

DEVON LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

19 November 2010

Present

Devon County Council
Councillor Channon (Chairman)

Devon Schools Group

Foundation Schools
Mr Evans

Academy Schools
Mr Bishop

Church of England Diocese
Mrs Mabin (Vice Chairman)

Voluntary Aided Schools
Mr Tancock

Devon Association of Governors
Mr Rogers

Community
Ms Butler (early years)
Ms Booth (children in care)
Ms Denson (Service Families)
Mr Juby

Neighbouring Authorities (Non Voting)
Mr Pollock (Somerset County Council)
Mrs Turner (Cornwall Council)
Mrs Wallace (Plymouth Council)

Apologies
Ms Bailey (Torbay Council) and Mrs Boote (Community Schools)

55 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2010 be approved as a correct record.

56 LAF Constitution and Membership

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/107). The Chairman reported the resignation of Mr Dutton and a letter from him expressing his appreciation of the work of the Forum.

A nomination for the appointment of Mr Haring, Head teacher Ivybridge College (Academy) was proposed by Mr Bishop.

RESOLVED

(a) that Mr Jonathan Bishop (Head teacher Broadclyst Primary Academy) be appointed as an Academy representative;

(b) that consideration of a secondary school Academy representative be deferred;

(c) that Mr Juby be appointed as a Community representative;

(d) that it be noted that a nomination is awaited from DASH for a community secondary head;

(e) that it be noted that a Parent Governor nomination is awaited from the Devon Association of Governors;

(f) that a nomination be sought from the RC Diocese for VA primary school representation;

(g) that the LAF membership be increased by a further 2 and nominations be sought for community representation and submitted for consideration at a future meeting.

57 Academies and Related Admissions Implications

The Forum noted the report of the Secretary (CY/10/95) on the academies and related implications. The report detailed the majority of similarities and small differences in terms of admission arrangements for all maintained schools.

58 Devon LAF Annual Report: Feedback and Taking Forward Recommendations

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/96) on the Chief Schools Adjudicator's positive response to the Devon LAF Annual report citing Devon's report as 'best practice'. The report also detailed recommendations from the annual report proposed for adoption by the LAF in respect of Devon based matters and others requiring national consideration, which were being considered by the Adjudicator. The Forum thanked the Task Group and the support provided by Lisa Boon and Andrew Brent in compiling the report.

Forum discussion points included:

- the merit of regular (annual) comparisons with both statistical and geographical neighbouring authorities
- the need for a national awareness-raising campaign regarding timescales for schools admissions to minimise late applications – particularly around primary admissions
- clarification on whether the Pupil Premium was based on receipt of or eligibility for Free School Meals. (Further information on this can be found on the DfE site:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0063284/government-announces-pupil-premium-to-raise-achievement>

this suggested that the deprivation indicator to be used to pay the Pupil Premium is not yet decided but eligibility for Free School Meals was being considered. The DfE was likely to confirm the parameters for the Pupil Premium which will be reported to the next meeting).

RESOLVED

(a) that the Devon-based recommendations detailed in paragraph 3 of the report be approved and that the recommendations requiring national changes be noted;

(b) that the Chairman, on behalf of the Forum, writes to the Secretary of State requesting that a national awareness-raising campaign be implemented regarding timescales for school admissions.

59 Outcome of Devon Objection to Schools Adjudicator re Newton Abbot College Admission Arrangements for 2011/12

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/97) on the Adjudicator's determination in respect of the LA's objections to aspects of the College's admission arrangements for 2011/2012. The report detailed the reasons for the LA's and the neighbouring school's objection. The Adjudicator's decision was binding on the Authority and the School and it allowed the request for an enlarged designated area for the College covering the Newton Abbot Learning Community and overlapping the neighbouring school's area. The report detailed the implications on transport policy and designated school entitlement for the County. The Adjudicator's decision allowed the College to determine its admission arrangements as detailed save the need for an explanatory note relating to pupils with a statement of special education need.

The Forum noted with concern the potential transport cost implications of the decision and the precedent established despite the advice and guidance of this Forum and the need for consensus between schools. It was acknowledged however that Newton Abbot College had maintained a dialogue with the LA during the objection, and that recent meetings had taken place at both Newton Abbot College and Coombeshead College to consider the way forward.

60 Cost Savings to Devon LA Resulting from Withdrawal of Faith and Grammar school Schemes Proposed from September 2011

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/98) on potential savings and the consultation arrangements in respect of the proposed changes to current discretionary transport entitlement.

RESOLVED

(a) that the proposal confirmed by the Cabinet on 13 October 2010 to consult on the removal of discretionary faith and grammar school transport on a phased basis from September 2011 be noted;

(b) that the potential financial savings to the Local Authority as a result of this proposed change to Devon's Education Transport Policy be noted;

(c) that the other discretionary transport areas that would be subject of consultation on possible reduction or removal from September 2011 be noted.

61 Admission Appeals: Outcomes split by LA and Own Admission Authorities' Schools (recommendation in LAF Annual Report)

The Forum considered the report of the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Committee (CX/10/115) on data relating to the proportion of Schools Admission appeals allowed and refused by the Schools Appeal Committee in respect of Community and Voluntary Aided schools from 2006 to date. The report was produced following a recommendation within the Forum's Annual report to the School Adjudicator.

Discussion points included:

- the anticipation of more academy schools and cost implications for them in using the independent appeal panel on which there was ongoing analysis and discussion by the LA;
- the role of LAF in monitoring the data relating to admission appeals.

RESOLVED that the Clerk to the appeals Panel be requested to submit an annual report to LAF showing appeal outcomes split by admission authority outcomes.

62 Testing Before Preference: Update on Contacts with Torbay LA/LAF

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/101) on the current position in Devon, and Torbay and Plymouth Local Authorities. Torbay was proposing to proceed with testing before a preference was expressed for 2112-13 which would not be consistent with practice for Devon or Plymouth and would have implications for Devon parents. A meeting of the Torbay LAF was arranged for 24 November as a consequence of the concern expressed at which the County Council officer would attend and present the Council's and this LAF's reservations about the proposal. Mr Evans expressed his view about the need for consensus between the grammar schools involved before any change should be approved.

RESOLVED that the position be noted and a further update to be made at the next meeting.

63 Proposed Admission Arrangements for 2012/13

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/102) on the local authority's proposed annual consultation arrangements. The other admitting authorities in Devon - academies, VA, foundation and trust schools would be included in these arrangements. The on-line consultation would begin on 15 December and end in February 2011 and would be determined by 15 April 2011 in line with the requirements of the admissions code. The report detailed the proposed amendments from 2011-12 to co-ordinated admission schemes.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the admission arrangements for 2012-13 be proposed and consulted on by the local Authority;
- (b) that the changes to proposed arrangements detailed in section 4.1 be noted;
- (c) that the list of proposed consultees in paragraph 3.4 of the report be supported;
- (d) that the proposal relating to year 11 Admissions be noted.

64 Inclusion – Devon In Year Coordination Scheme and In Year Fair Access Protocol

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/103) on the monitoring of the admission of children who arrive in the authority's area outside the normal admission round and the distribution among local schools, taking account of any preferences expressed. The report also detailed the application of the Fair Access Protocol administered by the LA Admissions Team. The report provided statistical data on children in care and admissions as part of the Protocol and the overall number of out of normal round admissions.

Discussion points included

- the significant additional work load on the LA Admissions Team and the related capacity issues which had inhibited data recording;
- the need for foster carers and social workers responsible for children in care to seek the advice of the LA Admission Team regarding school admission.

RESOLVED that the impact of in-year co-ordination on inclusion within Devon be noted.

65 Proposed Admission Arrangements for CE Schools

The Forum considered the report of the Church of England Diocese (CY/10/104) on the annual consultation process in respect of the 48 primary and one secondary CE VA school admission arrangements for 2012/13. These would be incorporated with the Devon arrangements to be published by 1 May 2012.

RESOLVED that joint consultation arrangements be approved and supported.

66 Infant Class Size Breaches

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/105) on the number of breaches of infant class size legislation and cost implications in making 'qualifying measures'. Breaches had reduced with the involvement of the Schools Admissions Team in determining all admissions for all maintained primary schools.

RESOLVED that the continuing work of the local authority to minimise the number of breaches of infant class sizes legislation be supported.

67

Admissions Policy for Devon Personalised Learning Service (DPLS)

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (CY/10/106) on the proposed admissions policy for implementation from the spring term 2010/11 in respect of the Devon Personalised Learning Service from 3 settings across the County for children and young people experiencing difficulty in engaging in education. The proposed policy would be subject to public consultation (including the Devon Education Forum) for 2011-12 and 2012 -13 academic years for determination by the Cabinet.

Discussion points included:

- the need to put the young people at the centre of the process and the need for a flexible and pragmatic approach by schools, particularly in respect of Yr 11 children;
- commending the draft policy in clarifying the process and roles.

RESOLVED that the Admissions Policy formulated for the DPLS be supported for implementation.

68

Dates of Meetings 2011

RESOLVED Thursday 17 March 2011; Thursday, 14 July 2011 and Thursday 17 November 2011 at 10.30 am at County Hall.

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.40 pm

The Minutes of the Forum are published on the County Council's Website at:-
http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/schools/admissions/admissions_forum.htm