

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 15 March 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs (Chair), Chris Peace,
Andrew Sangar, Talib Hussain, Joe Otten and Craig Gamble Pugh

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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 Councillor Joe Otten declared a personal interest in Case No. M5 (Primary Admission Request), on the grounds that he was a Governor of the school being requested, and he left the meeting prior to the consideration of the request.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15th February 2017, 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 Verbal Appeals

6.1.1 In attendance were the appellants and Amanda Dale (Customer Services).

6.1.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. He then outlined the procedure which would be followed during the hearing.

6.1.3 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted a report

and commented upon two cases where the parents had appealed against the administrative decisions made by the Executive Director with regard to the refusal to grant home to school travel bus passes for their two children (Case Nos. FO/VA1 and FO/VA2).

- 6.1.4 Amanda Dale explained the Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals criteria regarding the City Council's Home to School Transport Policy, and informed the Committee of the reasons why the applications had been refused at Stage 1, and then the subsequent refusal of the appeals at Stage 2.
- 6.1.5 The appellants explained to the Committee the reasons for the request for home to school travel passes for their children.
- 6.1.6 In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the appellants stated that, as well as the walking route being very dangerous, with their children having to cross a number of busy roads, including some without pedestrian crossings, the route was also very hilly. They added that their eldest child used to walk to school, but now assisted her younger sister on the tram and bus.
- 6.1.7 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellants left the meeting to enable the Committee to consider the evidence.
- 6.1.8 RESOLVED: That the appeals be not upheld on the grounds that there are no exceptional circumstances demonstrated, and having regard to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, the distance from the home address of the pupils to the school for which they are requesting a pass for is under the statutory walking distance, and is within a designated Safe Walking Route (Case Nos. FO/VA1 and FO/VA2).

6.2 Written Appeal

- 6.2.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted a report and commented upon a case where parents had appealed against the administrative decision made by the Executive Director with regard to the refusal to grant a home to school travel bus pass (Case No. L/F1).
- 6.2.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting information and evidence provided by the pupil's parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-
- 6.2.3 RESOLVED: That the appeal be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional educational and family circumstances in the case, and the pass be granted for a period of 12 months (Case No. L/F1).

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 two 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 both cases, evidence and advice provided by voluntary or professional bodies and organisations, and, arising therefrom, it was:-

7.3 RESOLVED: That (a) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'sibling' category, on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances in the case (Case No. 1); and

(b) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'non-catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances in the case or, if there are any other previously prioritised pupils on this waiting list, the pupil now mentioned be placed below such pupils (Case No. 2).

8. SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES - REQUESTS TO PRIORITISE ON WAITING LISTS

8.1 New Cases

8.1.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon 35 cases where parents had expressed a wish for their children to be admitted 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.

8.1.2 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:-

8.1.3 RESOLVED: That (a) eleven 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. M2, M3, M5, M7, M8, M14, M18, M20, M22, M23 and M30);

(b) five pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment' category

on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances (Case Nos. M6, M16, M28, M31 and M32);

(c) three pupils be prioritised on the waiting list in the 'sibling' category, two at the top of the waiting list and one second on the waiting list, on the grounds that there are exceptional medical or family circumstances (Case Nos. M1, M33 and M13 respectively);

(d) fifteen pupils be prioritised on the waiting list in the 'non-catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional educational, medical or family circumstances, with (i) nine pupils being placed at the top of the waiting list (Case Nos. M12, M15, M19, M21, M25, M26, M27, M29 and M35), (ii) five pupils being placed second on the waiting list (Case Nos. M4, M9, M10, M17 and M34) and (iii) one pupil being placed third on the waiting list (Case No. M11); and

(e) consideration of one request be deferred to enable the Executive Director to seek further medical information (Case No. M24), and authority be given for the Executive Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to determine the request.

(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. M28, M29, M30, M31, M32, M33, M34 and M35) 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 Outcome on Deferred Case

Following the decision of the Committee at its last meeting, to defer consideration of Case No. F22 to enable the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families to seek further clarification on the case, it was noted that the child in this case had been offered and accepted a place at one of their three preferred schools.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 19th April 2017, at 1.15 pm, in the Town Hall.