



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting MONDAY, 15 MARCH 2021, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

- 4 **School Admission Arrangements 2022-2023** (Pages 3 - 6)
- 6 **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021 - 2024** (Pages 7 - 10)

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Date: 17 March 2021

My Ref: SS/CYP/SAPD



County Hall
Cardiff,
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Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2021 –
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2022/23**

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the consideration of Cabinet proposals relating to School Admissions 2022/23. Please also pass on our thanks to Mel Godfrey, Michele Duddridge-Friedl and Richard Portas. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

Members raised a number of questions around the demand for places, including the formula used when allocating school places. Members also asked around issues relating to pinch-points in particular parts of the city; projections and forecasting; what more could be done proactively to address over subscription to some schools; and how often the process is reviewed. In responding to these questions, you referred to the WISERD study that had been undertaken, and suggested that Members receive a copy. Therefore we request that a copy of this be provided to the Committee.

Whilst Members acknowledged the current rationale for allocating places, we still remain concerned with the uncertainty in the planning of school places. Members stated that, in their role on this Committee and wider roles as school governors Appeals Panel Members etc, there is a feeling amongst us that evidence is growing around demand for school places and oversubscription across a growing number of schools. This indicates to us as a Committee that the time is now right to review the approach strategically, and ahead of the completion of the Band B Programme, as stated by officers.

Members asserted that within the 21st Century Schools Programme, decisions had been taken (for example, closing Rumney and Llanrumney High and replacing them with Eastern High) that has resulted, over a short period of time, in an oversubscription to this school. Therefore, we are interested to know how review decisions stack up in the longer term. We are concerned that decisions taken about likely projections at the time of review later result in schools becoming oversubscribed and we believe that this cannot continue. We believe that contingencies should be put in place to address this going forward.

We also discussed the effect that this may have on children in terms of their mental health and well-being. Given discussions around this issue on this and other agenda items at this meeting, we are uneasy about the impact that children being separated from friends, peers and support networks built in primary schools will have on them.

We asked questions around whether planning decisions had taken account of pressures on existing school places and enquired whether this had led to a provision change of that school. We would request that you provide us with examples of where this has happened and the outcome from this.

We also remain concerned about the impact of safe travel to and from schools for those pupils that have to take longer journeys via public transport, cycling etc. and having the right infrastructure in place to allow this to happen safely.

To this end, as a Committee, we believe that a city-wide catchment review be undertaken and this be commenced as soon as possible. We therefore **recommend** that the catchment area review be brought forward before the completion of Band B and that the outcome from this review be reported back to this Scrutiny Committee in 12 months. This review should include:

- A review of the provision of school places and demand for school places;
- Details of the likely decline in primary school places; and
- Contingencies to be built in for changes in capacity to ensure that fluctuations in demand for school places at both primary and secondary level are addressed.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting**:

- A copy of the WISERD study that has been undertaken; and
- Provide the Committee with examples of where planning decisions had taken account of pressures on existing school places and had resulted in a provision change of that school.

The Committee is **recommending** and will formally monitor:

The catchment area review be brought forward before the completion of Band B and that the outcome from this review be reported back to this Scrutiny Committee in 12 months. This review should include:

- A review of the provision of school places and demand for school places
- Details of the likely decline in primary school places
- Contingencies to be built in for changes in capacity to ensure that fluctuations in demand for school places at both primary and secondary level are addressed.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Michele Duddrige-Friedl, Operational Manager, Planning & Provision
Richard Portas, Programme Director of SOP
Joanne Watkins - Cabinet Officer Manager
Melanie Jackson, Cabinet Support Office
Helen Eager, PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

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Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Councillor Sarah Merry
Chair of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

Dear Graham and Sarah,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2021 – CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Please accept my thanks for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the consideration of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Please also pass on our thanks to Deborah Driffield and Jade Harrison. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

Care Leavers aged 16+

Members asked a number of questions in relation to young people aged 16 plus who were on the edge of care or leaving care. We particularly raised issues regarding whether those placed out of county were not proportionately disadvantaged in this case. We share yours and officers concerns for this particular age group.

We accepted the responses received on this issue, but would be interested in receiving further data and information. Therefore, we request that we be provided with data relating to the numbers of young people being brought back into the area on leaving care as a percentage of all those being placed out of county. We would also appreciate some examples of the types of support and interventions available for young people who are being brought back into Cardiff and some further information in relation to how you intend to expand support for this group in retaining them in the area, and what this will look like.

Building relationships with Social workers

We asked you whether you felt there were any concerns regarding the commitment for young people to build trusted relationships with social workers was achievable, and Deborah kindly offered to provide us with a report on numbers of changes of social worker per young person, and we would welcome this report as soon as possible.

Substance Misuse

Members asked questions on whether substance misuse amongst children looked after was a significant issue. We agreed that it was likely not to be the sole reason and substance misuse issues may also be a wider family issue for the young person. However, we would like to gain a better understanding of this issue and would therefore request data on the number of children in our care that have substance misuse problems, and any further information on the reasons for this.

Personal Education Plans

Members of the Committee requested clarification on the numbers of personal education plans available for young people, particularly in relation to the Strategy stating 70% of young people having plans, with Committee Members enquiring as to why every young person didn't have one. It was agreed that a report on PEPs would be provided, and again, we would appreciate this coming forward to us as soon as possible.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting:**

Care Leavers aged 16+

- Data relating to the numbers of young people being brought back into the area on leaving care as a percentage of all those being placed out of county;
- Examples of the types of support and interventions available for young people being brought back into Cardiff; and
- Further information in relation to how you intend to expand the support for this group in retaining them in the area, and what this will look like.

Building Relationships with Social Workers - a report on numbers of changes of social worker per young person.

Substance misuse - data on the number of children in our care that have substance misuse problems, and any further information on the reasons for this.

Personal Education Plans – a report on PEPs be provided

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Jade Harrison, Operational Manager for Service Improvement & Strategy
Joanne Watkins - Cabinet Officer Manager
Melanie Jackson, Cabinet Support Office
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Office
Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services

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