

Council – 9 November 2009

Local Admission Forum

Service: Walsall Children's Services - Serco

Wards: All

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report sets out changes to the membership of Walsall's Local Admission Forum required as a result of The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008. These changes were also set out in the School Admissions Code published in February 2009.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approves a new constitution for the membership of the Admission Forum as set out in paragraphs 3.13, 3.5 and 3.7 of this report and that members are appointed for a four year term of office.
- 2.2 That Council retains the existing representation of two elected members on the Admissions Forum and makes the appointments to the Admission Forum.
- 2.3 That Council requests a further report in January 2010 following receipt of nominations.
- 2.4 That Council thanks members of the current Admission Forum for their work on admissions matters.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Section 85A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires all local authorities to establish an Admission Forum.
- 3.2 Admission Forums provide a vehicle for local authorities and other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved. Their main focus is to consider the fairness of arrangements in their local context. Admission authorities of all maintained schools and academies, when exercising their functions, must have regard to any advice offered by the Forum.

Membership of Forums

- 3.3 It is important that Admission Forums reflect the needs of their local community. The membership of Forums is set out in the School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008 (Regulation 8). A Forum must comprise no more than 20 members who are appointed by the local authority in accordance with the Regulations.
- 3.4 The membership must reflect the types of schools in the locality and must include:
- a) at least one representative of each of the following schools which are in the relevant area:
 - community schools
 - voluntary controlled schools
 - voluntary aided schools
 - foundation school
 - academies
 - city technology colleges;
 - b) one representative from each body or person representing the religion or religious denomination of any foundation or voluntary schools or Academies in the relevant area which are designated as having a religious character;
 - c) at least one parent member;
 - d) at least one person who appears to the members appointed under a) to c) above to represent the interests of any section of the community in the relevant area who is not eligible for appointment within any of the other membership categories, this could include employers, community groups, and Choice Advisers.
- 3.5 Members falling within a) above must be either the head teacher or a governor (other than a governor who is appointed to the governing body by the authority and is a member of the authority) and must be appointed following nomination by the governing body of a maintained school within the relevant area. Council is recommended to decide that these representatives are headteachers.
- 3.6 Members falling within b) above must be appointed following a nomination by the relevant body or person prescribed in relation to the religion or religious denomination in Regulation 12(7) of the Admission Arrangements Regulations. In Walsall these denominations are the Church of England and the Catholic Church.
- 3.7 Members falling within c) above must be resident in the relevant area and the parent of a child who has attained the age of two and is receiving primary

education or is of compulsory school age. Cabinet is recommended to decide that these members are parent governors.

3.8 Members falling within d) above must be appointed following a recommendation by the members appointed under a) to c) above.

3.9 The new regulations state that up to two Local Authority representatives (as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools) be appointed as members of the Admission Forum. The local authority representatives can be:

- (x) two elected members;
- (y) one elected member and one officer; or
- (z) two officers.

In May 2009, Councillors Bird and Carpenter were appointed to the Admission Forum for the Municipal Year.

It is recommended that Walsall retains two elected members on the Admissions Forum.

3.10 A term of membership must not exceed four years and members must vacate office if they no longer meet the requirements set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.7 under which they were appointed. Members appointed under d) above must vacate office if the members appointed under a) to c) above are of the opinion that the member should no longer be a member of the Forum.

3.11 The 2007 Regulations which required all maintained schools, except special schools, in the local authority area to nominate a member (known as 'school members'), if not otherwise represented in the Core membership have been revoked.

3.12 A Forum must elect a chair and vice chair from within the forum membership, who will serve in that capacity for a period of one year. The members must also appoint a person, nominated by the authority, who is not a member of the forum to act as secretary.

Proposed membership of the Local Admission Forum for Walsall

3.13 The proposed membership for the various categories detailed in the Regulations is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed membership of the Local Admission Forum for Walsall

Category	Number of members	Notes
Local authority	2	Elected Members
a) Schools		
Community Schools	2	One from the primary sector and one from the secondary sector; nominations to be sought from the Primary Forum and the Secondary Forum
Voluntary controlled schools	1	Primary sector; nomination to be sought from the Primary Forum
Voluntary aided schools	2	One from the primary sector and one from the secondary sector; nominations to be sought from the Primary Forum and the Secondary Forum
Foundation schools	2	One from the primary sector and one from the secondary sector; nominations to be sought from the Primary Forum and the Secondary Forum
Academies	1	Secondary sector; nominations to be sought and a ballot held
b) Religious denominations		
Church of England	2	Nominations to be sought from the church authorities
Catholic Church	2	
c) Parents	4	Two from the primary sector and two from the secondary sector; nominations to be sought from parent governors and a ballot held
d) Other	2	To be appointed following nomination by members of the Admissions Forum appointed under groups a), b) and c) above.
Total	20	

- 3.14 Subject to approval of these proposals by Council, it is proposed to seek nominations and for these to be considered by Council in January 2010; this would enable members of the new Admissions Forum to be appointed from 1 February 2010 or as soon thereafter as possible.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 There are no direct financial implications.

4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 Local authorities are required to review the membership of their Admission Forum and reconstitute it to meet the requirements set out in the School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008. These changes were also set out in the School Admissions Code published in February 2009. The 2007 Regulations which prescribed changes to the membership of Forums have been revoked.

4.3 Staffing:

- 4.3.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

5. Citizen impact

- 5.1 Admission Forums have a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes social equity and consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the local authority.

6. Community safety

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7. Environmental impact

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

- 8.1.1 The Council is required to reconstitute the membership of Walsall's Admission Forum in line with the Regulations.

8.2 Performance management:

- 8.2.1 Local authorities must submit an annual report on admissions to the Schools Adjudicator; this will include details of the membership of the Forum. The Schools Adjudicator should refer matters concerning membership and the prescribed maximum limit of an Admission Forum to the Secretary of State where they do not comply with the Regulations.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1 Admission Forums have a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes social equity.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The need to reconstitute the Admission Forum has been discussed at meetings of the Local Admission Forum.

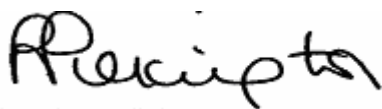
Background papers

Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 3091: The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008.


DCSF: School Admissions Code

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