

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2020/21 – OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2019</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

This report seeks to provide Members with an update on the public consultation undertaken reviewing the oversubscription criteria as part of the September 2020/21 School admission arrangements.

This report also seeks to provide members with a copy of the consultation report analysing the responses received from consultees towards proposed changes.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Members review the full content of this report, the attached consultation report (appendix 1) and the proposed School Admissions Policy 2020/21 (appendix 2).
- 2.2 On reviewing section 2.1, that Members agree to implement a revised oversubscription criteria as listed under section 3.8 of this report to accommodate the below:
  - Introduce a new criteria into the oversubscription criteria for secondary schools that affords a priority to children on roll at a designated Primary feeder school.
  - Amend the order of the oversubscription criteria for Primary and Secondary Schools to afford a priority to children and young people resident in the designated catchment area for the preferred school over those residing outside of the catchment area but with relevant siblings.

The amendments are to be implemented as part of the School Admission arrangements for September 2020/21

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018, Cabinet gave approval for the local authority to engage in a public consultation process, seeking the views of key consultees on proposed amendments to the oversubscription criteria identified within the Council's School Admission arrangements.
- 3.2 In line with the School Admissions Code of Practice (2013), parents must be provided with an opportunity to express a preference for a School for which they would like their

child(ren) to attend. This preference can be for a school outside of the designated catchment area.

- 3.3 Whilst parents have the right to express a preference for a school place, it is not always possible to comply with that preference. This can be the case in the event that the number of applications received exceeds the number of available places. In this event, the agreed oversubscription criteria is applied to determine who is to be awarded places.
- 3.4 The oversubscription criteria in its current form has been in place for many years. The ordering of the oversubscription criteria has been subject to challenge, particularly in relation to its prioritisation of sibling links over those children residing within the catchment area for the preferred school.
- 3.5 Over recent years, the Council's current admission arrangements have resulted in some children and young people attending a feeder primary school not obtaining places at the linked secondary school, thus resulting in some children not able to transition to secondary school alongside their peer groups. A criterion for Secondary School admissions that prioritises children in attendance at a feeder primary school has been suggested as a result.
- 3.6 The Council engaged in an extensive consultation with schools, governing bodies, parents and other interested parties to seek views on the introduction of a feeder school criteria / a criteria that prioritises children within the catchment area for the preferred schools over those outside of the catchment area but with relevant siblings.
- 3.7 The consultation commenced on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and lasted for a period of 6 weeks, concluding on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. During this time, six public consultation sessions were held in venues throughout the County to allow consultees to ask any questions / raise any concerns on the proposals.
- 3.8 The criteria on which we consulted was:

The proposed new criteria for Primary Schools

Priority rank	Criteria
<b><i>Children in receipt of a Statement of special educational needs (statutory requirement for admission)</i></b>	
1.	Looked after children or previously looked after children i.e. children that are in the care of or have previously been in the care of a local authority.
2.	Children with exceptional medical circumstances
3.	Children residing within the catchment area for the preferred school who have relevant siblings
4.	Children residing outside of the catchment area for the preferred school, but with relevant siblings who will continue to be in attendance at the preferred school due to being unsuccessful in their application for a place at their catchment school.

5.	Children residing outside of the catchment area, but with relevant existing siblings enrolled at the preferred school by September 2019. <b>***Please see explanatory note below</b>
6.	Children residing inside the catchment area for the preferred school
7.	Children residing outside of the catchment area for the preferred school, with a relevant sibling (who will be in attendance at the preferred school at time of admission) that does not meet criteria of points 4 and 5 above
8.	After applying the categories above, or should the school continue to be in a position of over-subscription in any of the above categories, priority will be based on closeness to the preferred school, measured using the shortest safe walking route.

The proposed new criteria for Secondary Schools

Priority rank	Criteria
<b><i>Children in receipt of a Statement of special educational needs (statutory requirement for admission)</i></b>	
1.	Looked after children or previously looked after children i.e. children that are in the care of or have previously been in the care of a local authority.
2.	Children with exceptional medical circumstances
3.	Children residing within the catchment area for the preferred school who have relevant siblings
4.	Children residing outside of the catchment area for the preferred school, but with relevant siblings who will continue to be in attendance at the preferred school due to being unsuccessful in their application for a place at their catchment school.
5.	Children residing outside of the catchment area, but with relevant older siblings enrolled at the preferred school by September 2019. <b>***Please see explanatory note below</b>
6.	Children residing inside the catchment area for the preferred school
7.	Children residing outside of the catchment area for the preferred school, with a relevant sibling (who will be in attendance at the preferred school at the time of admission) and does not meet criteria of points 4 and 5 above
8.	Children currently on roll at a primary school that is designated to be a feeder school for the preferred secondary school
9.	After applying the categories above, or should the school continue to be in a position of over-subscription in any of the above categories, priority will be based on closeness to the preferred school, measured using the shortest safe walking route.

\*\*\* This criteria would be relevant for existing siblings only, placed on roll at the preferred school by September 2019, with younger siblings eligible to start primary school / transfer from primary to secondary school in September 2020, September 2021, September 2022, September 2023, and September 2024.

Please refer to the full draft school admissions policy 2020/21 (appendix 2) for details on how children qualify under each of the above criterion.

3.9 On conclusion of the formal consultation, Officers have produced a consultation report that sets out all of the consultation arrangements undertaken together with the responses received to the consultation. This report is available under appendix 1 of this report for Members perusal.

3.10 177 consultees responded formally to this consultation:

- The proposals to introduce a criteria for secondary school admissions for those attending a feeder primary school drew support from 83% of these respondents.
- The proposals to prioritise children residing within the catchment area for a preferred school over those residing outside the catchment area but with relevant siblings drew support from 61% of these respondents.

3.11 The consultation report brings together the key themes of both support and concern towards the proposals. The majority of the votes against proposals relate to a concern that siblings will be separated and will need to attend different schools. Whilst the Council is unable to remove this risk, the concerns can be mitigated through the proposals to honour existing sibling links due to start over the next 5 years.

3.12 The consensus drawn from the consultation report is that both proposals received sufficient support to justify their implementation in readiness for September 2020/21 admission arrangements.

#### **4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The options considered are to implement the proposed changes as presented, or maintain the status quo. The results of the consultation suggest that the Council would be acting reasonably should proposals be implemented.

#### **5. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

This is included in appendix 3.

#### **6. REASONS:**

The consultation process was designed to allow the council to receive a public view on the concerns received over recent years relating to the current oversubscription criteria.

The response received has enabled the council to consider an amendment to existing policy based on an informed consultation.

**7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no resource implications associated with these proposals.

**8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

This is included in appendix 4.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

CYP DMT  
Cabinet Member for Education  
All parties directly affected by these proposals

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013)

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