



Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 19 October 2011 at Gordano School

Present

Sally Varley
Jack Dagnall
Bill McEntee
Luci Amos
Anne-Marie Heath
Cllr Ann Kemp
Geoff Flynn
Julie Fox
Chris Hustwick
Eurfron Parry
Justin Templer
Shelagh Pritchard
Sue Calvert

Local Authority (Planning & Access)
Governor (Secondary & Primary)
School Admissions (Secretary)
VC Primary Schools
Choice Advice
Local Authority
Assistant Locality Leader
Community Primary Schools
Governor Services
Methodist Church
Clifton Diocese
Community Secondary schools
BANES Council

1. Apologies for absence

Pete Binding, Lynne Packer, Terri Knowlton, Tess Gale, David Gradwell, Caroline Hostein and Cate Hill

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of 7 July 2011 – Agreed with minor amendments and signed by Chair

3. Actions and Matters arising

Most matters were on the agenda.

JD mentioned the work of David Wolfe (Legal Specialist) particularly concerning Academies and changes occurring in Admissions area. SV explained that the new School Admissions Code and Regulations are ultimately subject to testing in the Courts.

4. Forum Remit and Membership

It was agreed to appoint Cllr Anne Kemp as Chair, Tess Gale as Vice-Chair (subject to her agreement) and Bill McEntee as Secretary. The Forum wished to record their thanks to Tess for all of her previous work as Chair of the Forum.

It was noted that there is still no representative (rep) for Voluntary Aided C of E Schools.

Action: BM to ask the schools again to appoint a rep.

Cate Hill has agreed to remain as the Special School rep (rather than Phillippa Clark/Fiona Richings as listed in the membership).

Liz Tunnard should be replaced by Sue Ivermee.

The draft Forum Remit was agreed and the Forum membership was also agreed subject to the above amendments. However it was agreed that if under the new Admissions Code there is no longer a statutory requirement to have an Admissions Forum, the remit and membership of the Forum would be reviewed. In particular we could consider making non-core members core members.

5. Federation of Hannah More and Grove Junior Schools

SV explained the plans for the federation of the schools and their governance. Whilst the consultation was still not closed there were a high number of responses received in favour of the proposal. Cllr Jeremy Blatchford had signed the plan to support the federation (not the amalgamation) of the schools.

6. Figures for placements under In Year Fair Access protocols and figures of Permanent Exclusions and Managed Transfers.

GF explained there was an increase in the number of permanent exclusions (23 in 2010-11 compared to 14 in 2009-10) but that there was no apparent reason for this. Only 5 of the pupils have placed at another mainstream school.

Of the 31 Negotiated Transfers GF was pleased to report that 65% were ultimately permanently taken onto the school's roll. The others went to Pupil Referral Units or back to their original school. Schools are working well together, helping to keep children in schools. Whilst there are now 5 x Academies, the early signs are that they are keen to work with other schools.

JT reported how well the Virtual School Service is working for Children in Care & suggested linking to their Service and their good practice to be shared and used by all schools. GF confirmed that none of the Permanently Excluded pupils were Children in Care. SV and GF said there was already good practice in schools for Children in Care.

JD was pleased that GF was able to report that schools that have become Academies are still cooperating with managed transfers etc.

GF reported that schools who admit a child that comes under the In-Year Fair Access Protocol are still not always informing GF that they have done so – so he only discovers when he approaches them about admitting another child.

GF particularly concerned about pupils refused Weston-super-Mare secondary schools being offered Clevedon School.

SV explained how as an Academy Hans Price Academy can limit admissions and the future implications if all 10 secondary schools become academies.

SP felt that the LA should have anticipated the problem caused by the new academy.

SV explained that the LA was previously opposed to admit over number at other secondary schools whilst there were spaces at Wyvern School. As the number of places at Hans Price is now restricted the LA will help parents to be allocated a place at an appropriate school.

SV proposed that secondary schools write a protocol for all 10 secondary schools to adopt for In-Year admissions and for the Forum to oversee and support it to help parents. This was agreed by the Forum. The protocol would try to address issues like, school hopping, genuine movers, troublesome children and support for schools. SV, SP, GF, AK & JD all volunteered to be on the 'Protocol Working Group' and it was agreed to ask Gary Lewis (Academies rep) and any other members if they would like to also join. **Action – SV to liaise with SP and report back to the Forum.**

SV confirmed that parents refused a place at an academy do have the right of appeal, and if upheld the academy will have to admit the pupil – and this would not change under the proposed School Admissions Code.

7. Review of Choice Advice Service

AH reported on the work of the Choice Advice service and in particular how they chase parents to remind them to apply on-time for a secondary transfer place.

Last year there was an increase in the number of parents who did not apply on-time (late applicants). This was thought to be because firstly the new national closing date of 31 October is after the schools were closed for a week holiday - SC said Bath & North East Somerset Council had the same problem.

AH said that the Family Information Service (FIS) has been reduced from 4.0 to 1.6 staff and this will have an impact in future years.

Suggestions of how to reduce the number of late applicants are welcome.

The FIS may be lost if the council adopts 'a single point of entry' and Choice Advice is not mandatory under the proposed new School Admissions Code. The Forum agreed that it wanted the Choice Advice service to continue.

8. Priory Free Primary School

SV explained there is projected to be a shortfall of places in Weston-super-Mare and that the Secretary of State says any new school will normally be an Academy or a Free School.

The Council supports Priory Community School's (PCS) application to establish a Free School as the places are needed. Funding for the Free school would come from the Secretary of State.

JF said that local Head Teachers were concerned about the lack of consultation. SV explained that academies/free schools are not required to consult, unlike Local Councils. The WASP cluster of schools is concerned and SV and Neville Coles (Principal of PCS) are to meet with the WASPs cluster.

JT asked about Cluster arrangements and what 'commissioning' means? SV explained that Councils have a duty to commission school places National changes mean that it is unlikely that in the future local funding will be available to build new Community schools.

SV said that Free schools do not require qualified teachers and SP said nor specialist class rooms.

SV said that Councils still have to identify Basic Need but may not get any funding. The Secretary of State has refused the application for the Priory Free School for 2012-13.

SV explained the funding allocation process and how people can apply to build new schools, the involvement of Secretary of State and how the competition for funding works.

9. Weston Who Consultation

SV explained the proposals to expand the number of places available at Hillside First, Mendip Green First and St Martin's Junior schools and to convert them into Primary schools.

85% of responses received to the consultation on the proposals were in favour. Some Mendip Green parents were against Hillside becoming a primary.

Hillside will be able to have single aged teaching classes. Tony Pearle (School Organisation Manager) has met with pupils as part of the consultation exercise.

Transport was a concern but it was felt that not having 'split-school' will help parents not to have to travel between schools.

The Heads and Chair of Governors at all three schools support the changes. There will be major building/refurbishment work at the schools. A planning application has been made for Mendip Green and Hillside Schools and work is almost complete at St Martin's.

The extra places are needed now for current and future demand.

LA said she was most concerned at the impact that the additional places created would have on rural schools.

The Forum agreed to support the proposals.

10. In-Year admissions to secondary schools in Weston

BM explained about the problem of some pupils in Weston-super-Mare (WSM) being unable to obtain a place at a WSM school and being offered Clevedon as mentioned under Item 6.

Tony Pearle (School Organisation Manager) has met with the Head Teachers of the four secondary schools in WSM to encourage them to admit children who live within their First Geographical Area.

SP said that as Year 7 at Broadoak School only had 6 forms it was a problem for them.

Schools should all take their fair share.

11. Draft Fair Access Protocol

SV explained which children should be included within a Fair Access Protocol (FAP). It was noted that the draft FAP contained some typing errors.

SV explained that on some occasions schools can admit over their Admission Number and that FAP children take priority over other applications.

SV explained the rationale of the FAP.

JF agreed to provide some text for the 4th bullet point on page 2 of the FAP as the Behaviour Improvement Team no longer exists.

Action JF to provide text.

SC said that it may lead to some schools taking more pupils than others so SV agreed it would have to be monitored.

JT queried what the brief/remit of the Vulnerable Learners Panel (VLP) was and if schools could be represented at VLP meetings. It was explained that schools can submit their reasons in writing.

Action – The Head of the VLP to be asked to provide the Forum with a report about the VLP, including the criteria/remit for the next meeting.

What the number of previously permanently excluded pupils a school should admit was discussed (see page 4 of the draft FAP).

Action - SV asked reps to discuss at SHINS/PHANS what the percentage or number of previously permanently excluded pupils admissions should be.

SC suggested relating it to the Admission Number of the School.

Subject to the percentage or number of previously permanently excluded pupils admissions being agreed and other minor typing corrections being made, the Forum were all in favour of the draft FAP, with the exception of JT.

It was agreed to review the FAP at the next Forum meeting.

12. New School Admissions Code (if issued)

As the new Code has not been issued this item was not discussed.

13. Future meeting dates

The following proposed dates were circulated:

18 Nov – but this date was not agreed

20 Jan

24 Feb

18 May

29 June

All 9.00am -12.00pm at Castlewood, Clevedon.

Action – BM to circulate a revised date to replace 18 Nov.

14. Any Other Business

BM explained that Councillors wanted the Council to consult on making the over-subscription criteria for urban primary school admissions to be the same as that used for rural primary schools so that priority would be given to those applying for their nearest school rather than to those with a sibling already at the school. The consultation will explain the advantages etc of the proposed and current systems. It was agreed that it should be raised with PHANS.

LA was concerned that it might cause more movement of pupils as siblings may have to move schools.

SC said that BANES Council decided not to adopt such a policy. It was agreed to discuss it at the next meeting:

Action – LA to raise with PHANS.