

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 28 November 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillors Maleiki Haybe (Chair), Talib Hussain, Sioned-Mair Richards, Ann Whitaker and Ann Woolhouse

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 An apology for for absence was received from Councillor Safiya Saeed.

**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 7 and 8 on the agenda (Items 6 and 7 of these minutes), 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 31 October, 2023 were approved as a correct record.

**5. ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

5.1 The Committee noted that, since its last meeting, the Strategic Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, under powers delegated to her with regard to Primary and Secondary Admissions and Home to School Travel Passes, had granted a home to school travel pass on the grounds that there were exceptional medical, educational, physical, family and social circumstances demonstrated (Case No. BA/01).

**6. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS**

6.1 Verbal Appeal SD/02

- 6.1.1 In attendance were the appellant, the appellant's husband and Sharon Craig, Semaira Asif and Andy Tierney (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 Strategic Director of Children's Services submitted a report and commented upon a case where the parent had appealed against the administrative decision made by the Strategic Director with regard to the refusal to grant a home to school travel bus pass (Case No.SD/02).
- 6.1.4 Sharon Craig explained the Stage 1 review and Stage 2 appeals process regarding the City Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Ms Craig informed the Committee of the reasons why the request for a home to school travel pass had been refused at Stage 1. She also informed the Committee that the child was attending a school based upon parental choice, that was not a qualifying school.
- 6.1.5 The appellant and her husband explained the reasons for their preference of Silverdale School. They stated that the reason for this choice was based on distance from their home and also followed on from discussions with their child's primary school, which was a feeder school for Silverdale School.
- 6.1.6 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellant, the appellant's husband and the officers left the meeting to enable the Committee to consider the evidence.
- 6.1.7 RESOLVED: That:-
- (a) the appeal be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional financial, family and social circumstances demonstrated (Case No.SD/02); and
  - (b) the Committee undertake to request that the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee consider commissioning a review of the information given to parents on Home to School Transport applications when applying for secondary schools for their children; the revised information to include the following:
    - a. a 'Task and Finish Group', to include members and officers, to review the current information pack for parents with particular reference to travel;
    - b. admissions information written in plain language;
    - c. a summary of important points to take into account when choosing a school, including the potential financial consequences of their choice;
    - d. support for parents who have English as a second or third language;
    - e. support for feeder schools in offering accurate advice to parents

when applying for school places; and

- f. engagement with parents in order to test the new information pack to make sure that it is user friendly.

6.2 Written Appeal EC/01

- 6.2.1 The Strategic Director of Children's Services, submitted a report and commented upon a case where the parent had appealed against the administrative decision made by the Strategic Director with regard to the refusal to grant a home to school travel bus pass (Case No.EC/01).
- 6.2.2 Semaira Asif explained the Stage 1 review and Stage 2 appeals process regarding the City Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Ms Asif informed the Committee of the reasons why the request for a home to school travel pass had been refused at Stage 1. She also informed the Committee that the child was attending a school based upon parental choice, that was not a qualifying school.
- 6.2.3 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting information and evidence provided by the pupil's parent and, arising therefrom, it was:-
- 6.2.4 RESOLVED: That the appeal be not upheld on the grounds that there are no exceptional medical, financial, family or social circumstances demonstrated and, having regard to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, the school that the pupil is requesting a pass for is not the catchment/qualifying school (Case No.EC/01).

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 7.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 20 December, 2023, at 2.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

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