) Fair Access Protocols

Officers advised that following the outcome of the consultation with Head Teachers, the Forum will be presented with the final draft protocols for ratification.

iii) Scrutiny of Admission Arrangements

Schools mentioned in the report were made aware of the findings and requested to make changes in preparation for the 2010 admissions process.

Carol Jerwood commented that there were 12 reports received from Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) for the Southwark Diocese. There were a number of issues that she had to raise with the OSA because information within some reports was incorrect. They will make the changes for 2010.

Michael Reading asked if the OSA could be advised that the timing of this report could have been better and requested that Members were sent a copy of the Borough response to the School Admissions Consultation.

Action Point – Hatija Bhatia