

# Minutes

**For:** Admissions and Place Planning Forum

**Date:** 13.06.2022

**Time:** 15:30-17:30

**Location:** Video Conference

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## Attendees:

### Chair

Councillor Joshua Garfield: Cabinet Member for Education and Children Social Care (JG)

Councillor Mariam Dawood: Deputy Cabinet Member for Education (MD)

### Local Authority Officers

Peter Gibb: Head of Education Access and Infrastructure (PG)

Tracy Jones: Group Manager, Pupil Services (TJ)

Ada Egot: Commissioner Education Place Planning (AE)

### Clerks

Kiran Parkash Singh: Admissions and Appeals Team Manager (Primary)

Cassandra Philip: Admissions and Appeals Team Manager (Secondary)

### Representatives: Maintained primary schools

Diane Barrick: Head Teacher, Carpenters Primary School

Sue Ferguson: Head Teacher, Ellen Wilkinson Primary School

### Representatives: Academy Primary Schools

Paul Harris: CEO Tapscott Trust

Gael Hicks: Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust

### Representatives: Academy secondary schools

Anthony Wilson: CEO Newham Community Schools Trust

John Blaney: Principal, Royal Docks Academy (Burnt Mills Trust)

### Representative: Single Sex Schools

Charlotte Robinson: Head Teacher Rokeby School (Boys Only)

### Faith Representative: Catholic schools

Gael Hicks: Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust

Chris McCormack: Head Teacher, St. Bonaventure's

### Representative: University Technical Colleges

Geoffrey Fowler: Principal, London Design and Engineering UTC

**Representative: Virtual School**

Val Naylor: Executive Head Teacher

**Representative: Alternative provisions**

Sandy Davies: Head Teacher, Education Links

**Apologies:**

Kate McGee: Head Teacher, Manor Primary School

Peter Whittle: Associate Principal, Langdon Academy (Brampton Manor Trust)

Jo Aylett: Head Teacher, Edith Kerrison Nursery School and Children's Centre

**Key**

Secondary Head Teacher – SHT

Primary Head Teacher - PHT

APPROVED

## **Action Points**

### **1. Lead Councillor for Education visits to schools**

Schools to contact Councillor Garfield's PA to arrange school visits in the 2022-23 academic year. This will also be put in the Head Teachers' Newsletter.

### **2. Promotion of Newham Schools**

Local authority to review previous plans for promoting Newham school success in borough, to encourage residents to remain in Newham for their children's education.

### **3. SEND Consultations**

SEND Consultation process to be reviewed at the next Admissions and Place Planning Forum.

### **4. Secondary In Year Admissions**

Local authority to circulate in year admission figures prior to the next Admissions and Place Planning Forum.

### **5. Admissions and Place Planning Forum Feedback at Education Partnership Board**

Forum members to feedback findings and decisions made at Admissions and Place Planning Forum at the next Education Partnership Board.

### **6. Transgender Pupils**

Local authority officers (education and social care and forum representative, Paul Harris) to meet prior to the next Admissions and Place Planning Forum to discuss transgender pupils. Item to be added to the next forum agenda.

### **7. Children Missing Education Procedures**

Children Missing Education processes to be reviewed at the next Admissions and Place Planning Forum.

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## **Agenda Item 1. Welcome, introductions and membership**

1. Chair JG introduced himself as the new Lead Councillor for Education and MD as new Deputy Lead Councillor for Education and welcomed attendees to the final forum of the 2021-2022 academic year. Other forum members introduced themselves and apologies were forwarded for members who were unable to attend today.

2. JG advised that he looked forward to working closely with schools and requested school forum members to contact his team if they would like him and MD to visit their school. This invitation will also be included in the Head Teachers' newsletter.

## **Agenda Item 2. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising:**

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

2. The forum reviewed the action points from the previous meeting.

### **a. Membership vacancies**

1. TJ advised the panel that vacancies should be reviewed over the summer and should be filled in time for the next Forum.

### **b. Promotion of Newham Primary Schools**

1. PG advised that the local authority will be looking at this over the summer about how the success of Newham schools can best be showcased. The local authority will be pushing this in the autumn term when families will be applying for 2023 admission.

2. A PHT stated that the local authority should be doing a lot more to celebrate Newham success. There are some very good schools in the borough with outstanding results but schools rolls were falling.

3. There was also anecdotal evidence that suggests families were moving out of Newham when their child starts year 5, for what they consider to be better secondary schools in other boroughs.

4. JC added that the lack of promotion of success in schools had been recognised at Cabinet level and agreed that more needed to be done. This will be reviewed in time for the autumn term and the next Forum.

### **C. Overalllocation**

1. PG advised that at the request of the forum the schools who overallocated for year 7 admission were contacted. The forum has noted the impact of overallocation on other schools but responding schools stated that they took the decision to overallocate due to oversubscription and to increase educational options for families.

### **D. SEND**

1. PG advised the forum that Newham's 0-25 SEND Service were contacted and were informed of the panel's view that year 7 places were urgently needed for year 6 children with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP) for September 2022. This has been acknowledged and the service is working on securing secondary places.

2. PG reminded the panel that the local authority is increasing capacity for secondary school level SEND provisions, and is in the process of securing funding to support this.

3. A SHT added that the EHCP consultation process in Newham often cause confusion over the school naming process on the EHCP, as often there is no follow up from the 0-25 SEND Service. It would be helpful if the Forum could review the EHCP consultation process. This will be added as an agenda item at the next Forum.

### **E. SEND Place Planning and Free School Options**

1. PG advised the Forum that at their request the DfE were contacted over the proposed new school at Rick Roberts Way. The DfE have taken the Forum's views on board and they will be considered.

### **F. Summer Born Admissions**

1. TJ advised the Forum that clarity was sought from the DfE about when children who have deferred entry can sit public examinations, i.e. was it based on their year group or age? The DfE have advised that children will sit examinations when they have reach the appropriate key stage and not when they reach a certain age.

2. Secondary schools in Newham have stated that they would not consider admitting summer born children out of cohort and children who have been offered a secondary school place will have to start in year 8 rather than in year 7. However, in light of the DfE's

guidance this may need to be reviewed.

3. It was agreed that this will be an agenda item at the next Forum.

### **Agenda Item 3. Place Planning**

1. PG opened this agenda item by advising the Forum that changes had been made to the 2021 Place Planning Strategy. Amendments to Ward boundaries has resulted in an increase from 20 to 24 wards. Primary place planning areas have also been reconfigured to 8 from 7. This has also been approved by the DfE. There is no change to the place planning area for secondary schools.

2. The updated Place for All Strategy for 2022-2027 will be circulated for comment in time for when it will be presented to Cabinet in the autumn term.

3. AE provided an overview of the changes to the previous since the last Forum. The current projections have factored in a number of demographic trends;

- a. Birth rates – Falling since 2015 and likely to fall further
- b. Housing – 1-2 bedroom new build properties have not resulted in an increase in pupil yield
- c. Migration – Falling since 2015-16

4. Taking into consideration the above, the current forecast suggests that there is no projected need for additional places. Longer term there may be need for primary places in areas of the borough where major housing developments are being delivered. However the current projection for the 2022-23 year group is that schools are operating at a 17% surplus. This is projected to rise to 24% by 2025.

5. This is of concern for many primary schools. The local authority will continue to consider capping proposals but the overall position will be discussed further with schools in planning area meetings in the autumn term.

6. A PHT asked what the local authority's plan was for schools with falling rolls. PG advised that whilst there was a general fall in reception numbers across the borough, the position in Newham was not as bad as in other parts of London and was mainly concentrated in certain areas.

7. PG added that a number of schools have implemented temporary caps to their rolls but schools could be more sustainable by considering permanent reductions to their admissions number which would support them to be more financially viable. A temporary cap allows schools to analyse whether a permanent reduction will work for them.

8. Schools could also consider sharing resources/staff to reduce costs and the borough's School Improvement Advisors are able to support with this.

9. A SHT asked if there was any option for schools to change their designation from mainstream to special to maintain their viability. AE advised that another local authority has raised this with the DfE. The outcome will be shared once it is received. PG added that currently new special schools could only be considered as part of each new free school wave.

10. PG added that the whilst the current projections suggest that additional places are required, the local authority have to continue to monitor what the possible pupil yield will be

from planning applications for housing that have recently been submitted and whether these developments will require new schools. Current schools however, should feel assured that they will not be impacted by the building of new schools as a result of new housing developments.

11. Secondary schools are currently operating at 2% headroom and this is mainly concentrated in two secondary schools. This could reach a surplus of 8% in 2027-28. This would suggest that no additional secondary school places are required in the next forecast period. This is in contrast with the DfE's views.

12. PG added that overallocation in previous years has helped maintain a surplus of secondary school places. If schools did not overallocate then there would not be a surplus of places for 2022-23. However overallocation will not be required in future years to maintain a working surplus.

13. A SHT stated that it was important that the local authority made it clear to the DfE that the new proposed schools are not required due to the forecasts.

14. The SHT added that overallocation was still an issue and based on the forecast it will not be required with each year 7 intake but should be an option for in year admissions, should it be needed. This would support schools who are struggling with filling with each year 7 intake round. In addition schools that overallocate in year 7 are less likely to admit in year as they do not report vacancies.

15. Another SHT added that schools that are not full in year 7 will repeatedly admit more children in year in later year groups as they were not full in year 7. Schools should not be able to overallocate.

16. AE stated that overallocation could help maintain pupils numbers in secondary schools as fewer children are likely to leave if they are happy in their school. A SHT responded by stating from their experience (an undersubscribed school) children tend to stay. If more children were offered undersubscribed schools they may still stay.

17. TJ added that following each national offer day, families who have not been offered any of the schools named as preference and been allocated their nearest schools with a place available are notified of other schools that still have vacancies and invited to change the school that is offered. Based on the number of families contacted, very few actually do change the offered school.

18. MD asked if this was a trend and whether there was anything that could be done about it. PG advised that overallocation had been a feature of year 7 admissions for a number of years but it is clear based on the forecast that it will not be needed going forward.

19. PG added however, it is important to note that this is not a matter for the local authority as own admission authority schools can make their own decision about overallocation. The Forum cannot make a decision but members can make representations at Education Partnership Board Level.

#### **Agenda item 4. Standing items**

##### **a) New academy conversions and proposed new free schools**

1. TJ advised the Forum that St Winefride's RC Primary School has joined Our Lady Of Grace Catholic Academy Trust. Currently there are no other proposed conversions.

2. A PHT asked if the local authority will be responding to the Government's latest education White Paper – Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child. JG advised that the local authority will consider the White Paper and make appropriate representations.

3. A PHT added that any representations should include the viewpoint of local multi academy trusts.

#### **b) Proposed consultations for September 2024 entry.**

1. TJ advised the Forum that LB Newham was not planning any changes to the 2024 arrangements. Own admission authorities needed to ensure that they publish the timetable for any proposed changes to their arrangements on their website.

2. TJ added that Harris Academy Chobham are considering adopting LB Newham's determined admission arrangements.

#### **c) Objections to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA)**

1. TJ advised there have been none of note but own admission authorities needed to ensure that their published arrangements were clear and simple to avoid any potential challenges.

#### **d) Annual item: composite prospectuses**

1. TJ advised the Forum that progress was being made on the drafts of the autumn 2022 editions. The design company has thanked schools for their timely responses to their requests, which has ensured the local authority is on track to meet printing deadlines in time for publication in September.

### **5. Any other business**

#### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

1. A SHT advised the forum that they had a constructive meeting with local authority officers about children deemed as future CMEs who have been offered a year 7 place despite not completing a common application form. This has however, created a lot of work for the schools.

2. TJ advised that normally, there would only be around 10 such cases each year, but this year there have been about 100. These children have been allocated schools that have vacancies. Primary schools work very hard to support families but they need to ensure that they engage with families when applications are not being submitted. Schools can check who hasn't applied on the eAdmissions portals.

3. A SHT whose school has been allocated a number of future CME children advised that they have found that some of these children have moved out of Newham to other local authorities or gone abroad.

4. TJ advised that such queries will need to be referred back to the CME service. It is possible that the primary school may have submitted a CME referral but they will not be able to remove from their roll until they receive confirmation from the service.

5. A PHT added that the local authority needed to ensure the CME are working with schools

as too many cases are taking a long time to resolve and close. Schools are following agreed protocols but the CME service is not resolving these fast enough.

6. PG acknowledged that there was backlog and resources are being put in place to address this. In addition, the local authority's CME processes are being reviewed to ensure speedier outcomes.

7. A PHT added it would be helpful to have an update on the CME process at the next Forum.

### **Transgender**

1. A PHT stated that this needed to be reviewed to ensure that transgender children are appropriately placed in schools.

2. TJ advised that the DfE have clarified that families can apply for any school regardless of gender. However, there is a need to consider the local position and community viewpoints about gender reassignment.

3. It was agreed that this will be an item at the next Forum but members will meet before the next Forum to discuss this further.

4. Gael Hicks (Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust) and Charlotte Robinson (Single Sex Schools) will be leaving their roles at the end of the academic year and will be replaced in the Forum roles by their successors. JG thanked them both for their contribution to the success of the Forum.

Meeting Closed 17:30

End.

Date of next meeting: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022