

## Hampshire Admission Forum

Date **06 October 2011**  
Time **1.30pm - 4.00pm**  
Location **Meeting Room, Intech Science Centre**

### Present

#### Core:

Cllr Charlotte Bailey	HCC (Liberal Democrat)
Helen Dean	Guildford Diocese
Lynne Hignett	VC Primary Heads Rep (St Michael's VC Junior School)
Joyce Johnson	Portsmouth/Winchester Diocese
Angela Morrow	Community Primary Heads Rep (Fryern schools – federated)
Lynette Reed	HCC Manager Vulnerable Children (EIS)
Matthew Quinn	VA Head's Rep (Oaklands Catholic Secondary School)
Diana Traill	HCC Admissions
Urszula Topp	Portsmouth RC Diocese
Sylvia Vine	Hampshire Governor Association
Jo Williamson	HCC Choice Adviser
Major Becs Wilson	Service Families Rep – Firm Base

#### Guests:

Chris Holt	HCC Head of School Organisation
Cindy Clements	Purbrook Infant School
Kevin Parfoot	Purbrook Junior School
Jane McDowell	Leesland Infant School
Nikki Riches	Freegrounds Infant School

### 1. Apologies

Cay Byford	Contact a Family
Gemma Framp	Service Families Rep – Firm Base
Martin Goff	HCC Admissions
Chris Pritchard	Portsmouth/Winchester Diocese
Michael Hall	Guildford Diocese

### Action

Members commented on Amanda Rowley's recent resignation from Forum to take on a new demanding role as a LLE (Local Leader of Education) for the National College. They wanted to note a huge appreciation for her commitment over the years of Forum membership. Her contribution to ensuring Fair Access for vulnerable children, and to striving for equality for all Hampshire children has been hugely influential and will be much missed.

*DT to send card on behalf of members*

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 07 July 2011 were agreed as accurate.

### **3. Matters arising**

#### Item 5 of Matters arising:

##### Address verification

Joyce advised that Chris Pritchard is finding that the majority of Diocese are continuing to use the Child Benefit as a means of identifying the home address. *Diana suggested that it may take some time for the impact of families losing this benefit to filter through before it is realised that this is can no longer be a universal means of asking for proof of child's address.*

#### Item 4 of Matters arising

Jo reported that she had made contact with professionals on the Local Children's Partnerships creating awareness that she was providing Choice Advice again this year. She has worked in partnership with a number of these professionals previously to deliver the Choice Advice Service.

#### Item 4: LA Report

Diana advised that she had sent the report to presenting officers of Admission appeals, as suggested by members.

#### Item 5: HAF: Membership & Terms of Reference

On agenda

#### Item 8: Consultation on HCC 2013 admission policy

On agenda

Sylvia sought clarification on the meeting venues for the year. Roz advised that the December and March meetings would be held at E11 Court and parking would be arranged for attendees. The rest of the meetings will be at Intech as previously suggested.

### **4. School Place Planning (Chris Holt)**

Chris advised of a national issue with a dearth of Year R places; a 22% increase in births in England and Wales over the last ten years introducing an additional 130,000 children into the school system. In Hampshire the increase in births over the same period is 16% which equates to 12,065 children. Mention was made of a local press article stating that Southampton City Council had a shortfall of 75 places for Year R children in September 2011.

Chris added some historical context to this current predicament pointing out that it was not so long ago that he was engaged in removing surplus places in the primary sector in keeping with national policy.

Chris went on to explain the complexities of planning for school places across the County:

- There is a huge variation in the rise in births across the county.
- Hampshire is made up of 11 district/borough councils who are all their own planning authority.
- Each District/Borough is at different stages of producing its Local Development Framework which will detail their plans for the number and

location of houses for the next 15 to 20 years.

- The Local authority has to approach each developer for contributions to provide the education infrastructure necessary to support the new development.
- The capital programme is very difficult to plan as presently the authority receives capital funding on a year by year basis.

There are a number of what are being termed "hot spots" throughout the County. The School Organisation Team are looking at strategies to provide places in future years and are meeting with headteachers in those areas to discuss creating more places within the existing schools. Parental preference is a factor in those discussions, however in reality not all school sites can accommodate an additional pupils. Chris indicated that there would be a clearer picture by April 2012 to put the required number of places into the areas for September 2012.

Conversely, at secondary level, there are currently some very low cohorts going through secondary schools which means there are some hugely undersubscribed schools dotted across the County. In the long term, those places will be needed when larger cohorts come through the system.

Chris advised that the new School Places Plan (SPP) will be going to Cllr Perry on 07 December 2011 and will be a public document by the next Forum meeting in December.

Charlotte asked whether the new SPP was proactive unlike the current predicament where the LA appeared to be reacting after the problem has occurred. Chris reassured that the new SPP was more strategic and worked on a higher end forecast than previously (having identified that the SAFP (Small area forecast population) was an underestimate in 8 out of 11 districts).

Matt asked whether the plan allowed for people moving out of independent schools and from some of the surrounding unitary authorities who may be less able to flex their supply of school places. Chris advised that the County worked with the surrounding LAs as there was considerable cross border movement of pupils.

Kevin asked whether the plan would include allowing popular schools to grow even if there were undersubscribed schools in the locality. Diana suggested that the (draft) new Admissions Code will probably support popular schools expanding. It is likely that the status of the school will have an impact on whether strategic concerns can be taken into account when making a decision about expansion. Sylvia asked about the impact on the SPP of popular schools expanding. Chris suggested that it may cause problems for undersubscribed schools.

## **5. Consultation on 2013 HCC admission policy**

Diana outlined the consultation calendar for members advising that this term schools would be consulted on the proposed admission arrangements for 2013 ahead of the statutory process in the Spring term. The new Code may affect the statutory process but the Admissions Team is proceeding with the informal consultation as usual.

Diana introduced reasons for reassessing the need for a criterion giving priority for admission to junior schools for children attending the linked infant schools. A number of junior school heads had contacted the Admissions Team with concerns about children at the linked infant school who were unable to progress to the junior school due to oversubscription. Diana referred members to Appendix 1.

Chris highlighted the issue that there are some schools in the County where there is a mismatch in the PAN of the infant and junior pairing that means that a priority for those at the infant could not work.

Kevin and Cindy spoke about their experiences at Purbrook Infant & Junior Schools where, for 2011, three children at the infant school were unable to transfer with their cohort due to oversubscription. Some of these parents went to appeal and had a strong case which resulted in the Year 3 cohort starting with 99 on roll, a larger intake than the junior school would plan for.

One issue is that parents make the assumption that their child will move from the infant to the junior school. Members were concerned that the message should be made very clear to parents who were applying from out of catchment *or who had subsequently moved out of catchment ahead of the transition to junior school* that places were offered to in-catchment families first and there was no guarantee of a place.

Nikki advised that, in her area, parents had heard that some children at the infant were not getting into the junior and were therefore opting for a local primary over the infant/junior option.

Jane advised that as a federated school her parents were expecting to gain a benefit such as automatic transfer.

Charlotte commented that for families moving into an area/ a community, it was right that they would hope to be able to send their children to the local school over children out of the area.

Diana tabled comments received from other infant and junior schools about a possible 'linked' criterion in the primary policy. Urszula concluded that it was clear that one approach would not be appropriate for the whole county and therefore proposed that junior schools should have to request a 'school specific link criterion' (SSC) if it was with the agreement of the paired infant school.

Kevin asked about the possibility of having a 'linked' criterion above catchment children as he has seen working for his linked secondary school. Diana clarified that the secondary school had Foundation status and consequently wrote their own policy. But for controlled schools, Urszula suggested that the decision to give priority to catchment was a longstanding commitment of the County. Chris pointed out that there would be implications for home to school transport entitlement if the priorities of the County's admission policy were to change so significantly.

Charlotte said that in considering each SSC request she would want to consider the impact on the surrounding schools.

Diana proposed that the Schools Comm. sent concerning the 2013 admission policies would highlight the possibility for junior schools to request a SSC for a 'linked' criterion. All requests would be considered at the December Forum.

Angela advised that she is part of a group for Federated schools and she will bring it to their attention and may ask Diana to attend to talk to them about the extent to which priority can be given to a link criterion in these schools.

## **6. New School Admissions Code**

Diana advised members that this had been expected at the end of September, but nothing has been released yet. Diana referred members to the summary of proposed changes that were included as part of the appendices at the July meeting and talked members through the more significant changes.

## **7. Hampshire Admission Forum**

Urszula referred members to appendix 2 of the papers and suggested that the new Terms of Reference and Membership that had been drawn up incorporated all the suggested amendments from the last meeting. She proposed that the document be accepted and reviewed as required later in the year. Members agreed with this.

Diana informed members that:

- Cllr Perry remains committed to 'having regard to' the recommendations of the Admission Forum despite its change in status (to a non-statutory body in September 2011).
- Martin had written to the Chairs of the Primary & Secondary Heads Conferences asking for them to suggest reps for Forum.

Urszula confirmed that December's meeting would see the annual election of the Chair and Vice chair.

## **8. Updates**

### **(i) Main admission round 2012**

Roz advised that:

- the online application form for Year 7 had opened without a hitch on 19 September.
- the contact centre had received a much reduced number of calls in the first 3 days of the process compared to last year.
- there were 6,986 submitted online applications to date for Year 7.
- the 'Starting School' and 'Infant to junior transfer' rounds would be opening on 01 November 2011.
- 'Starting school' posters and 40,000 postcards have been sent out to a variety of venues including GP surgeries, early years settings, libraries, parish councils, leisure centres to increase awareness of the application deadlines.
- As part of the County's requirement to publish information about individual schools, the School Details pages on the County website have been revamped with an 'admissions' tab containing the information that has previously been published in the directories. There has been a big response from schools checking their details and advising where amendments are needed.

### **Choice Advice**

Jo advised that she was busy making herself known to schools and others (LCPs)

to increase awareness of Choice Advice. Schools have been asked to send her details of any parents who had not yet submitted an application ahead of the deadline for applications.

Nikki asked for the PDF of the postcard to be sent to her so that it could be put on the school website.

RC to send  
PDF to NR

(ii) In-year admissions

Diana advised members that following the decision at the last meeting, the in-year application process had now been devolved back to schools and the Admissions Team were successfully tracking the application outcomes that they are aware of and contacting parents who have been refused, offering assistance in find a school with places available. Charlotte asked whether all schools were sending application information onto the Admissions Team. Diana advised that this was a shared concern and the importance of this information sharing had been emphasised to schools to ensure families were supported in securing school places. The Admissions Team is aware that families making enquiries but not applications may still fall through the net and will be looking at ways of reducing the numbers of such families.

**9. AOB**

Diana advised of three School Adjudicator (SA) decisions that had been received over the summer, regarding:

- 1) Hamble Primary School policy for 2012. The SA had supported Hampshire's position but had been critical of the length of time it had taken Hampshire to act on the issue. *Diana advised that the Strategic Planning Team had now visited Hamble Primary and were looking at ways of accommodating all the catchment children for 2012 admissions.*
- 2) directing a Looked After Child into a Portsmouth junior school. The SA supported Hampshire's reasons for the school identified and thankfully the issue was resolved ahead of the start of term.
- 3) a disagreement concerning the published admission number (PAN) for Bishop Challoner Catholic VA Secondary School. The SA disagreed with Hampshire and allowed the school to publish 180 as their intake for 2012, based on the view that although the school could not accommodate 900 children, the 2012 PAN on its own would not lead to this.

Helen asked how long Hampshire has had a CE controlled criterion in its admission policy. The Guildford Diocese has observed that Surrey do not have a CE criterion and there is a varied approach nationally. Helen believed that it would be down to the LA officers for such a criterion to have been introduced.

DT to  
investigate  
history  
behind the  
CE criterion

**Dates of next meetings:**

Day	Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday	07 December 2011	1.30pm – 4pm	E11 Court East: Broadlands
Thursday	08 March 2012	1.30pm – 4pm	E11 Court: Denning
Thursday	10 May 2012	1.30pm – 4pm	Intech Science Centre
Thursday	12 July 2012	1.30pm – 4pm	Intech Science Centre