

Appendix 2

Formal Responses

Response from Cllr. Robert Hopkins, Liberal Democrat Education spokesperson

Comments In Response To The Consultation On The Schools Admissions Policy

The comments below relate to the following paragraphs in the draft policy:

Paragraph 1.1.1: *“The council is committed to providing local schools for local children where possible.”*

Paragraph 1.4: *“There is no guarantee of an offer of a place at a child’s catchment school.”*

Paragraph 4.1 criterion 6 (Primary Schools) and paragraph 5.1 criterion 5 (secondary schools): *“Pupils who are resident within the defined catchment area of the school.”*

Oversubscription criteria- Paragraph 4.1 criterion 9 (Primary Schools) and paragraph 5.1 criterion 8 (secondary schools): *“...the Council gives priority to children living nearest the school as measured by the shortest safe available route.”*

Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2: *conditions relating to a child’s home address or to a change of address*

Paragraph 7.9: *“Where the number of preferences exceed the number of places available in any higher criterion, proximity is used as a tie breaker to determine which pupils are admitted.”*

Paragraph 7.7: *“An application will be considered under the sibling criterion if the sibling, and the applicant, would be attending the school at the same time.”*

Comments

Notwithstanding the commitment to providing a school place in local schools for local children wherever possible, in certain primary schools and secondary schools oversubscription relative to the places available is a significant, and in some cases, a growing problem. This is not a problem confined to the north of the city.

In recurring cases where a place is refused, in some instances at each of the preferred schools, parents are advised to seek a place at an alternative which may be twice the distance or more away from the child’s address. This poses significant problems for the parents of children of primary school age in particular and conflicts with the council’s “Active Travel” policy designed to encourage walking to school.

There is no connection made between length of time resident at a qualifying address in the residency criteria whether living inside or outside a school’s catchment area. Where new housing developments appear, this can mean that families who may have lived at a more established property within the catchment area of a particular

school, are edged out of a place. This is especially so where a new housing development may be sited closer to a school than other pre-existing properties in the area.

Should the council not review the impact of the proximity and residency criteria where there are particular pinch points across the city? Should consideration be given to using a points-based system within the criteria reacting to the proximity and residency criteria? Should consideration be given to increasing the number of places available, especially in primary schools, including the potential for using section 106 monies?

Finally, further consideration should be given to whether the sibling criterion is given sufficient weight and prominence in the criteria overall. It goes without saying that it is extremely upsetting and disruptive where siblings are not able to attend the same school. This further undermines the commitment to “Active Travel”, especially for children of primary school age.

Response from Michael Howells, Chair of Governing Body, St Peter's R.C. Primary School

Reference Cardiff Admission Arrangements 2022-2023 Consultation

To whom it may concern.

St Peter's RC School is currently designated as in "Special Measures" post Estyn Inspection in late 2018.

The Cardiff County Council then exercised its powers under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

and intervened. Its powers include appointing extra governors and the Chair.

I was appointed to the Governing Body as an LA Governor in 2019 and in February 2020 appointed Chair.

During 2018/2019, in the consultation process, in regard to schools in the Tremorfa/Splott area,

that included the possible closure of St Albans Rc Primary, it became apparent that in

in the annual Cardiff Admissions Booklets, the Admissions Number for St Peter's had varied from 60 to 75. There was no

audit trail of any written agreement between the Local Authority and the Governing Body as to how that had emerged.

I agreed as a member of the Governing Body to re write St Peter's RC School Admissions Policy and liaise with Neil Hardie, who was attends all Governing Body meetings on behalf of the Local Authority. Neil forwarded my copy to the relevant representatives to check the policy and with minor amendment it was approved by the Governing Body in 2019.

That policy has an admissions number of 60. In your consultation document the number is 75

Yours sincerely

Michael Howells Chair of Governors