

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 20 January 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Sioned-Mair Richards (Chair), Anne Murphy, Chris Peace, Andrew Sangar and Ian Saunders

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nasima Akther.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on items 6, 7 and 8 on the grounds that, if the public and press were present during the transaction of such business, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 The Chair (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) declared an interest in Case No. 6 (Primary Admissions Requests) and Councillor Chris Peace declared an interest in Case No.12 (Primary Admissions Requests) and did not speak or vote on those cases.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th December, 2015 were approved as a correct record.

5. ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

5.1 The Committee noted that, since its last meeting, no decisions had been made by the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, under powers delegated to her with regard to home to school transport or school admissions.

6. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS

6.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon two cases where a parent had appealed against the administrative decisions made by the Executive Director with regard to the refusal to grant home to school travel bus passes (Case Nos. LF1 and LF2).

6.2 In attendance were the appellant, a friend of the appellant and an interpreter for the appellant.

- 6.3 The appellant, through her interpreter, explained to the Committee the reasons for her request for home to school travel bus passes for two of her children.
- 6.4 In response to questions raised by Members of the Committee, Amanda Dale, Senior Customer Adviser, explained the Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals criteria regarding the City Council's Home to School Transport Policy. She informed the Sub-Committee of the reasons why the applications had been refused at Stage 1 and then the subsequent refusal of the appeals at Stage 2.
- 6.5 In response to further questions raised by Members, the appellant provided information on the present status of the two children in question, and the reason why the family had moved home and that the children did not attend the catchment/nearest school with available places to their new address.
- 6.6 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellant, the appellant's friend and the interpreter left the meeting to enable the Committee to consider the evidence.
- 6.7 RESOLVED: That the appeals be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional family and educational circumstances in the cases (Case Nos. LF1 and LF2).

7. SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES

Requests to Prioritise on Waiting Lists

- 7.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon 12 cases where parents had expressed a wish for their children to be admitted to secondary schools of their choice. The Executive Director stated that places in secondary schools had been identified by the City Council, in accordance with the published admission criteria, and it had been agreed that the Executive Director would provisionally allocate places at those schools where there were places available, up to the standard number/admission limit. The Committee was requested to consider prioritising the pupils on waiting lists, within their respective categories, for admission if and when places become available.
- 7.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information provided by the pupils' parents including, in some cases, evidence and advice provided by voluntary or professional bodies and organisations and, arising therefrom, it was:-
- 7.3 RESOLVED: That (a) seven pupils be not prioritised on the waiting lists, within their respective categories, on the grounds that the Committee considers that there are no exceptional educational, financial, medical or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12);
- (b) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances in the case (Case No.11);

(c) two pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'sibling' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances in those cases (Case Nos. 3 and 5); and

(d) two pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'feeder' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances in those cases (Case Nos. 1 and 9).

8. SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

8.1 Request to consider change of circumstances

8.1.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon two cases where parents had made requests for the Committee to consider changes in the families' circumstances, in connection with their requests for places at their preferred primary schools and, arising therefrom, it was:-

8.1.2 RESOLVED: That upon consideration of the cases, and with due regard to the additional information now submitted, the Committee considers that (a) there has been a material change in the family's circumstances in one case and therefore authorises the Executive Director to process a new application in the case (Case No.G1); and (b) there has not been a material change in the family's circumstances in Case No. BK1 and therefore authority be not given for a new application to be processed in this case.

(NOTE: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 26 of the Council's Constitution and the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair decided that Case Nos.BK1 and G1) be considered as matters of urgency in order for the requests to be considered at the earliest possible opportunity although it had not been possible to give five clear days' notice that the requests were to be considered).

8.2 Requests to Prioritise on Waiting Lists

8.2.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon 25 cases where parents had expressed a wish for their children to be admitted to primary schools of their choice. The Executive Director stated that places in primary schools had been identified by the City Council, in accordance with the published admission criteria, and it had been agreed that the Executive Director would provisionally allocate places at those schools where there were places available, up to the standard number/admission limit. The Committee was requested to consider prioritising the pupils on waiting lists, within their respective categories, for admission if and when places become available

8.2.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information provided by the pupils' parents including, in some cases, evidence and advice provided by voluntary or professional bodies and organisations and, arising therefrom, it was:-

8.2.3 RESOLVED: That (a) 13 pupils be not prioritised on the waiting lists, within their respective categories, on the grounds that the Committee considers that there are no exceptional educational, financial, medical or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 17, 20, 21 and 24);

(b) two pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment and sibling' category on the grounds that there are exceptional family and medical circumstances (Case Nos.11 and 14);

(c) four pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional family and medical circumstances (Case Nos.12, 15, 18 and 19);

(d) four pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'sibling' category on the grounds that there are exceptional family and medical circumstances (Case Nos.10, 22, 23 and HB1); and

(e) two pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'non-catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances (Case Nos.6 and 16).

(NOTE: During consideration of Case No.10 (Requests to Prioritise on Waiting Lists (Primary School Places)), the Chair left the meeting and Councillor Ian Saunders took the Chair).

(NOTE: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 26 of the Council's Constitution and the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair decided that Case No. HB1) be considered as a matter of urgency in order for the request to be considered at the earliest possible opportunity although it had not been possible to give five clear days' notice that the request was to be considered).

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 17th February, 2016, at 1.00 pm, in the Town Hall.