

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Present: Bob Thompson (BT) – Community Member (Chair)
 Hilary Burke (HB) – Secondary Head Teacher
 Nick Bardsley (NB) – Council Member Deputy Portfolio Holder
 Joyce Barrow (JB) – Council Member
 Phillip Sell (PS) – Hereford Diocese – CofE
 Roger Evans (RE) – Council Member
 Martin Watson (MW) – Parent Representative

In attendance: Phil Wilson (PW) – Shropshire Local Authority
 Carol Sneddon (CS) Shropshire Local Authority
 Sally Herbert (SH) - Shropshire Local Authority

Apologies: Phil Adams (PA) – Own Admissions Authority Schools Head Teacher
 Karen Morris (KM) – Primary School Head
 Mark Davies (MD) – Lichfield Diocese
 Gail Moore (GM) - RAF Shawbury
 Sabrina Hobbs (SH) – Special Schools
 Karen Bradshaw (KB) – Shropshire Local Authority
 Lisa Crossley (LC) – Telford & Wrekin CYPS
 Jane Payton (JP) – Aided Primary School Head
 David Minnery (DM) – Portfolio Holder

Date: Monday 11 July 2016

Venue: Wenlock Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury

No.	Action	Owner
1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies were confirmed as above.	
2	<u>Welcome to new members</u> BT welcomed new members to the group.	
3.	<u>Declaration of interest in agenda items</u> BT explained that this is a standard item and asked members to declare their interest, as and when relevant.	
4.	<u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2016</u> The minutes were read and agreed as an accurate record with the addition of the apologies of Phillip Sell.	

5.	<p><u>Matters Arising from the minutes</u></p> <p><u>Item 6 (page 2) – Determination of Admission Arrangements 2017/18</u></p> <p>The arrangements shared at the February LAF meeting went before cabinet and were formally determined.</p> <p><u>Item 7 (page 3) – Secondary Applications and Primary Applications</u></p> <p>Update on agenda.</p> <p>PW advised that at the time of the last meeting a document had just been released in relation to school place planning. In May five meetings were held in areas where particular pressure on school places was forecast and there is ongoing open dialogue with these schools.</p> <p>BT queried whether the infant Class Size of 30 would be reviewed by government but CS confirmed nothing had been heard in this regard.</p> <p>RE advised as Chairman of a primary school, that consideration had been given to changing a spare classroom into a nursery. Shropshire Council had opposed this change due to the forecast increase in pupil numbers in the next few years as a result of pressure on schools in Shrewsbury. RE expressed concern for other outlying schools with similar plans who may be unaware of this situation and may be considering changes to building use or to staffing.</p> <p>CS explained that when the school proposed to take a classroom out of use and to reduce their admission number, the proposal was subject to consultation. The reduction was agreed with the understanding that the room may be required in the future and would go back into use as a classroom. The point raised by RE had been acknowledged and it had been agreed that the forecast data shared with schools could be reviewed to look at enhancements of this kind.</p> <p>PW advised that Neville Ward is considering additional funding for early years provision. Data is constantly refreshed and offers clear evidence of pressures in particular schools. Schools have received the latest data forecast and four year projection based on January 2016 data including numbers of catchment children and those going out of area – the displacement element.</p> <p><u>5 Update on Objection referred to the Schools Adjudicator</u></p> <p>At the last two meetings the proposal was tabled for Lacon Childe to prioritise children transferring from any of the Trust’s primary schools over other feeder-linked applicants. LAF considered this proposal to be unfair and conveyed this to Lacon Childe. A letter from KB was sent explaining the objection and CS referred to schools adjudicator – still awaiting that response.</p> <p>PS acknowledged an interest in Lacon Childe School.</p>	
----	---	--

6. Secondary and Primary Allocations Update

LAF last met just prior to allocation of secondary school places on 1 March 2016. Letters were sent out that day and the online facility showing allocated schools went live. Unsuccessful applicants were advised they could request to be added to a waiting list. Any places released are allocated to the person at the top of the waiting list. Any unsuccessful review applicant has the right to proceed to the appeal stage. There has been an increase in appeal numbers this year.

Secondary

North – two schools with pressure for places. The Corbett went over PAN as they usually see numbers drop back. The Marches were very oversubscribed but have agreed to go over PAN. There are no appeals in the north of the county.

South – Idsall and William Brookes generally have applications above PAN from T&W applicants. Mary Webb went to PAN, but then fell back a little. Oldbury Wells went significantly over PAN and accommodated 30 additional students, mostly from the Wolverhampton area. The academy is below PAN in other year groups so in order to avoid numerous appeals the school decided to go over PAN, although they recognised that this will not be possible year on year.

Shrewsbury – There is a trend of receiving a number of applications from people outside of the catchment area and the most difficult to place are those with older siblings. Parents expect for a sibling to follow on at the same school but that is not always possible. Priory, Meole Brace and Belvidere were all heavily over-subscribed and each had a large number of appeals.

CS referred to the tables produced since the release of data from the DfE. Around 92% of all applicants are being offered their first preference. The second table shows that Shropshire was top of the West Midlands table in terms of first preferences met.

Shropshire received 97.2% of applications on line. There is a concerted effort to make the application process as smooth as possible and to encourage parents to self-serve.

2016 has seen a significant increase in appeals – 141 appeal applicants compared to 98 in 2015 and 45 in 2013.

Primary

Allocation letters were posted on 18 April 2016 - national allocation day - and unsuccessful applicants were invited to advise if they wished to be added to the waiting list and were given the review deadline of 13 May.

Numerous appeals for primary schools where restricted with the Infant Class Size (ICS) limit which is very frustrating for parents. The appeal panel is very restricted to allow an ICS appeal and the vast majority are refused.

The Infant to Junior places were not too pressured. Harlescott Junior School exceeded their PAN by 3 pupils.

	<p><u>Summary Year on Year</u></p> <p>North – 5 schools are at their admission limit and 11 breached their PAN. Schools where have ICS all reached their limit. Whitchurch Infant School has PAN of 90. With support from the local authority, the school have altered their accommodation to make a classroom enabling them to accommodate up to 100 in-area applicants in Reception. This required the employment of an additional teacher. If appeals for Whitchurch Infant School are heard they will not be on ICS grounds.</p> <p>South – 60 schools. 20 of these are at their PAN. 5 are at ICS limit.</p> <p>Shrewsbury – Many schools are oversubscribed this year. Initially there was a situation where Woodfield Infant School were unable to accommodate all catchment children, although since the review, all in area children have a place at the school.</p> <p>Work is currently ongoing with regard to a phone app via a portal to enable parents to register for a number of services. It will be compatible with iPods, iPhones, smartphones, tablets and other gadgets.</p> <p>The School Admissions Team maintain the waiting lists for Reception and year 7 pupils until Christmas at which point it is passed over to the schools. After this, some schools continue to maintain a waiting list, while others elect not to.</p> <p>BT commented that Warwickshire offer six preferences and CS responded that even though Shropshire enables only 3 preferences, our rate for preferences met is quite high.</p> <p>PS commented on a brilliant report. CS advised that Barrow was the subject of admission appeals for the first time this year and the school bought into the Admissions services.</p> <p>HB asked whether The Corbet and Marches Schools had bought into the Council Appeal Services. CS advised that The Corbet have and that the Marches School have not needed the legal services as yet.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Report to Office of the Schools Adjudicator</u></p> <p>The paper is on the website. Members were thanked for the comments received.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire 2017/18</u></p> <p>Work is currently in progress on the guide for 2017/18 - once published LAF members will receive a copy. Only 1500 copies will be produced compared to 5000 previously. The online version is in colour and the web links are being well received by the applicants. The booklets go to schools and libraries and children centres. Hard copies are used by EWOs, LAF, appeal panel members, schools and pre-schools, etc.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Date and Time of Next Meetings</u></p> <p>CS Proposed to look at meeting schedule for November, February and June/July. CS will firm up dates and get them to LAF members asap.</p>	