

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Admissions Committee

Meeting held 18 December 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs (Chair), Talib Hussain,
Andrew Sangar, Ian Saunders and Clive Skelton

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Martin Lawton and Nikki Sharpe.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

- 2.1 RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on item 6 on the grounds that, if the public and press were present during the transaction of such business, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 The Chair (Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs) declared an interest in Case No. UTC1 and did not take part in the consideration of this appeal.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th November, 2013 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- 4.2 The Chair reported that he had met with John Bigley, Admissions Manager, Children, Young People and Families Service and had asked for clarity with regard to the policy surrounding home to school travel passes regarding the University Technical College (UTC). The Chair informed Members that the Policy states that any applications for UTC are treated as “parental choice” and that many pupils will not be within the catchment area. He added that parents are to be given a copy of the Policy when applying for a place at the College and that no free home to school passes will be granted. However, the College may provide a bursary. Members of the Committee requested that this information be loaded onto the Council’s website.
- 4.3 With regard to Case No.MEAD1, which had been considered at previous meetings, the Chair informed the Committee that he had met with John Bigley, Admissions Manager, Children, Young People and Families Service and that Mr. Bigley had apologised that the decision to overturn the Committee’s decision had been done without consultation with the Committee. Due to Members of the Committee expressing its displeasure regarding this matter, it has been decided

that any further reviews required to be undertaken of decisions of the Committee are brought back to Committee for its reconsideration.

4.4 RESOLVED: That (a) the information now reported be noted; and

(b) officers be requested to publish on the Council's website the policy regarding home to school travel passes relating to the University Technology College.

5. ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

5.1 The Committee noted that, since its last meeting, no decisions had been made by the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, under powers delegated to her with regard to home to school transport or school admissions.

6. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS

6.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted reports and commented upon 25 cases where parents had appealed against the administrative decisions made by the Executive Director with regard to the refusal to grant home to school travel bus passes.

6.2 The Committee gave consideration to all the supporting information and evidence provided by the pupils' parents including, in some cases, evidence and advice provided by voluntary or professional bodies and organisations and, arising therefrom, it was:-

6.3 RESOLVED: That (a) 18 appeals be not upheld on the grounds that there are no exceptional circumstances demonstrated and, having regard to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, (i) the school that eight of the pupils are requesting a pass for is not their catchment school/nearest suitable school (Case Nos. HUN1, HUN2, ALL1, ALL2, KIEC2, NOT1, UTC1 and DEFRIV1), (ii) the distance from the home address of seven of the pupils to the schools for which they are requesting a pass for is less than the distance in the criteria (Case Nos. PAR1, PAR2, KIED2, NEW1, NEW2, YEW1 and YEW2) and (iii) three of the pupils do not attend one of their three nearest qualifying schools (Case Nos. CIT1, KIEC1 and KIED1);

(b) one appeal be upheld on the grounds that there are exceptional medical and family circumstances in the case with a letter of support and medical evidence being received from the family's GP (Case No. LGO-ALLS2);

(c) five appeals be upheld on a termly basis, on the grounds that there are either exceptional educational, financial, medical or family circumstances in the cases (Case Nos. WYB1, CIT2, HIND1, SPR1 and MBR1def); and

(d) a decision on the remaining appeal be deferred to enable the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families to make further investigations into the case, along the lines now requested, and authority be given to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to determine the appeal

(Case No. PARK1).

(NOTE: (i) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 26 of the Council's Constitution and the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Chair decided that one of the above appeals (Case No.MBR1def) be considered as a matter of urgency in order for the appeal to be considered at the earliest possible opportunity, although it had not been possible to give five clear days' notice that the appeal was to be considered; and (ii) during the consideration of Case No. UTC1, in which the Chair declared an interest, Councillor Ian Saunders took the Chair).

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, 15th January, 2014 at 1.00 p.m. at Howden House.