

Bridgend County Borough Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Admission Forum Civic Offices, 15 November 2018

LA Representatives

Mr R Davies (RD) Group Manager, Business, Strategy and Performance
Mrs D Davies (DD) Principal Officer, Knowledge and Learner Support

School Representatives

Mr J Tarran (JT) Headteacher, Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales
Primary School
Mrs K John (KJ) Headteacher, Brackla Primary School
Mrs S Jayne (SJ) Headteacher, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bro Ogwr
Mr J Evans (JE) Headteacher, Heronsbridge School

Governor Representative

Mr W Bond (WB) Heronsbridge School

Secretary to the forum

Ms M Jones (MJ) Learner Support Officer

1. Welcome

The forum welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Smith, Mrs Angela Keller and Ms Claire Kristy. No apologies were received from Mr Andrew Slade.

3. Election of chairperson

The forum members proposed that Mr R Davies be re-appointed as chairperson for 2018-2019 and the nomination was accepted.

4. Election of vice chairperson

The forum members proposed that Mr J Tarran be re-appointed as vice chairperson for 2018-2019 and the nomination was accepted.

5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018

The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record.

6. Matters arising from the meeting held on 27 March 2018

Item 9 – Update on statutory admissions

DD provided a verbal update on the number of admission appeals in relation to the Year 7 secondary admissions for September 2018. All the appeals were in respect of refusals at Bryntirion Comprehensive School; all the children involved resided out of catchment. Originally, 25 appeals registered but 2 were withdrawn. At stage 1, the local authority

successfully proved prejudice for all 23 appeals that were heard. At stage 2, 7 appeals were upheld and the children were admitted to the school; 16 were not upheld and admission to alternative schools was organised.

DD and RD confirmed that the forum would receive information on any issues regarding admission arrangements raised at admission hearings.

7. Review of 'Starting Schools' booklet 2019-2020

DD informed members that the Admission Policy for 2019-2020 is already available on the BCBC website and MJ confirmed that the 'Starting School' booklet for 2019-2020 will be available on the website for the start of the statutory admissions round.

DD and RD advised members of the intent to amend the format of the Starting Schools booklet in the future.

8. Local authority's draft School Admission Policy 2020-2021

The forum members considered the draft School Admission Policy for 2020-2021. All sections were discussed. The following specific changes/points were agreed:

Online school admission applications

Various changes throughout the document to reflect this implementation/development.

Infant class sizes

Removal of the reference to the infant class size limit of 30 and replacement with reference to regulations limiting the number of children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. This change reflects the current Welsh Government initiative to reduce infant class sizes to below 30.

Child's address

Changes made to replicate the Learner Travel Measure. Reference to the child's place of ordinary residence. Ordinary residence of the child gives equality to both parents who are not living together but have a shared responsibility for the child.

Welsh-medium education

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd formerly known as (Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Garw) has relocated to the new Betws Primary School site and opened in January 2019. The local authority will be responsible for any transport costs for eligible pupils, but only if such pupils reside closer to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd than to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr. KJ raised concerns regarding the transport that the LA provides for children to attend the Welsh Unit at Dolau Primary School and Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari. KJ stated that such support risks Welsh-medium provision in the county and also presents a financial issue. RD advised members that views would be taken on board. The consultation presents the opportunity to obtain a full suite of views. It is procedurally appropriate for there to be consideration of any removal of the arrangements by Cabinet. RD agreed to update members at the next meeting.

Timetable for the allocation of full and part-time nursery places

Proposed dates.

The notification to parents/carers for part-time nursery places will be brought forward from November to 31 October.

In year transfers

The time on the waiting list for applications received outside the normal admissions round will revert from one month back to three months from the date of refusal letter.

Registering an appeal

In 2020-2021, parents/carers will be able to submit their appeal online.

Late applications (applications submitted after the published closing date)

The local authority will accept applications that are received after the relevant published closing date **provided that** the application is received prior to the offers of places being made **and** the local authority is satisfied as to the parents/carers' reasons for the late application. All other late applications will be processed by the local authority after applications that were received by the closing date. This accords with the statutory School Admissions Code 2013. In consequence, late applicants may find that their preferred school is already full, even if the school is their catchment school.

9. Common dates for the 2020-2021 admissions round.

The forum members noted that the proposed dates for the 2020-2021 admissions rounds were included in the draft School Admissions Policy, already considered. The draft policy will be subject to consultation.

10. Development and implementation of online applications for school admissions

RD informed the forum members that the implementation of the online applications has been a great success and thanked Dawn Davies, who has operationally managed the online process, and ICT. The online system has a number of benefits for applicants and the LA.

Forum members were apprised of the next phases of the development.

SJ enquired about the process for in-year transfers. DD confirmed that the default position for transfers not due to a house move or where the child is not deemed to be in need of immediate admission, is deferment until the start of the next term. This accords with the School Admissions Code 2013 and a protocol agreed between the LA and schools. However, immediate admission can proceed if both schools involved feel that this would not be disruptive for them. Where a transfer is in consequence of a house move or if the child is deemed as requiring immediate admission, the LA will admit immediately.

11. Date of the forum meeting in the Spring Term 2019

Provisionally agreed as 6 March 2019 at 2pm in Civic Offices.

JE left the meeting at 3.30pm

12. Any other business

No matters were raised.