

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Admission Forum held at Civic Offices on Wednesday 15th March 2017

LA Representatives

Mr R Davies Group Manager, Business, Strategy & Performance
Mrs M Treharne School Support Officer, Learner Support

School Representatives

Mr J Tarran Headteacher, Archdeacon John Lewis C in W Primary

Governor Representatives

Mr W Bond Parent Governor, Heronsbridge School

Other LA

Mrs Claire Kristy, RCT

Secretary to the Forum

Ms M Jones

1. Welcome

RD welcomed Owen Shepherd to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Smith, Mr A Slade, Mrs S Pilcher, Mrs R Dixon and Mrs H Ridout. No apologies were received from Mrs A Keller.

3. Vulnerability Assessment Profile (VAP) Owen Shepherd.

OS explained to forum members how the (VAP) process worked and stated it is the early identification tool employed within Bridgend to identify, track and supply targeted support to school aged young people who are at risk of becoming, or who are actual NEET's (not in Education, Employment or Training).

OS stated that this process is currently only being carried out within the secondary school sector, at present there is no European funding available to fund lead workers in the primary sector. There are currently 15 lead workers across the secondary schools running alongside agencies including Careers Wales, Bridgend College and Secondary Schools.

OS stated that they have carried out a pilot run in the primary sector which involved Litchard Primary key stage 2 pupils. OS presented members with pupil data in a chart form showing how the data is derived. OS explained to the members that this data helps staff and other agencies by giving them early indications to identify pupils who are underachieving, pupils who have behavioural difficulties and also provides the support mechanism put into place to support parents and vulnerable children who are most in need of support.

OS explained to members that the Welsh Government has 3 major categories in this process which are:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Attainment

JT stated that he could see the benefits of the VAP assessment to staff and pupils and enquired with OS if a trial could be carried out at his school. OS to arrange with JT for the trial assessment to be carried out on Y6 pupils.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1st December 2016 were confirmed as a true record.

The following matters were discussed.

Item 12 –

RD stated that 'The Digital Transformation Project' has identified a pressing need for an 'Admissions Database' with online capacity and has recently gone out to tender. An online-admission process is a priority for Bridgend because at present all pupil information is inputted manually. RD stated that there are complications with obtaining the data from SIMS as Bridgend does not have Capita 1 and we do not have the capital to purchase this package. RD informed members that we are currently exploring the possibility of a 'standalone database' with online capacity and would be looking for this system to be operational in 2018.

5 Report to the consultation on the LAs Draft Admission Policy 2018/19

An e-mail was sent to all members of the Forum on the 15th December 2016 recommending the following changes to the policy.

- **Pages 7,8 and 9:** removal of Special Arrangement 1 relating to the transitional arrangements for the catchment areas of Maes yr Haul Primary School and Trelales Primary School.

The transitional arrangements were originally agreed for a period of 5 years from September 2013 and we are now recommending that the arrangement ceases as originally planned.

- **Pages 6, 8 and 10:** removal of the tie-break wording due to concerns that this over-complicates the situation for the public when, in practice, it is not anticipated to ever be required in Bridgend
- JT addressed a point in the policy within Section A which states 'Further information about admission to voluntary aided schools is set out in Section V'. This should state 'Section W' which has been amended in the policy.

WB enquired on behalf of the Governors at Croesty Primary that the words 'subject to the oversubscription criteria' be added after maximum of 30 pupils. RD and MT explained that there are only a number of permitted exceptions in the regulations to be able to admit pupils over the 30 class size limit such as:

- Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children
- A named school on a 'Statement of Special Educational Needs'
- Pupils accepted in through an appeal

JT enquired if a sentence could be inserted in the admissions policy stating the permitted exceptions above. RD stated that a sentence could be inputted into the 2018-19 admissions policy. RD to update at next meeting.

All forum members approved the above amendments.

6 To finalise the Forum's view on the LAs Admission Policy 2018/19

The draft Admission Policy for 2018/19 was approved by the Admission Forum and would be sent to the Interim Corporate Director - Education & Family Support (Mr Lindsay Harvey) by 15th April

for approval. MJ to send the final policy for 2018/19 to the Welsh Government. RD stated that the admission policy for 2019/20 is to be reviewed in the forum meeting in October.

7. Syrian Refugees Re-Settlement Programme

RD informed members that the 3rd Syrian family will soon be re-located to Bridgend. CK asked RD if there could possibly be more family's being re-located to the Bridgend area. RD stated there is an expectation in the future of unaccompanied minors. RD to keep members informed. RD asked CK how the process of the re-location of refugee families is working in RCT. CK stated to date the project is successful and so far have received 5/6 families.

RD also informed members that at present there is no legislation in relation to the admission of Refugees in the current 'Admission Policy'

8. Update on review of catchment areas

RD informed members that the LA has looked at the possible implications of removing/revising catchment boundaries in the near future. By using this approach the LA will no longer need to specify catchment areas for a school, where the number of children living in the catchment area may exceed the number of places available. RD explained to members that children who live nearest to the requested school could, by using this approach, be given the higher priority for school places. RD also stated that the statutory distance for transport would remain the same of 2 miles for Primary and 3 miles for Comprehensive. The criteria would state 'children for whom the preferred school is the nearest 'suitable school' by the shortest walking route, in terms of the child's age and parental language preference or faith preference (for schools associated with the Church in Wales).

RD stated to members that Denbighshire has removed the catchment area criteria in their admission policy. JT stated it would be interesting to know from Denbighshire if the admission appeals have risen since this criterion has been applied. RD informed members that the authority will be testing data by October and will update members in the October meeting and the earliest this could come into effect would be 2020/21.

9. To arrange future dates for the 'Admission Forum' meetings

MJ to contact Members to arrange the next 'Admission Forum' meeting in October.

10. Any other Business

No other business

11. Meeting closed 11.00am