

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 103

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Revised Admission Forum Membership and Functions
Date of Meeting:	20 April 2009
Report of:	Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer:	Name: Steve Healey Tel: 293444
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Key Decision:	No
Wards Affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 introduced a number of changes to school admissions arrangements, including changes to the role and membership of the Admission Forum. This reports sets out the key changes as they affect the Brighton & Hove Admission Forum, and makes recommendations about those membership options which are for the City Council to determine.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the proposed membership for the Admission Forum is approved.
- 2.2 That the changes to the Admission Forum role arising from the Education and Skills Act 2008 are noted.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 introduced further changes to the role and membership of the Admission Forum which were set out in more detail in subsequent Regulations and a new version of the Admission Code which is now in force. The key membership changes are that the overall membership is limited to 20, only two Council representatives are permitted, and the concept of attendance and voting rights for all schools in the City is removed. The main changes in Admission Forum membership and duties are set out in appendix 1.
- 3.2 The new membership requirements, although very specific in some respects, also give the City Council some latitude in determining the numbers of members representing schools. The school membership must be representative of all schools in the City. In Brighton & Hove this includes community schools, voluntary aided schools and the Falmer Academy. The limitation of Council

Members to two means that there will be a significant reduction from the current five elected Members. As a result the proposed membership set out in appendix 2 allows for one Council Member from the ruling group and one from the official opposition group. The proposals set out in detail a model for school membership which reflects the previous membership, and also the remaining membership which is not determined by the Council.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The changes in membership and the duties of the Admission Forum were discussed at the last meeting of the previous forum held on 24th February 2009. The Forum Members were asked to make any suggestions that they wished about the revised membership requirements. No such suggestions have been received to date.
- 4.2 Both the Roman Catholic and Church of England diocesan authorities have indicated that they have identified representatives for the new Forum.
- 4.3 The various school groupings set out in appendix 2 will be asked to inform the Council of the names of their representatives on the new Forum.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 As a statutory body the Admission Forum requires clerking facilities, currently provided through the Democratic Services Team. These duties, together with other expenses, such as travelling expenses, room hire etc result in costs to the LA. Until such time as the revised Forum has met and established a pattern of meetings, expenses and activities it is not possible to quantify these costs. Should these costs not be contained within existing resources then additional funding must be identified.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Coleman

Date: 20/03/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008 set out the membership, purpose and functions of the Admission Forum. The Forum must operate within the guidance in the Regulations. The revised Admissions Code published and effective from February 2009 adds some detail to the expectations of how the Forum will operate. Both the new Regulations and the Admission Code arise from changes set out in the Education and Skills Act 2008. The LA must have regard to any advice and recommendations given by the Forum, and the Forum is obliged to promulgate such advice and recommendations to all admission authorities, maintained schools and Academies within the area of the LA and to any other persons with an interest.

Layer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 20/03/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 One of the key roles of the Admission Forum is to monitor the effectiveness of local admission arrangements including fair access to schools and the accessibility of advice and guidance for parents and carers by the local authority. It also considers how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of all children and parents/carers in the area. Planning and provision for school admissions procedures must be conducted in such a way as to avoid potentially discriminatory admissions priorities or planning processes. The City Council must be mindful of bad practice as described in the Admissions Code.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report. Advice given by the Admission Forum may impact on such issues as the proportion of children attending schools in their local community, which in turn could affect transport patterns on the “school run”.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no risk issues in terms of risk to city council resources or risk to children and their parents/carers.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The proposals contained in this report are intended to encourage participation in the establishment and monitoring of school admission arrangements in the City.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The City Council does not have the option to operate outside the legislative requirements arising from the Education and Skills Act 2008 with regard to the Admission Forum. The options available to change the pattern of school representative membership on the Forum were considered, but it was considered that continuity of that school membership pattern, with the addition of the Falmer Academy representation, would help the stability of the new Forum.
- 6.2 The required reduction in Council Member numbers on the Forum allows very little by way of alternative membership options.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To ensure that the City Council conforms to the changed legislative requirements as to how an admission forum will operate.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. The Main changes in admission forum membership and duties.
2. The proposed new membership of the Brighton & Hove Admission Forum.

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None