

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 16 March 2016

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

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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 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th February, 2016 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- Case Nos. KIED1 and KIED2

6.1.1 In attendance were the appellants and Tracy Reid 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 meeting.

6.1.3 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon two cases where 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 (Case Nos. KIED1 and KIED2).

- 6.1.4 Amanda Dale 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.
- 6.1.5 The appellants explained to the Committee the reasons for the requests for home to school travel passes for their two children.
- 6.1.6 In response to questions from Members, the appellants stated that due to problems of bullying and harassment in their local area, they had taken the decision to remove their children from the area for their own safety. The appellants feel that taking their children to a local school would be too disruptive for them and that they have tried on many occasions to be rehoused away from where they live at present.
- 6.1.7 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellants left the meeting to enable the Sub-Committee to consider the evidence.
- 6.1.8 RESOLVED: That the appeals be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional family circumstances in the cases (Case Nos. KIED1 and KIED2).

6.2 Verbal Appeal – Case No.ND1

- 6.2.1 In attendance were the appellant and Tracy Reid and Amanda Dale (Customer Services).
- 6.2.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. He then outlined the procedure which would be followed during the meeting.
- 6.2.3 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.ND1).
- 6.2.4 Amanda Dale 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 application had been refused at Stage 1 and then the subsequent refusal of the appeal at Stage 2.
- 6.2.5 The appellant explained to the Committee the reasons for the request for a home to school travel pass for her child.
- 6.2.6 In response to questions raised by Members, the appellant stated that she is facing increasing living costs and is really struggling to afford the bus fare for her child. She has asked whether it would be possible for the child weekly bus pass available for use on the main bus operators, could be used on all bus operators

within the City, which, in her child's case, would be more affordable.

6.2.7 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellants left the meeting to enable the Sub-Committee to consider the evidence.

6.2.8 RESOLVED: That the appeal be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional financial circumstances in the case (Case No.ND1).

6.3 Written Appeals

6.3.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon six cases where 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.

6.3.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting information and evidence provided by the pupils' parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-

6.3.3 RESOLVED: That (a) four 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 (Case Nos. PAAC1, PAAC2, PAAC3 and ACH11); and

(b) two appeals be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional educational and family circumstances in the cases (Case Nos. BD1 and BIR1).

7. **SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES - REQUEST 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 child to be admitted to a secondary school of their choice (Case Nos. HS1 and HS2). The Executive Director stated that the Committee had previously prioritised both pupils at the top of the waiting list, within their respective category, for admission if and when places became available at the school, but there was now a need to prioritise between the two cases.

7.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information which had already been provided by the pupils' parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-

7.3 RESOLVED: That the pupil in Case No. HS2 be prioritised above the pupil in Case No. HS1 on their respective waiting list.

8. **SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES**

8.1 Request to consider change in circumstances

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

and commented upon a case where parents had made a request for the Committee to consider a change in the family's circumstances, in connection with their request for a place at their preferred primary school and, arising therefrom, it was:-

- 8.1.2 RESOLVED: That upon consideration of the case, and with due regard to the additional information now submitted, the Committee considers that there has not been a material change in the family's circumstances in Case No. W1 and therefore authority be not given for a new application to be processed in this case.

8.2 Requests to Prioritise on Waiting Lists

- 8.2.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon 26 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) 10 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, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, D5 and D7);

(b) one pupil 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 No.16);

(c) four pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'sibling' category on the grounds that there are exceptional family circumstances (Case Nos. 11, 12, 17 and D1);

(d) nine pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'non-catchment' category on the grounds that there are exceptional family or medical circumstances (Case Nos.4, 5, 9, 14, 15, 18, D3, D4 and MARL1); and

(e) consideration of two appeals be deferred to enable the Executive Director to seek further information (Case Nos.D2 and D6).

(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.MARL1 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).

8.3 Requests to prioritise waiting list position

- 8.3.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon two cases where parents had expressed a wish for their child to be admitted to a primary school of their choice (Case Nos. DC1 and DC2). The Executive Director stated that the Committee had previously prioritised both pupils at the top of the waiting list, within their respective category, for admission if and when places became available at the school, but there was now a need to prioritise between the two cases.
- 8.3.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information which had already been provided by the pupils' parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-
- 8.3.3 RESOLVED: That the pupil in Case No. DC1 be prioritised above the pupil in Case No. DC2 on their respective waiting list.

(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.DC1 and DC2 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).

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 20th April, 2016, at 2.00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

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