

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE ADMISSIONS FORUM** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands on Wednesday, 23 June 2010

### PRESENT

Local Education Authority:	Cllr	Mrs A M Lewis	Portfolio Holder Children's Services
Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools:		Ms Neale	Governor, Dunton Lower School
		Mrs A Phillips	Headteacher, Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable
Foundation and Trust Schools:		Mr S Fell	Headteacher, Harlington Upper School
Voluntary Aided Schools:		Mr N Sharpe	Ashton Middle School, Dunstable
Roman Catholic Diocese:		Mrs F Image	Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative
Parent Representative:		Mr I Robinson	Parent Governor, Caldecote VA Lower School
Local Community:		Mr V Hodgson	RAF Henlow
Apologies for Absence:		Ms W Anderson-Welsh	
		Mr D Brandon-Bravo	
		Mrs P Cotton	
		Mrs D Day	
		Mr J Kemp	
		Mr B Sear	
		Mr R Slade	
		Mrs C Spurgeon	
		Mrs J Woodthorpe	
Officers in Attendance:		Mrs R Bonwick	Head of Admissions Service
		Ms L Braisher	Senior Admissions Officer
		Mrs A Bray	Head of School Support
		Mr J Goldsmith	Assistant Director (School Organisation and Planning)
		Mrs E Heaney	Temporary Democratic Services Officer

### CBAF/10/1 **Appointment of a Chairman**

The Democratic Services Officer invited nominations for a Chairman of the Forum for the 2010 – 11 year. Shawn Fell was nominated, seconded and duly appointed as Chairman.

### **RESOLVED:**

**to appoint Shawn Fell as Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Admission Forum for the 2010 – 11 year.**

**CBAF/10/2 Appointment of a Vice-Chairman**

The newly appointed Chairman took the chair and invited nominations for a Vice-Chairman. Nick Sharpe was nominated, seconded and duly appointed as Vice-Chairman

**RESOLVED:**

**to appoint Nick Sharpe as vice-chair as Vice-Chairman for the 2010-11 year.**

**CBAF/10/3 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Forum considered the minutes of the previous meeting (held on 24 March 2010).

Officers updated the Forum on the following matters

- an appointment had been made to the post of School Transfer Advisor (minute 04/24 refers);
- the new transport policy had been included in the booklets (minute 04/25 refers);
- the school planning team had advised that the increase to the admission number at Mary Bassett Lower School was not intended to replace the need for a new school. Development in the area was being carefully monitored (minute 04/26 refers).

There were no changes proposed to the minutes of the previous meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2010 as a true and accurate record.**

**CBAF/10/4 Matters arising**

Matters arising had been dealt with during the previous item (see above).

**CBAF/10/5 Update on membership**

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, setting out measures taken to fill vacancies in the Forum (set out in the report). The Democratic Services Officer advised the Forum that Clare Neale had been appointed as a representative of Voluntary Controlled Schools.

**RESOLVED:**

**to note the measures put in place to fill the existing vacancies.**

**CBAF/10/6 Update on 2010 admissions and appeals.**

The Forum discussed the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services which gave an update on admissions and appeals in respect of the September 2010 admissions round. The Forum had a duty to consider how well the admission arrangements served the interests of parents in the local area. The report listed schools where the published admission number (PAN) had been exceeded by 5 pupils or 10% of the PAN. The report also provided school preference data and information on the number of online applications received as well information relating to admission appeals.

Members noted that the following schools had exceeded their published admission numbers

<b>School</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>No of applications</b>	<b>No of places allocated</b>
Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine	54	66 (of whom 62 were from the catchment area)	60
Fairfield Park	30	44 (of whom 36 were from the catchment area)	36
Mary Basset Lower School	30	40	40
Thomas Johnson Lower	18	24 (of whom 22 were from the catchment area)	22
Raynsford Lower	30	46 (of whom 34 were from the catchment area)	30

The Forum was pleased to note that over 90% of families had been offered their first preference place and that this was the highest % of first preferences being met in the Eastern Region. The Forum thanked the Admissions Team for their hard work in achieving this.

Although more on-line applications had been received for first admission to Lower School the number of parents applying on-line for an upper school place was below the regional and national secondary average. A target of receiving 50% of application on-line had been set for the 2011 admissions round. It was also noted that there had been more appeals for lower school places this year, it was suggested that this was a reflection of more lower schools being oversubscribed.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. to note those schools where the published admission number has been exceeded and the reasons for this, as set out in the report;**
- 2. to note the school preference and online application data;**
- 3. to note the appeals information.**

CBAF/10/7 **Admission Arrangements 2011 Foundation, Trust, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academy**

The Chairman declared an interest in this item as the headteacher of one of the schools concerned and invited the Head of the Admissions Service to introduce the report.

Members considered the report on Admission Arrangements 2011 – Foundation, Trust, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academy. The only change to the admission arrangements proposed for foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools at the Admission Forum's last meeting on 24 March 2010, was a proposed change to the published admission number (PAN) of Harlington Upper School.

The Governing Body proposed to reduce the published admission number from 360 to 340. This would still provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand from the catchment area at the time of transfer but could result in in-year applications being unsuccessful.

In response to a question Mr Fell explained that the sixth form numbers were much greater than anticipated when the building work had been completed in 2006. There were currently 1370 students in the school and the growth in sixth form numbers would soon result in the maximum capacity of 1400 being exceeded. Approximately 280 applications each year were from within the catchment area and Mr Fell was confident that the lower admission number would enable all catchment area children to be accommodated at the time of transfer.

The Forum also noted that All Saints Academy had applied to the Secretary of State to have siblings of catchment area children included in their admission arrangements; this was in line with Central Bedfordshire Councils admission policy.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. to approve the change in Harlington Upper School's published admission number from 360 to 340;**
- 2. to note the request made by All Saints Academies to the Secretary of State.**

**CBAF/10/8 Local Authority Report to Schools Adjudicator**

The Forum considered the Local Authority's report to the Schools Adjudicator, noting that they had previously decided to have input into the Local Authority's report rather than produce their own report.

Members discussed the report fully; particularly the impact that exclusions from All Saints Academy had on other local schools as the Academy was not required to admit pupils through the Fair Access Protocol for the first two years. During the discussion it emerged that a slight expansion was planned at RAF Henlow and that the RAF would liaise with the Council over the possible impact on school places.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. to endorse the information provided in the Annual Report;**
- 2. to recommend to the Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services that the report be agreed.**

**CBAF/10/9 Parental Feedback on 2010 Admissions**

The Forum considered the report on Parental Feedback on the admissions process. It was noted that the response rate had been extremely low and that meaningful analysis was not possible. It was felt that the low response rate suggested that overall, parents were satisfied with the admission process.

**RESOLVED:**

**to note the analysis of responses and comments received.**

**CBAF/10/10 Information for Parents for 2011 admissions**

The Admissions Forum reviewed the information to be given to parents. Copies of the draft application forms and in-year guidance notes were circulated and are attached to these minutes.

Members noted that to reduce costs the Admissions Service had proposed several changes to the booklets:

- using templates from creative services rather than paying for external art work;
- issuing only a small number of booklets to schools for families without internet access. The booklets would be available on the website for all other parents;
- reducing the size of the booklets by listing those schools where the standard admissions policy applies and providing details only for those schools with additions to the standard admissions policy.

The wording for the home to school transport policy had been amended to reflect that denominational transport would no longer be provided. As this was a significant change, the Forum suggested that the booklets make clear reference to the fact that free transport was no longer provided on denominational grounds.

The Forum also discussed the difficulties experienced when asked to admit children in-year at short notice. The In-Year application form had been amended and parents were asked to give the reasons for their application. If a child already had a school place then the local authority would liaise with the requested school to agree a suitable start date (for example the start of the new half term) to minimise disruption. Members requested that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Forum to look at issues associated with in-year admissions.

It was also suggested that the In-Year application form identified children with a statement of Special Educational Needs in Section E.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. to approve the information to be distributed to parents in respect of the school admissions processes, subject to the following amendments:**
  - a. inserting the following into all guidance booklets in the Home to School transport section “Please note that free transport is no longer provided on denominational grounds.”;**
  - b. identifying Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs on Section E of the In Year Application Form;**
- 2. to consider, at the next meeting, any issues associated with in-year admissions .**

**CBAF/10/11 Date and Time of future meetings**

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the following meeting dates**

- **11 November 2010 8:30am;**
- **22 March 2011 8:30am;**
- **28 June 2011 8:30am .**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 8.30 a.m. and concluded at 9.55 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated ..... ..