

ITEM 4

Time Commenced: 10.00 am

Time Finished: 11.10 am

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM 23 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present:	David Keys	Brackensdale Junior School Parent Governor (in the Chair)
	Alison Brown	Derby Diocese, Board of Education
	Sue Bradley	Kingsmead School Head Teacher
	Elizabeth Coffey	Acting Head Teacher Landau Forte College
	Robin Constable	Solicitor
	Daniel Cooper	Constitutional Services Officer
	Greg Duffy	Woodlands School Deputy Head Teacher
	Cathy Dobb	Head of Admissions and Awards
	Genevieve Gordon	Education Welfare Officer
	Roger Shipton	Merrill College Head Teacher
In Attendance	Drew Livingstone	Rolls Royce Plc
	Sara Clark	Rolls Royce Plc

01/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sara Bull, Edward Hayes, Keith Forrest, Fiona McLaughlin and Alison Woodhouse

02/09 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

03/09 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

04/09 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record subject to Minute 05/08 being amended to read:

Name	Type of Interest	Reason
David Keys	Personal	Governor at Brackensdale Junior School

05/09 Rolls Royce Plc – Submission to the Admission Forum of Derby City Council

Members considered a report from Rolls Royce Plc seeking support from the Forum in relation to problems some of their employees were having in relation to school places.

It was reported that Rolls Royce Plc are experiencing increasing difficulty finding school places for their employees who are seconded overseas for work placements. They retain their properties within the city while they serve their placement but when they make their application they are still overseas. The property in which the child currently resides is used to assess the child in connection with the Admissions Authority's admission criteria. Even though a family has a property within the catchment of the school instead it would be their overseas address that would be taken as their residence. This means that children from these families are given the lowest category on the admissions criteria when they make their application.

Senior management are expected to go on a work placement as part of their employment and this is crucial to the ongoing success of Rolls Royce Plc.

The representatives from Rolls Royce Plc asked that children of their employees were not given priority over the Derby residents but were simply treated equally. The company are willing to provide the necessary verification to prove that the employee has returned from overseas, and the length of the placement.

The Chair raised concern that this would mean that places were reserved for Rolls Royce Plc employees. He said the Forum had supported the admissions criteria for Derby and this was in place to ensure a fair system that could be applied equally to all prospective school children. The representatives from Rolls Royce Plc stated that this was not their intention and they are requesting that their employees are treated the same as a regular Derby resident when their application is made. The Head of Admissions and Awards Cathy Dobb stated that any changes to the interpretation of the law may be difficult as a number of residents own multiple properties within the city. Where a family resides is a crucial factor in offering a place to a child and it may also prove difficult to combat fraudulent applications.

The Deputy Head Teacher at Woodlands, Greg Duffy, stated that residents who spend a time abroad on work placement and then could not gain a place for their child were unintentionally a by product of the system. He said that at Woodlands, where possible in similar circumstances, they have admitted children back into the school as it is in the child's best interests and will help them to settle back into schooling.

The Chair stated that he felt quite strongly that the current legal framework is there to provide an equal and fair system that protects all those involved. The solicitor stated aspects of the legal framework were open to interpretation and the Forum could consult the Department for Children, Schools and Families for clarification of the approach the Council, as an admission authority, should take.

Resolved to write to the Department for Children, Schools and Families for clarification on whether an employee working abroad can be treated

as residing in their family home at the time of applying for a school place so long as their period of absence and date of return is verified by their employer.

06/09 In-Year Fair Access Report

The Forum received a report on the Fair Shares Protocol (In Year Fair Access) Managed Moves and Hard to Place Children for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 periods. The Kingsmead School Head Teacher Sue Bradley informed the Forum that this protocol would be updated in September and she hopes that this will also have a positive effect.

The Merrill College Head Teacher Roger Shipton stated that he once again congratulated the ongoing efforts of the Pupil Referral Unit. He said that although the scheme does not solve all the problems of children with challenging behaviour it does seek to deal with them in a very structured way. This project has the backing of all the schools within Derby.

The Kingsmead School Head Teacher Sue Bradley informed Members that this report does not show the commitment of the schools within Derby to this project who offer places to these hard to place children. She admitted that the problem areas lie with parents wanting to exercise a choice over the location of their child's schooling. She said that it is made clear to them that when they enter the scheme they will not have a choice on where their child is placed. If they then refuse the offered place, quite often this results in the exclusion of the child.

Resolved to note the report and to congratulate the ongoing work of the pupil referral unit.

07/09 Consultation on the Admissions Arrangements 2011-2012

Members considered a report from the Director of Children and Young People informing the forum of changes to the admission arrangements for 2011-2012. The Head of Admissions and Awards Cathy Dobb stated that a number of changes to the process which supports the admissions scheme will now increase the pressures on the service. The new Code of Practice on School Admissions came into effect on 10 February 2009 and whilst Derby City has had dealt with all such admissions since September 2005, the authority did not exchange data with other local authorities. This aspect is now a requirement of the code, and therefore the Department for Children, Schools and Families have imposed a set closing date for Primary Reception Intake and Junior Transfers, and a separate date for Secondary Transfers. The national closing date for Primary will be 15 January, and for Secondary will be 31 October.

Officers do not envisage that the Secondary closing date will be an obstacle to the current processes. However, the imposition of a national closing date of 15 January will extend the date by which offers will be issued to parents. To exchange data with other local authorities, and to ensure that parents receive

only one offer of a school place, the timescale completing this process means that offers will be issued on or around 9 May. The code also imposed a mandatory 'three preferences' for primary applications. Currently Derby City operates two preferences.

Resolved to note and support the Authority's stance on the co-ordination of admissions to all schools in Derby.

MINUTES END