

Minutes

For: Admissions and Place Planning Forum

Date: 6 March 2019

Time: 16:00 – 18:00

Location: Ellen Wilkinson Primary School

Attendees:

Chair

Councillor Julianne Marriott: Cabinet Member for Education (JM)

Local Authority Officers

Peter Gibb: Head of Access and Infrastructure (PG)

Tracy Jones: Group Manager, Pupil Services (TJ)

Simon McKenzie, Interim Head of Service 0-25 SEND (SM)

Manjit Bains, Commissioner Education Place Planning (MB)

Clerk

Kiran Parkash Singh: Pupil Services

Representative: Nursery Schools

Anne Kibuuka: Head Teacher, Kay Rowe Nursery School & Forest Gate Children's Centre

Representatives: Maintained Primary Schools

Diane Barrick: Head Teacher, Carpenters Primary School

Sue Ferguson: Head Teacher, Ellen Wilkinson Primary School

Representatives: Maintained Secondary Schools

Ian Wilson: Head Teacher, Little Ilford Primary School

Anthony Wilson: Lister Community School (Chair of Newham Association of Secondary Head teachers - NASH)

Representative: Academy Primary Schools

Gael Hicks: Head Teacher, St Helen's Roman Catholic Primary School

Representatives: Academy Secondary Schools

Andrew Seager: Head Teacher, Stratford School Academy

Charlotte Whelan: Associate Head Teacher, Forest Gate Community School

Representative: University Technical Colleges

Victoria Webb: Chief Information Officers, London Design and Engineering UTC

Representative: Church of England Primary School

Matt Hipperson: Head Teacher, St. Luke's CoE Primary School

Guest Members

Helen Page - Director of Delivery, Compliance & Transformation, HP

Kelleywebb Martin - Head of 0-19 Children's Health (Lead Nurse), 0-19 Children's Health Service, KM

Apologies

Charlotte Robinson: Head Teacher, Rokeby School

Diane Rochford: Executive Head, John F Kennedy Special School

Paul Halliwell: Head Teacher, St Bonaventure's Catholic Comprehensive School

Paul Harris: Head Teacher, Curwen Primary School

Peter Whittle: Associate Principal, Langdon Academy

Quintin Peppiatt: New Vision Trust

Shirley Ann Jones: Head Teacher, St. James' CoE Junior School

Val Naylor: Executive Head Teacher

Key

Secondary Head Teacher – SHT

Primary Head Teacher - PHT

Action Points

Item 2b. Summer Born Admissions – Review in 12 months

Items 2c and 6. Fair Access Protocol – Forum members to support local authority officers to develop a definition of ‘challenging pupils’. Latest version to be circulated, including internal transfers (following agreement from legal services) for comment and feedback.

Item 2d. – Nursery Admission – Further discussion between LA officers and nurseries over the draft admission arrangements.

Item 5. Secondary Transition for September 2019 – Variations to the current alternative allocations scheme to be explored and options to be discussed at the next forum.

Item 7. Medical admissions and school readiness – Pupil Services, 0-19 Health Care Team and Schools to look at strategies to promote health services available to parents.

1 Introductions

Chair introduced herself and asked the other members of the forum to do the same.

2.a Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous forum meeting were reviewed. All present confirmed that it was an accurate recording of the discussions.

2.b Summer born admissions

JM advised that as Newham’s agreed process was now live it was now an opportunity to discuss summer born admissions for a final time at this forum. TJ explained that the summer born webpages on the Newham website had been updated to provide clarity to the reader to distinguish between requests for summer born deferment and the statutory right to defer admission in the reception year group.

Newham have agreed to follow the DfE recommended approach where an application must be made for the normal admission round. If the deferment is agreed then applicants will have to reapply the following year. However there is no guarantee that the same school will be offered. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) have also agreed to Newham’s approach.

Schools will be advised to publish the links to the summer born admissions webpages on their sites.

At the time of the meeting there was still no information from the DfE regarding the impact on secondary admissions. A SHT asked if the guidance advised applicants that there was a possibility that summer born deferments may not be offered a year 7 place. TJ advised that it did.

A PHT said this was a positive move and brought clarity to the process and ensured that all head teachers were looking at the same guidance to make a decision which meant there was consistency in approach from all schools.

It was agreed that summer born admissions will be reviewed in 12 months.

2.c Fair Access Protocol

Discussed under agenda item 6

2.d Nursery Admissions

TJ presented the draft arrangements for a consistent approach for admission into a nursery placement in Newham, the headline of which was a local closing and offer date for applications that all nurseries agree to. The dates suggested were designed to ensure that there was no clash with the statutory dates for reception and year admissions. The main consideration was to have a consistent approach with a borough wide application form with borough wide deadlines.

A PHT said that the process could apply to the admission of 3 and 4 year olds but there would need to be a different process for the admission of 2 year olds.

To support the process the local authority would run a publicity campaign to advise parents of the new timetable to apply for a nursery place. The forum agreed in principal with the new local approach however further discussion was required regarding the admission of 2 year olds and the agreed dates.

3 Standing Items

Membership

JM asked the forum if whether there was a need for any other education providers to be represented. All agreed that the current membership represented all types of state funded compulsory education. Therefore there was no need for others to be included.

New academy conversions and proposed new free schools

TJ outlined the latest schools that have converted into an academy. Only North Beckton Primary School were currently undergoing the academy conversion process.

There are no new proposed free schools.

Consultations

A PHT provided an update on the outcome of the consultation of the arrangements for admission to Newham Catholic primary schools. They had received feedback from the Diocese of Brentwood and a secondary school regarding a joint policy for all Catholic primary schools when not all are voluntary aided schools (two are academies). The response was that they were part of a family of Catholic schools and that the governing bodies of each school were happy with a joint policy. There was also a query from the Catholic Education Service regarding the verification of siblings and home addresses which was addressed. Following the consultation, the new arrangements were determined.

A PHT provided an update on the consultation process for the admission into St Luke's Primary School. They advised that there was one enquiry but no challenges and the school's governing body had approved the new arrangements.

Place Planning

PG provided an update on Place Planning and the LA's five year place planning strategy, 'Places for All'. PG explained that the strategy was developed to provide transparency and clarity over the LA's plans for any proposed expansion of schools. The final draft was presented and agreed at Cabinet in January 2019 and published on the Newham website.

PG advised that the main headline from the plan is that the primary sector has stabilised whilst the forecast for secondary has increased. The focus therefore currently was on

ensuring that there is a sufficiency of places available in secondary. PG further advised that the Mayor's pledge to increase affordable housing options in the borough was being factored into the strategy.

The birth population in the borough appeared to be stabilising however uncertainty still remained around what will happen after Brexit.

MB added that a recent London Councils meeting that the position in Newham was being reflected across London.

PG added that a bid had been submitted to the DfE for a new special school in Newham. There had been a growth in the number of children diagnosed as being on the Autism Spectrum. The borough are still waiting to hear whether the bid has been successful.

4 Determination of admission arrangements

TJ advised the panel that in accordance with paragraph 1.46 of the School Admissions Code, all admission authorities were required to formally agree 'determine' their admission arrangements. She advised that for September 2020 the LA had opted to continue with those for September 2019 which had been agreed via the formal consultation process 2017/18 and Mayoral Proceeding in 2018.

<https://mgov.newham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=296&MId=11571&Ver=4> These arrangements are for community and voluntary controlled schools and any academies which have agreed to adopt these. Today we were seeking formal agreement from the forum. All voted in favour of the LA's determination of their arrangements.

JM advised own admission authority schools to ensure that they have determined their arrangements and that they were published on their website. TJ stated that this was important as the OSA will check to ensure compliance.

JM advised that a review of the existing admission arrangements (for all schools located in the borough) will be a standing item at each summer meeting of the forum.

5 Secondary Transition for September 2019

JM thanked schools for supporting the transition process, with secondary schools supporting the LA with additional places and primary schools helping parents make successful applications online.

PG added that the number of pupils transferring to secondary school in September 2019 had increased by around 200. However by national offer day all children who had submitted an application had been offered a place. The current position was that there are 32 places for boys and none for girls. This has resulted in exercising the option of a bulge class at Eastlea Community School. The LA had listened to schools and ensured that there was no over provision in schools, however the situation was being monitored

The forecast for 2019 had materialised with the increase in the number of children starting secondary school in September 2019. It was also likely that the projected increase forecast for 2021 will also be seen. There was therefore a need to plan ahead.

MB added that in addition to this Newham was retaining year 6 pupils. In 2011, Newham was retaining 92% of the year 6 population. This had now risen to 97%.

TJ presented data from national offer day. There had been concerns over the gender split in some coeducational schools however this year there had been some improvement in the balance of male and female pupils at certain schools.

In terms of pupils attending school outside of the borough, most children who had gained a

place in an out of borough school will be attending grammar and faith schools. Out of borough children with siblings at Newham schools were still applying for a place with their siblings.

A SHT added that there had been an increase in the number of children transitioning to secondary school but not in the number of applications. TJ explained that there was no requirement for pupils in year 6 at an all through school to submit an application if they intend to stay at the same school for year 7 application. In addition if an application is submitted for another school and an offer is made for a child attending an all through school, it is possible that they will hold onto two offers.

The discussion then moved onto alternative allocations. TJ gave an overview of the current process. If a place cannot be provided at a school named as a preference then the LA will allocate a place at the closest school to the pupil's address that has a place available. The Admissions Code was silent on how such places should be administered but the OSA agreed with this approach as it provided transparency and clarity and the focus was on the child.

A SHT suggested that different models should be considered to assess what other rational options were available and how they would work.

JM said that this will be discussed further at the next forum.

A PHT stated that they had faced challenges with parents applying online and that they had less opportunity to provide advice when completing the application, i.e. naming more than one preference. TJ said that the LA could not enforce that more than one school be named but it up to applicants to make informed decisions.

SEN non EHCP Admissions

SM circulated a paper outlining the SEND admissions for September 2019 and fielded questions about the data. A SHT advised that the LA and schools were in a better position than they had been in previous years but added that there needed to be further conversations surrounding cases where mainstream places were being sought for pupils in alternative provisions.

In addition, place planning needed to look at resource provisions so that schools can plan ahead for recruitment purposes. SM agreed that there was a need for an improved process for admissions into resource provisions which would support the argument for a SEND Commissioner to oversee the process.

6 Fair Access Protocol and In Year internal transfers

TJ presented new advice from the DfE regarding the possibility on internal school transfers (Newham to Newham school) being included as part of the fair access protocol. A SHT provided some examples of internal transfers that could be considered under fair access.

TJ provided detail as to how the process would work. The school's governing body could refuse the admission under fair access and bring the case to Newham's pupil placement panel monthly meeting for a decision to be made as to whether the school should admit. It would be an opportunity to prevent undersubscribed schools from being used by applicants escaping sanction from their current school.

The forum was invited to vote on whether internal transfers should be included in the protocol. All agreed that they should be. The inclusion needed to be ratified by Newham's legal service. TJ added that a definition of a 'challenging pupil' also needed to be agreed to be included in the protocol and requested support from forum members to develop a

definition.

7 Medical admissions and school readiness

A PHT provided examples of children starting school when they weren't ready. The primary focus of concern was surrounding the issue of children not being toilet trained with parents not informing them at admission.

HP advised that the commissioning of 0-19 health care was now under the local authority and working groups had been established to address the issues and concerns being raised by schools especially about toilet training, however bigger concerns will require multi agency working groups. Work was currently being undertaken to develop these.

In addition staff in the 0-19 Health Team can now access limited records of children without having to rely on referrals from external agencies. This would help officers to start work with schools at an earlier stage.

However the Team needs to increase support around toilet training and being school ready and more work needed to be done with parents. JM suggested that the services available from the 0-19 Health Team needed to be promoted more by the LA and schools. Information should be included in the starting primary school booklet and other ways of promoting the service needs to be looked at.

6. Any other business and close

TJ notified the panel of an objection the Office of the Schools Adjudicator had received concerning the admission arrangements to a secondary school from a primary school in the north east of the borough, where pupils at the school were unable to gain a place at a local secondary school. Sheringham Primary School raised the objection advising that their year 6 pupils were not being offered a place at Little Ilford Secondary School. TJ advised the forum that Sheringham Primary School had adopted LB Newham's admission arrangements which are compliant with the admissions code. However there was an opportunity to discuss the admission arrangements.

It was agreed that the arrangements and objection be discussed at the next panel.

Meeting Closed 19:00

Next meeting – Wednesday 12th June 2019 (Ellen Wilkinson Primary School)

End.