

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 30 January 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Maleiki Haybe (Chair), Safiya Saeed (Deputy Chair), Talib Hussain, Ann Whitaker and Ann Woolhouse

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Denise Fox and Sioned-Mair Richards.

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, 8 and 9 on the agenda (items 5, 6, 7 and 8 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 28 November, 2023, were approved as a correct record.

4.2 Matters Arising

It was noted that at the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee on 19 December, 2023, it had been agreed that a 'Task and Finish' group would be set up to consider school admission matters. This had been agreed in response to the specific referrals that the Admissions Committee had made to the Policy Committee, dated 27 June, 26 September and 28 November 2023.

5. ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

5.1 The Committee noted that, since its last meeting, no decisions had been made by the Strategic Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, under powers delegated to her with regard to home to school

transport or school admissions.

6. SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - MID-TERM

6.1 Request for Priority on Waiting List – Mid-Term FV1

6.1.1 The Strategic Director of Children’s Services submitted a report and commented upon a case where parents had expressed a wish for their child to be admitted to a secondary school of their choice (Case No. FV1). The Committee was requested to consider giving the pupil priority on the waiting list, on the grounds that there are exceptional medical circumstances.

6.1.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information provided by the pupil’s parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-

6.1.3 **RESOLVED:** That the pupil be given priority on the waiting list in the ‘other’ category, on the grounds that the Committee considers that there are exceptional medical circumstances demonstrated (Case No. FV1).

6.2 Request for Priority on Waiting List – Mid-Term HH1

6.2.1 The Strategic Director of Children’s Services submitted a report and commented upon a case where parents had expressed a wish for their child to be admitted to a secondary school of their choice (Case No. HH1). The Committee was requested to consider giving the pupil priority on the waiting list, on the grounds that there are exceptional educational and family circumstances.

6.2.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting evidence and information provided by the pupil’s parents and, arising therefrom, it was:-

6.2.3 **RESOLVED:** That the pupil be given priority on the waiting list in the ‘catchment area’ category, on the grounds that the Committee considers that there are exceptional educational and family circumstances demonstrated (Case No. HH1).

6.3 Request for Fresh Right of Appeal – Mid-Term M1

6.3.1 The Strategic Director of Children’s Services submitted a report and commented upon a case where parents had expressed a wish for their child to be admitted to a secondary school of their choice (Case No. M1). The Committee was asked to consider whether there were any significant and material changes in the circumstances of the family, since the original applications were made, to authorise that a fresh application be made, which would allow a fresh right of appeal for the school.

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

6.3.3 **RESOLVED:** That the pupil be given a fresh right of appeal on the grounds that the Committee considers that there have been changes in the circumstances of

the family demonstrated, namely exceptional medical circumstances (Case No. M1).

7. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS

7.1 Verbal Appeal AS/01

7.1.1 In attendance were the appellant, an interpreter for the appellant, and Semaira Asif and Sharon Craig (Customer Services).

7.1.2 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.

7.1.3 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.AS/01).

7.1.4 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.

7.1.5 The appellant explained, via the interpreter in attendance, the reasons for his preference of Astrea Academy. He stated that this was due to his child having attended Astrea Academy since September 2022, and feeling supported within the Arabic speaking community. He stated that his child had expressed a wish to remain with established friendship groups, and indicated that he had received minimal language support when applying for a school place.

7.1.6 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellant, the interpreter for the appellant, and the officers left the meeting to enable the Committee to consider the evidence.

7.1.7 **RESOLVED:** That the appeal be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional educational, financial, family and social circumstances demonstrated (Case No. AS/01).

8. SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUESTS - SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES

8.1 The Strategic Director of Children's Services submitted reports and commented upon 40 cases where parents had expressed a wish for their children to be admitted to secondary schools of their choice. The Strategic 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 Strategic 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 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:-

8.3 **RESOLVED:** That (a) two pupils be not prioritised on the waiting list, within their respective category, on the grounds that the Committee considers that there are no exceptional educational, financial, medical or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 3 and 31);

(b) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment area with sibling' category at one of their preferred schools and in the 'catchment area' category at their other preferred school on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case No. 23);

(c) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment area with sibling' category at one of their preferred schools and in the 'other' category at their other preferred school on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case No. 38);

(d) one pupil be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'catchment area' category at one of their preferred schools and in the 'siblings' category at their other preferred school on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case No. 30);

(e) five pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting lists in the 'catchment area' category at one of their preferred schools and in the 'feeder school' category at their other preferred school on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 5, 11, 24, 28 and 33);

(f) 14 pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting lists in the 'catchment area' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, 32 and 39);

(g) four pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting lists in the 'catchment area' category at one of their preferred schools and in the 'other' category at their other preferred school on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 2, 18, 34 and 35);

(h) two pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'siblings' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 22 and 26);

(i) six pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'feeder school' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family

circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 7, 8, 15, 17, 29 and 40); and

(j) four pupils be prioritised at the top of the waiting list in the 'other' category on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and/or family circumstances demonstrated (Case Nos. 1, 4, 36 and 37).

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 27 February, 2024, at 2.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

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