

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2009

Subject: Wigan Admission Forum

Report of: Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services

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Purpose / summary: Advise Members of a change in the School Admission Regulations regarding Admission Forum membership and request Members approve the reconstitution of the Admission Forum

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: N/A

Recommendation / decision: Members are recommended to:

- approve the reconstitution of the Admission Forum
- approve the membership
- approve current Core members where possible are assimilated into the Forum membership
- where vacancies exist instruct the Director of CYPS to seek nominations

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 3 March 2009

Risks / Implications:

Financial: None

Staffing: None
 Policy: No, a diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.
 Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?
 Wards affected: All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

No.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure? No

No.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**
 Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**
 Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	X
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

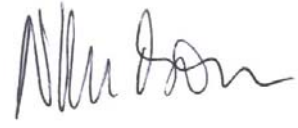
Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners

Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		19 February 2009	

There# are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer



Date

30 January 2009

1. **Background:**

- 1.1 Section 85A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998) requires all local authorities to establish an Admission Forum. Admission Forums provide a vehicle for admission 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.
- 1.2 The Admission Forum for Wigan Local Authority has been in existence since December 2001.
- 1.3 The current core membership of the Forum is in line with The Education (Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2002 and the Admission Code 2007. A copy of the current membership is attached at appendix 1.
- 1.4 These regulations have now been revoked and replaced with The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008 which come into force with effect from 10 February 2009. A new Admissions Code 2009 has also been introduced and this is also effective from February 2009.
- 1.5 Local authorities must reconstitute the membership of the Admission Forum in line with the new regulations.

2. **The role of Admission Forums**

- 2.1 Admission Forums have a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes social equity. Part of their role is to advise local authorities and admission authorities on matters relating to school admissions. Admission forums must:
 - consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the local authority;
 - promote agreement on admission issues;
 - review the comprehensiveness, effectiveness within the local context, and accessibility of advice and guidance for parents by the local authority, both through the published composite prospectus and the delivery of Choice Advice
 - consider the effectiveness of the authority's proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements, and advise on whether the authority's proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements differ substantially from the previous year;
 - consider the means by which admissions processes might be improved and how actual admissions relate to the admission numbers published;
 - monitor the admission of children who arrive in the authority's area outside a normal admission round with a view to promoting arrangements for the fair distribution of school children among local schools, taking account of any preference expressed;
 - promote the arrangements for children with special educational needs, children in care and children who have been excluded from school;
 - monitor the effectiveness of the local authority Fair Access Protocols;

- consider any other admission issues that arise.

2.2 In discharging these responsibilities an Admission Forum should:

- refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator where either it identifies admissions policy, practice or oversubscription criteria of a school that may be unfair, unlawful or that contravene the mandatory provisions of the Admissions Code 2009; and
- review the impact of local admission policies on achieving fair access.

2.3 Admission Forums have an important power to produce an annual report for all maintained schools reporting on the effectiveness of local admission arrangements.

3. Membership of the Admission Forum

3.1 It is important that Admission Forums reflect the needs of their local community. The membership must not exceed 20 and meet the requirements set out in the (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008 (The Regulations).

3.2 The proposed membership of the Admission Forum is set out in Appendix 2. The proposed membership numbers ensure compliance with 3.1 and that membership reflects a proposed number of representatives for the number of and different categories of school. It should be noted that the category of school member, where a named representative from any Wigan school could attend any meeting, no longer exists.

4. Proposals:

4.1 It is recommended that Members approve the reconstitution of the Admission Forum.

4.2 It is recommended that Members approve the proposed membership as outlined in Appendix 2.

4.3 It is recommended that Members approve current core members where possible are assimilated into the Forum membership and where vacancies exist instruct the Director of CYPS to seek nominations.

5. Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:

5.1 The alternative options considered take into account guidance in the School Admissions Code 2009 and The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forums) (England) Regulations 2008.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Members should note the content of this report and endorse the reconstitution of the Admission Forum.

Current core membership of the Admission Forum

Membership	Representatives
Local Authority	3 Elected members
Community and voluntary controlled schools	3 (1 primary, 1 secondary, 1 special)
Voluntary aided schools	2 (1 primary, 1 secondary)
Church of England Diocesan Board of representatives	2 Church of England (1 Liverpool and 1 Manchester)
Roman Catholic Diocese representatives	1 Roman Catholic (Liverpool)
Parent governor representatives	3 (1 primary, 1 secondary and 1 special)
Representatives of the local community	2 (1 special needs, 1 ethnic minority)
Total core membership	16

School Members

Each school not otherwise represented in the Core membership detailed above, has a school member on the Forum.

Proposed membership of the Admission Forum

Group member	Representation in line with Admissions Code and regulations	Proposed numbers
Community schools	At least one representative	3 (1 primary, 1 secondary, 1 special)
Voluntary controlled schools	At least one representative	1
Voluntary aided schools	At least one representative	2 (1 primary, 1 secondary)
Foundation schools	At least one representative	1 (1 secondary)
Diocese	One representative from each body or person representing the religion or religious denomination of any foundation or voluntary school	3 (1 Roman Catholic, 1 Church of England, 1 Methodist)
Parent member	At least one parent member	2 (1 primary, 1 secondary)
Community representative	At least one person who represents any section of the community appointed following a recommendation of other Members	2
Local Authority representatives	Up to two local authority representatives (these should be employees of the local authority as apposed to councillors to avoid any accusations of a conflict of interest).	2
Local employer	Employers in the area	1
Total membership		17