

# Newport City Council: Education Services

## School Admissions Forum

### Minutes of the Meeting



Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Present: Roman Catholic Diocese (in the Chair)  
NCC Service Manager  
NCC School Admissions & Appeals Manager  
NCC Elected Member  
NCC Elected Member  
NCC Elected Member  
VA Schools Representative  
Local Community Representative (GEMS)  
Local Community Representative (EY)  
Advisor for Behaviour & Autism (non-voting)  
Partnership Officer HMF Education Support (non – voting)  
Community Schools Representative  
Parent Governor Representative  
Looked After Children Representative (non - voting)

Clerk to the Forum

Apologies: Parent Governor Representative  
Parent Governor Representative  
Secondary Community Schools Representative  
Community Schools Representative  
VA Schools Representative

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

AR opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies as noted above were given and accepted.

#### **2. Minutes of meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

The minutes of the meeting were held to be a true and accurate record.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

The Spring Term School Admissions Forum was cancelled due to Covid – 19 and therefore no matters arose.

#### **4. Review of Membership**

The following positions were nominated and agreed:

- AR – Chair
- DW – Vice Chair
- FR – Community School Representative

**Action:** AR to liaise with AD regarding Diocesan Authority of the Church in Wales representative.

## 5. Annual Admission Round

JL informed the Forum that all of the on time admission rounds had been completed, all published offer dates met and late applications continue to be processed.

Additional capacity was created at the following schools in order to accommodate demand from the catchment areas during the on time round:

- Bassaleg School;
- The John Frost School;
- Mount Pleasant Primary School, and;
- Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael (to accommodate demand for Welsh – medium education).

Mount Pleasant Primary School currently have a bubble class in year 6, which will be leaving at the end of this year.

In catchment refusals were still unfortunately made at Jubilee Park Primary, Glasllwch Primary and Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd and appeals are taking place in July. This is slightly later than normal due to a change in legislation as a result of the pandemic.

AR confirmed that some appeals had already taken place in respect of the Roman Catholic schools; 17 were held in respect of St Joseph's RC High, 10 of which were successful.

Secondary spaces are currently only left available at Lliswerry and Llanwern High Schools and 27 secondary applications remain outstanding. St Joseph's RC High School is also full.

183 primary school places remain available across the city, however two thirds are located in the east. Only 4 Welsh-medium primary school places currently remain available however it is expected that the new Welsh-medium seedling school, opening next year, will assist with meeting this demand in the future.

JL informed the Forum that with regards to nursery education, only 6 English-medium nurseries were full and all 3 Welsh-medium nurseries have places left available. Unfortunately, none of the Rising 3 places could start in April due to schools being closed. AR confirmed this was the same position across the private sector however some are starting to open back up now.

## 6. In - Year Admissions/Places Available

JL informed the Forum that 356 applications were received during the Spring term, bringing the total number of applications received this year to 970. 1484 has been the average per year for the last three years however this is likely to be impacted by the pandemic this year.

60% of preferences have been met and 94% have been processed within Welsh Government timescales. Those that have gone over have been due to valid reasons such as being considered at a managed move panel.

25 school admission appeals were received however only 8 have been heard due to the pandemic restrictions. Of the 8 heard, only 1 was upheld in favour of the parent.

JL outlined the current level of surplus places across the city:

- 13% Welsh-medium primary / 27% Welsh-medium secondary school places
- 8% English-medium primary / 10% English-medium secondary school places

DW observed that the English-medium primary sector continues to be an area of concern. A lot of the places available are in the east of the city and families moving into the west of the city are being split up. This situation is similar at secondary level, with places primarily available in Lliswerry and Llanwern.

EK noted 12 of the in-year transfers were due to bullying and 16 were unhappy with their current school – do we know more about these? JL confirmed that bullying cannot be a barrier to delaying an application, however outside of the Admissions team, this is considered as part of the Learn Well Plan and a termly report is provided to the Assistant Head of Education (Engagement and Learning).

DW informed the Forum that the Admissions team were very intrinsic in supporting the establishment of childcare hubs at the start of the pandemic, getting them up and running and answering queries. AR & WH also praised the team for their support in this.

## **7. Fair Access Policy**

DW explained that the Council are currently looking to implement a Fair Access Protocol with a view to commence in September.

The protocol would work similarly to Managed Moves, however these sit outside of the Admissions team and is owned by the 8 English-medium secondary schools. They have signed up to work in a fair way and look specifically at children who are at the risk of permanent exclusions or those who have already been excluded. Managed Moves are a way in which schools can exceed their Published Admission Number and admit such pupils more equitably across all secondary schools.

A Fair Access Protocol will look at those children who are not considered a Managed Move, but still have challenging circumstances. It would cover children who are hard to place for a variety of reasons such as having involvement with the Youth Justice system or having been home educated for a while.

JL explained that a protocol document is currently being drafted and will go out to Head Teachers for consultation before being rolled out. It will only be implemented at secondary level in the first instance and if successful, it is hoped to be rolled out at primary level too. It is also proposed to be added as a standard agenda item for future Forum meetings.

AR noted that this subject area often comes up at other Forums and asked if St Joseph's RC High School was part of this. DW confirmed that St Joseph's RC High School is part of Managed Moves however, Fair Access would require negotiations. Newport City Council would be keen to work towards this.

MBJ asked if there are any proposals to move to alternative education for children who fall into these categories or may not want to engage in the educational system? KD confirmed that a proportion of each school's delegated budget is allocated to alternative education and partnerships are in place for training with companies such as Waste Savers. The Bridge Achievement Centre also have good links with alternative education provision such as Sporting Champs. These budgets are however already stretched and cost can be a barrier.

EK asked how many extra would schools who are full be taking? KD confirmed it would be difficult to predict and there would be no cut off, however if a school is already full that is something that would be taken into consideration.

The Forum agreed for this item to be added as a standard agenda item.

## 8. Reorganisation Programme

DW explained that there are currently two live projects within the 2021 programme the first of which is the establishment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welsh-medium primary school. A statutory notice was published in March and as no objections were received, the Cabinet Member was able to take a decision locally to move forward.

In the autumn term a temporary governing body will meet to discuss the opening arrangements for 2021. The school will open for nursery and reception pupils only for the first year and will be based in the former Caerleon Lodge Primary School building for 2 years. They will then move to a permanent location at Pillgwenlly Primary School. This will increase Welsh-medium places by 50%.

The second live project is the amalgamation of standalone nursery provision, Kimberley and Fair oak Nurseries. This proposal was initially launched on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020, however was withdrawn on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 due to the pandemic. The formal consultation will now relaunch on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and close on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with a view to open in September 2021.

## 9. AOB

None

## 10. Future Meeting Dates

The Autumn term's date was agreed for Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

AR proposed to continue with Microsoft Teams for all future meetings. All agreed.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
4	Liaise with AD regarding Diocesan Authority of the Church in Wales representative.	AR