

**DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS**

**Admissions Forum (MS Teams)**

**30 November 2020**

**MINUTES**

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| **ATTENDEES:** | Cllr Lis Burnett, Mike Matthews, Lisa Lewis, M Dacey, A Robertson, A Ricketts, Rhian Andrew, Andrew Hennessey, C Thomas, S Owen |
| **APOLOGIES:** | Fiona Greville, Jane Werrett, S Mawhinney |

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| **ITEM** | **ISSUE** | **ACTION REQUIRED** | **Member** |
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| 2 | Minutes of Previous Meeting | The minutes were checked for accuracy and agreed as a true record. |  |
| 3 | Matters arising | None |  |
| 4 | Draft Annual Report of the Admissions Forum | MM went through the report. The report is a statutory document that must be completed annually and sent off to the Welsh Government. Provides a report on the effectiveness of school admission arrangements. AR commented on the success of coordinated arrangements for CIW aided schools, schools are very happy with these arrangements. AR thanked for feedback. St Richard Gwyn participating in the coordinated admission scheme for the September 2021 intake. Coordinated arrangements will ensure that parents are not holding more than one school place which provides uncertainty for schools in managing intakes to schools. A coordinated approach was welcomed. The report was approved. |  |
| 5 | Consultation on admission arrangements for 2022/2023 | LL outlined the process for consultation on admission arrangements for 2022/23 to commence in December 2020. No changes in terms of the admissions policy and oversubscription criteria. A secondary school catchment area review is being undertaken as part of the consultation to balance demand for places to be discussed at next agenda item. |  |
| 6 | School Catchment Review | LL Secondary catchment area review is considered necessary as the Council is facing increasing pressure for secondary school places at the year 6 transfer stage and particularly pertinent to the Barry area. Need to balance pupil numbers in catchment areas relative to the school capacity. MM Large scale housing development and the establishment of mixed sex education in Barry has had an impact on demand for school places, Large yr 6 cohorts progressing to secondary education up until 2024/25 and drop thereafter. LL outlined proposal to establish a dual catchment area for St Cyres School for a period of three years commencing 2022/23 to manage demand around the Barry and surrounding area. The proposal would include Pencoedtres High School catchment area within St Cyres catchment area. Pencoedtre would continue to operate and serve its existing catchment area. Temporary measure until 2024/25. The withdrawal of the feeder system from September 2020 has had an impact, parents are no longer accessing secondary schools for their children that they hoped for when sending them to feeder primary schools under previous arrangements.  Further catchment proposal to transfer the Rhoose area to Ysgol St Baruc catchment area from Ysgol Dewi Sant. Ysgol Dewi Sant has seen increasing pressure for school places from within catchment area. For the reception intake 2020, the Council received more applications from children living within the school catchment area than were places available. Ysgol St Baruc is expanding to a two form entry from September 2022 that will have the capacity to accommodate children from the Rhoose area. This would ease the pressure and demand for places at Ysgol Dewi Sant. The numbers entering Welsh medium provision from Rhoose have dropped in recent years since it changed from serving Ysgol St Curig in 2015, feedback has suggested that it is a long way for children to travel. RA asked what is the proximity criteria for allocating places, is it furthest away from the next nearest school. LL responded when assessing on proximity ground, those living nearest a school have priority. This changed for the Reception 2020 intake round. Consultation to commence 14 December 2020 and available on the Councils website. Consultation closes on the 8 February 2021 for comments. Further comments to MM. |  |
| 7 | Hard to Place | Martin Dacey, Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing attended the forum and gave a presentation on Hard to Place children.  The Council was seeing a number of referrals for managed move and hard to place children. These were often directed through individual officers. A managed move protocol has been in place for a number of years but options for placements was becoming increasingly difficult. There needed to be a coordinated approach.  The Council established a Social Emotional Mental Health Panel on a trial basis for 2019/20 and for subsequent review. The aim of the Panel is to meet the duty placed on local authorities in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements for the provision of suitable EOTAS provision for learners no longer able to attend school for any reason, including (but not limited to) illness and expulsion. The Panel would consider the placement of pupils with specific needs into specialist provisions OOST across the LA such as High Street SRB, Gladstone Loft, Y Daith (including Y Daith EOTAS), OOST.  The membership panel consists of a range of representatives and professionals from officers to school representatives that meets every 4 weeks to discuss referrals. The referral process to SEMPH was outlined to the forum.  Arrangements have proved successful. The well-established process continues to offer pupils at risk of exclusion and poor attendance the opportunity for a fresh start. Managed moves continue to provide an alternative solution to permanent exclusions. The SEMPH (social, emotional, mental, physical health) was created to facilitate school places for those pupils previously deemed ‘hard to place’ for a variety. Martin Dacey was thanked for presentation. |  |
| 8 | Update on annual admissions round | Forum provided with admissions summary for the academic year 2019/20 for admissions to schools, appeal data and progress on the coordinated admission arrangements scheme previously mentioned. MM provided update on secondary application figures for September 2021 for each Secondary school. Process closed on the 27 November 2020. Aim was to get as close to 100% take up of applications that would be achieved by regularly contacting parents, schools and using social media. Excellent result by the admissions team, 99.4% of parents applying on time who deserve a great deal of credit for their endeavours. LL and LB echoed these sentiments. The successful uptake will ensure that substantially all parents will receive an offer of a school place at the offer date of the 1 March 2020. This will allow the authority to identify any potential admission issues at an early stage and as such secondary schools can prepare well for their September 2021 intake.    Application process for Reception 2021 opened on the 6 November 2020, A large number of applications already received with the usual hotspot schools in Penarth and Cowbridge being requested. The nursery admissions process opens on the 25 January 2021. |  |
| 11 | Date for next meeting | 11 June 2021. |  |
|  | Any Other Business | MM advised C Kynaston has retired and is no longer on the forum. Will need to find a suitable replacement as a VSGA foundation governor representative. MM to contact governor support. |  |