

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Admissions Committee

Special Meeting held 3 April 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Adam Hurst (Substitute Member for Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs), Mike Levery (Substitute Member for Councillor Andrew Sangar) and Anne Murphy (Substitute Member for Councillor Michelle Cook)

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1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

1.1 RESOLVED: That, in the absence of the Chair of the Committee (Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs), Councillor Anne Murphy be appointed Chair of the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 No apologies for absence were received.

3. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

3.1 RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on Item 5, 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 as described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL

5.1 The Executive Director, People Services, submitted a report on a case where parents have appealed against the administrative decision made by the Executive Director with regard to the refusal to grant a home to school travel bus pass (Case No. NO/DA03).

5.2 The appeal had been considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 30th October 2018, but, following further written submissions from the appellants in regard to a procedural issue, and on the receipt of legal advice, it had been agreed that the appellants be offered a fresh Stage 2 appeal. It had also been agreed that the Committee should comprise different Members to those who considered the initial appeal.

5.3 The parents had indicated that they wished to make verbal representations at the hearing.

- 5.4 In attendance were the appellants, Andy Tierney (Customer Services) and Paul Johnson (Strategy and Co-ordination Manager, People Services).
- 5.5 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked attendees to introduce themselves. She then outlined the procedure which would be followed during the meeting.
- 5.6 Andy Tierney explained the Stage 1 review and Stage 2 appeals process regarding the City Council's Home to School Transport Policy. Mr Tierney informed the Committee of the reasons why the request for a home to school travel bus pass had been refused at Stage 1.
- 5.7 The appellants explained to the Committee the reasons for the request for the travel pass.
- 5.8 In response to questions from Members, Andy Tierney stated that the likely reason for the appellants' daughter receiving a travel pass when attending her primary school of choice, was that this was the nearest primary school with a place. However, it was accepted that the travel pass, in this case, had been issued in error. Mr Tierney confirmed that, whilst there were currently no places at the appellants' daughter's catchment school, there had been places in the year group at times earlier in the 2018-19 academic year. The appellants provided an explanation as to why they had sent their daughter and son to the primary school now mentioned, and stated that they had made enquiries of all local primary schools in the area, which either would not, or could not, accept their son. They indicated that they wanted both their children at the same school.
- 5.9 Paul Johnson stated that the Council's Home to School Transport Policy had been written in line with Government guidance, and emphasised the fact that if a child attended their catchment school, and it was found that there was no safe walking route to that school, they would receive a travel pass. He also stressed that if parents chose to send their children to another school, as opposed to their catchment school, they would not be eligible for a travel pass and, on this basis, there was no discrimination against parents who wished to send their children to faith schools. He added that the Council accepted that travel passes had been issued to the appellants' son in error.
- 5.10 The appellants requested that it was minuted that they felt they had not had a fair hearing, specifically due to the fact that they had not been notified beforehand that Paul Johnson would be in attendance.
- 5.11 At this stage in the proceedings, the appellants, Andy Tierney and Paul Johnson left the meeting to enable the Committee to consider the evidence.
- 5.12 **RESOLVED:** That the appeal 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, the school that the pupil is requesting a pass for is not their catchment school/nearest suitable school (Case No. NO/DA03).