

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 28 November, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education

School Admission Arrangements 2018/19

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval to consult on the local authority's school admission arrangements as required by the Welsh Government's School Admission Code issued in July 2013.
2. This includes the admission arrangements to be applied in the event that the proposal to establish two new mixed sex 11-18 English medium comprehensive schools on the current sites of Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School is approved in March 2017 ([Appendix B](#)) and the arrangements to be used if the proposal is not approved ([Appendix A](#)).
3. This consultation must be undertaken in advance of a Cabinet decision on the above proposal in order to ensure compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013. Inclusion of reference to the above proposal in the proposed admission arrangements is an administrative requirement and is not intended to be an assumption of approval.

Recommendation

1. To approve the consultation required to agree local authority admission arrangements for all community schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Reason for the Recommendation

1. Para 2.3 (page 6) of the School Admissions Code (Wales) July 2013 states that "Admission arrangements must be consulted on for each maintained school between 1 September and 1 March, and set by 15 April of the school year beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements will apply".

Background

4. The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to consult with the governing bodies of schools who have delegated admission powers, all neighbouring local authorities (LAs), the admission authorities for all other maintained schools in the relevant area and the governing bodies of all other schools in the relevant area (i.e. community and

voluntary controlled schools which do not have delegated admission powers). The relevant area is determined as the geographical area of the Vale of Glamorgan.

5. The LA is required to publish a composite document each year for the subsequent school year admission round detailing school admission arrangements for all maintained schools in its area. This information is contained within the Council's information guide "A Parental Guide to School Admission in the Vale".
6. The Welsh Government's School Admissions Code 2013 requires admission authorities to act in accordance with the code. The code includes practical guidance and imposes requirements on local authorities and admission authorities, regarding the discharge of duties in respect of admissions.
7. The LA is proposing to consult on the draft admissions policy as required by the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code 2013.

Relevant Issues and Options

8. Welsh Government issued a revised School Admissions Code in July 2013. The Council must "act in accordance with the Code" as determined by the School Standards and Framework Act.
9. The consultation period for the proposed admission arrangements will be 16 January to 24 February 2017. This is prior to Council making a decision in March 2017 with regard to the proposals to transform English medium secondary education in Barry.
10. Although no decision has been made with regard to the proposals to reorganise the single sex English medium secondary education in Barry, these admission arrangements, including reference to the proposed change to catchment area ([Appendix C](#)), must be in place in order to determine the allocation of places in the autumn of 2017 in the event that the proposal is approved in March 2017.
11. In order to ensure that the Council is prepared for either outcome of the above proposal, and in consideration para. 2.3 above, two admission arrangement documents have been prepared. Depending on the outcome of the proposal to transform English medium secondary education in Barry, either [Appendix A](#) or [B](#) would be disregarded as appropriate. The inclusion of draft admission arrangements to manage the transfer of pupils to the two new proposed schools are therefore included in order to meet the statutory consultation deadlines and are in no way meant to be a prejudgment of potential outcome.
12. The proposed admission arrangements include the introduction of an equal preference system of allocations for secondary schools to bring the process in line with the arrangements for primary schools admissions in order to ensure that wherever possible pupils can be offered a place in their catchment school.
13. In addition, the deletion of the temporary admission arrangements for Welsh medium schools previously put into place to manage the transition arrangements that were required on the opening of Ysgol Nant Talwg and Ysgol Dewi Sant is proposed. This will ensure that catchment applications are prioritised over sibling connections, allowing the LA to manage allocations in Welsh medium primary schools more effectively. This change has become necessary following the amalgamation of Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg and Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg to create a 3-18 school. This has increased the number of potential sibling connection applications at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg significantly.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

14. There are no resource implications as a direct result of this report. The organisational impact of the proposed changes to the admission arrangements will be managed within existing resources.
15. The revision to school catchment areas would result in a more effective use of assets through the potential reduction of surplus capacity at the two proposed new mixed sex comprehensive schools. The proposed changes in catchment area will only be implemented if agreed and in the event that the proposals to reorganise the single sex secondary schools in Barry are approved by Cabinet.
16. The proposed deletion of the Welsh medium oversubscription criteria will ensure that wherever possible pupils can attend their Welsh medium catchment school which will ensure that the need to provide school transport will be minimised.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

17. By matching the number of pupils residing in catchment areas with the capacity of the defined catchment school, the LA promotes the sustainability of schools by limiting under/ over subscription.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

18. Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and regulation 4 of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 require Admission Authorities to consult and determine school admission arrangements annually. The act also requires Councils to “act in accordance with the (school Admissions) Code”. The regulations set a timescale for the consultation and determination of admission arrangements and this report reflects those requirements.

Crime and Disorder Implications

19. There are no Crime and Disorder implications arising from this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

20. This policy will enable families to access a place in their local school. There are no other Equal Opportunities Implications arising from this proposed change to the Admission Arrangements.

Corporate/Service Objectives

21. The proposed admission arrangements support the Council’s commitment as part of its Corporate Plan 2016-20 to achieving a vision of – ‘Strong Communities with a bright future’. The priorities and principles of this proposal are reflected in the Council’s Wellbeing Outcome 3: An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale, ensuring children and young people have the best opportunities to receive a first class education.

Policy Framework and Budget

22. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

23. Consultation with all interested parties will be carried out in accordance with legislation, following the statutory processes set out in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

24. Learning and Culture.

Background Papers

School Admissions Code: Statutory Code document no: 005/2013

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