

Newport City Council: Education Services

School Admissions Forum

Minutes of the Meeting



Date: 24 June 2019

Present: Roman Catholic Diocese (in the Chair)
School Admissions & Appeals Manager
Elected Member
Elected Member
VA Schools representative
VA Schools representative
Local Community representative (GEMS)
Local Community representative (EY)
Secondary Community Schools representative

Clerk to the Forum

Apologies: Service Manager (Vice Chair)
Elected Member
Primary Community Schools representative
Looked After Children in Education (non –voting)
Advisor for Behaviour & Autism (non-voting)

1. Apologies for absence

AR opened the meeting and welcomed those present. All members introduced themselves to those new members attending for the first time. Apologies as noted above were given and accepted.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 19 March 2019

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

3. Matters arising

Item 8 – JL confirmed that the consultation on admissions arrangements for 2020 has been completed and concluded.

Item 10 – in KD's absence the Fair Access Policy was deferred to the next meeting

4. Review of membership

Action: LP to contact MBJ to consider continuation in this position.

5. Phase admissions update

JL took the forum through the report noting the following key points:

- 2019 has been the largest cohort of the last four years and as a result, additional capacity has been created at initially two, leading to four secondary schools across the city; Bassaleg School, The John Frost School, Llanwern High School and Lliswerry High School. Planning of school places is currently monitoring the current and future positions
- No in-catchment applications were refused during the on-time admission round and all published offer dates were met
- Few applicants were successful at appeal but in all cases the Panel determined that the admission arrangements were lawful and properly applied
- Most children have now made their applications, however a small number of children are being chased by the school admissions team, with the assistance of schools and the Gwent Education Minority-ethnic Service.

JM, Cllr AN and PB enquired about catchment areas.

JL explained that catchment areas are largely based on sub groups called Lower Super Output areas and form part of the council's over-subscription criteria. They are also used by most authorities across Wales.

Catchment areas can be found on the council's website www.newport.gov.uk by typing in the relevant postcode. The maps can also illustrate the borders and area as a whole when zoomed out.

PB informed the forum 242 pupils were admitted to St Joseph's RC High School during the 2019 normal admission round, however this figure has now increased to 247 following successful appeals.

JL explained that where an applicant has been refused a place at their preferred school they are entitled to a right of appeal (with the exception of nursery applicants). LP informed the Forum that for the 2019 on time admission round, 65 secondary appeals had been received and 76 reception.

Cllr AN enquired about private nursery provision and a discussion ensued.

AD explained that the Early Years team works with private nurseries, however are not responsible for admissions. Welsh Government states that local authorities should provide options for parents and they are able to choose whether to take-up a private setting placement or a placement within a nursery attached to a school.

JL explained that following the nursery reorganisation programme all schools now have a nursery with the exception of Malpas Church in Wales Primary. There are three in-takes for nursery; January, April and September, depending on when a child is born.

Cllr AN enquired about how the message to apply, is publicised and a discussion ensued.

JL explained that the School Admissions team publicise the admissions process in a variety of different ways such as through social media, posters in doctors surgeries, leisure centres, schools, articles in Newport Matters and Grassroots, letters are issued to parents via primary schools, phone applications and this year we are looking at live birth data from ABHB. This area is often reviewed by both the team and forum.

Cllr B informed the forum that elected members are often leafletting and holding meetings within their wards and therefore the demographic route could also assist with publication.

Action: JL to liaise with Cllr B to consider this option.

6. In - year admissions update

JL explained that anything outside of the normal admissions round is considered as an in year transfer and the team typically deal with approximately 1500 per year. The reasons can vary between moving within or into the city, bullying, unhappy with current school, etc.

Key points to note are as follows:

- 401 applications were received during the 2019 Spring term, compared with 333 received during the same period last year
- The total number of application received so far this year is 1060 (1536 were received during the whole of the 2017/18 academic year)
- 43% of applications were made as a result of a move into the city
- 63% of first preferences were met which is slightly lower than the rate during the normal phase round which is around 90%

7. Availability of school places

The availability of school places report represents all mainstream pupils in each year group and is circulated to front line services to indicate where places are available.

JL explained that generally the picture does not change from one month to another, however there are far less places available in the west when compared to the east. Welsh Government recommendation is to have no less than 10% surplus places and we are often under that. One of the council's objectives is also to increase Welsh-medium places.

EK informed the forum about Clear Springs, a housing provider that receives information from the Home Office and arranges accommodation for asylum seekers when they are dispersed in Newport and other areas.

Action: LP to liaise with EK to establish if it would be appropriate to include Clear Springs on the circulation list for places available data

Cllr AN enquired about the surplus places in the Llanwern cluster. JL explained that a large housing development had recently started and therefore additional capacity will be needed but has not necessarily been taken up yet. Glan Llyn Primary School will also be opening in September 2019 to support this.

8. Reorganisation programme

JL asked the Forum to note the contents of the report and summarised the key points.

In addition to mainstream places, the council has a number of Learning Resource Bases for which admissions are dealt with by the SEN team. A lot of work is also ongoing to increase capacity here too.

JL explained the council's proposal regarding Pillgwenlly Primary pupils and the establishment of a fourth Welsh-medium school following Cllr AN's enquiry, highlighting that the consultation is due to begin next week.

Cllr AN asked how this would impact on secondary school places and JL explained that Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed is currently a growing school, established up to Year 9 at the moment and is not full in every year group.

The council has created a Welsh Education Service Plan to identify how we will increase the number of Welsh speakers within Newport, in accordance with Welsh Government's objective and the new primary school is part of this.

9. AOB

None

10. Future meeting dates

Autumn term - 19 November 2019

Spring term proposal – 17 March 2020 – agreed

Item	Actions	Responsible officer
4	LP to contact MBJ (Parent Governor representative) to consider continuation in this position.	LP
5	JL to liaise with Cllr B to consider publication through the demographic route	JL
7	LP to liaise with EK to establish if it would be appropriate to include Clear Springs on the circulation list for places available data	LP