

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

9 MARCH 2021

REPORT BY THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2022-2023

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of the School Admissions Policy 2022-2023.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

3. Background

- 3.1 Welsh Government's School Admissions Code 2013 (the Code) 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 school admissions. The Council must act in accordance with the Code, as determined by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 3.2. The local authority has a statutory duty to consult with the governing bodies of schools who have delegated admission powers, all neighbouring local authorities, the admission authorities for all other maintained schools in the county borough and the governing bodies of all other schools (ie community and voluntary controlled schools that do not have delegated admission powers) in Bridgend County Borough.
- 3.3. The local authority is required to annually publish an admission policy and guidance on the admission arrangements for its schools.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Bridgend Admissions Forum agreed a draft School Admissions Policy for 2022-2023, as per the requirements under the Code.
- 4.2 The consultation period for the 2022-2023 policy was 19 January 2021 to 19 February 2021.

4.3. The table below details the representations received as part of the consultation and the actions taken in response.

Consultation proposal	Representations received	Actions taken
<p>To maintain the content of section 3, relating to catchment areas, unchanged from that within the 2021-2022 policy.</p> <p>To maintain the content of section 6, relating to Welsh-medium education provision, unchanged from that within the 2021-2022 policy.</p>	<p>The Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) should be referenced in the policy and the actions being taken by the local authority to implement the WESP should be detailed in the policy.</p> <p>The position regarding catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools is unclear.</p> <p>The policy should state that transport is offered to Welsh-medium schools so that parents do not see this as a barrier for choice.</p> <p>The statement that the provision for every child to have the opportunity to learn and use the Welsh language includes the teaching of Welsh as a second language in English-medium schools, should be removed.</p> <p>As there are no catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools, parents/carers cannot be expected to know the transport implications of applications for Welsh-medium schools.</p>	<p>No change to the draft policy for approval has been made, on the basis that the School Admissions Policy is not a strategy document and is not developmental.</p> <p>The policy section relating to catchment areas in the draft policy for approval has been extended with a statement that there are no catchment areas for the Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend. In light of this addition, the same clarification has been stated for faith schools in Bridgend.</p> <p>Section 6 of the draft policy for approval has been amended and extended to clarify the position as regards eligibility for home-to-school transport to Welsh-medium schools in the county.</p> <p>The statement is considered to be appropriate for this section and has not been removed from the draft policy for approval.</p> <p>Section 6 of the draft policy for approval has been amended and extended to clarify the position as regards eligibility for home-to-school transport to</p>

<p>To maintain the content of section 7, relating to arrangements with other local authorities, unchanged from that within the 2021-2022 policy.</p> <p>To maintain the content of section 11, relating to equalities, unchanged from that within the 2021-2022 policy.</p> <p>-</p>	<p>The information states that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) will cover the cost of transporting children who reside in RCT but wish to attend Pencoed Comprehensive School, but does not state whether RCTCBC will cover the cost of transporting children who reside in RCT but wish to attend Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd</p> <p>There should be no reference to the Welsh Language Act 1993 (WLA 1993) as this has been replaced by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (WLWM 2011).</p> <p>The local authority is not adhering to equality for the Welsh language as there are no defined catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools in the county, as there are for English-medium schools.</p>	<p>Welsh-medium schools in the county.</p> <p>As the information communicates the arrangements that RCTCBC has determined, no change has been made to section 7 of the draft policy for approval.</p> <p>The WLWM 2011 makes provision for the development of standards of conduct relating to the Welsh language, which are intended to gradually replace the existing system of Welsh language schemes provided for by WLA 1993, but Part II of the WLA 1993 remains in force. Accordingly, the WLWM 2011 has been referenced in section 11 of the draft policy for approval, in addition to the WLA 1993.</p> <p>There is no legal requirement for school catchment areas to be designated. If applications for any Welsh-medium school in the county should exceed the number of available places, applications are prioritised for acceptance on the basis of distance from the child's residence to the school in pace of any catchment criteria. Therefore, the absence of defined</p>
--	--	---

-	Oversubscription criteria reference schools' defined catchment areas but there are no catchment areas for the Welsh-medium schools.	<p>catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools does not represent a disadvantage for parents/carers who wish to choose Welsh-medium education for their child/ren. Accordingly, no change has been made to the draft policy for approval.</p> <p>All sections in the draft policy for approval relating to oversubscription criteria have been amended to make it clear that catchment areas are only applicable in respect of applications for English-medium, non-faith schools and that proximity to the school is applicable in respect of applications for Welsh-medium and faith schools. It is referenced in the policy that the local authority is the admission authority for only one faith school (ie Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School).</p>
---	---	--

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 It is a statutory duty that admission authorities are mindful of their duties with regards to equalities legislation. The School Admissions Policy 2022-2023 and the amendments to the draft policy for approval referenced at paragraph 4.3 of this report adhere to these requirements.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment has been completed. A summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is as follows:

Long term

The school admissions policy sets out how the local authority will balance the discharge of its statutory duty in relation to parental preference, the need to

safeguard the delivery of effective education and the safety of pupils, and the need to support pupils in particular circumstances (for example, learners with specific vulnerabilities), in circumstances where the applications for places at a school exceed the number of available places.

Prevention

Consultation on the school admissions policy allows stakeholders to raise issues or make comments on proposals, for consideration of appropriate actions.

Integration

The school admissions policy supports the provision of education in the communities in which pupils live.

Collaboration

Each year, the local authority works in conjunction with key stakeholders to develop proposed school admission arrangements, for those schools for which it is the admissions authority.

Involvement

In accordance with the specified requirements of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 and the School Admissions Code 2013, the local authority consults each year on the proposed admission arrangements for those schools for which it is the admissions authority.

Consultation for the academic year to which the admission policy applies, takes place two years in advance of that policy coming into effect.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications regarding this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- approve the School Admissions Policy 2022-2023.

Mr Lindsay Harvey
Corporate Director - Education and Family Support

Contact Officer: Dawn Davies
Principal Officer – Business, Strategy and Performance

Telephone: (01656) 642694

E-mail: Dawn.Davies@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address: Education and Family Support Directorate
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Attachments

Appendix A: School Admissions Policy 2022-2023

Background documents

None