

**Providing Council with Written Responses to Questions asked at Council
28 March 2019**

1.	<p>Mr David Davies</p> <p>In relation to “Admission Arrangements 2020-2021” - Page 38, Final Paragraph.</p> <p>I realise the Council has a fine reputation for offering the parents of children their first preference for the school of their choice. However, I appreciate this is not possible always and children are often placed on a waiting list.</p> <p>Can you therefore give me an indication what proportion of those placed on the waiting list are eventually given the choice of school they desire?”</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p> <p>We do not keep differentiated records in relation to numbers of places allocated from waiting lists. Below is an explanation of the way the lists are operated:</p> <p>Effectively names are kept in a “pool” rather than on a ranked list. Once a school is full in a particular year group any application for a place in that group will be refused and automatically placed in the pool. Names are kept in the pool for the remainder of the academic year and can be added to any time a new application is made and refused. If a place becomes available the names would be put into a ranked list at that point. The ranking would be made in accordance with the admission criteria and not the length of time since the application was made. We do not keep records in relation to what element of the admission criteria was met in order to place someone at the top of the list. If a place is available and allocated it is done in the same way as a regular admission request so once the school and family are notified we do not keep a record of the detail. We keep records of how many places are allocated per school in any academic year but do not keep a separate list of allocations from a waiting list.</p>
2.	<p>Councillor A M Day</p> <p>In relation to Councillors Questions 2</p> <p>What is the evolving strategy following QEd 2020 and when will Councillors be involved with it.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p> <p>This was discussed in the report that was considered by Cabinet in July 2017 prior to the Council’s Band B Strategic Outline Programme being submitted and approved by Welsh Government.</p> <p>The Council’s QEd 2020 Programme focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning environments for children and young people aged from 3 to 19 that will enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes;

- Greater economy through better use of resources to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the education estate and public service provision; and
- A sustainable education system with all schools meeting a 21st century schools standard, and reducing the recurrent costs and carbon footprint.

The priority investment schemes were identified through the following range of complementary objective criteria; standards (where there were specific concerns), risk, condition, specific suitability issues, landscape, basic need (where very clear shortfall in places such as Welsh Medium), sufficiency (surplus places), viability (size), sustainability (future demographic trends) and deliverability (how readily it could be achieved).

All the Band A schemes have now been completed with the exception of Gorseinon Primary School new build which is in progress.

As with any plan it is not a static document, and indeed, the whole programme has required successive reviews in the light of the changing timescales and financial parameters for the programme. It has also continued to evolve in the light of changing demands (demographic trends and condition and business continuity issues), political priorities, capital resourcing, and fresh opportunities (such as the LDP).

The Band B programme and the next stage of the QEd programme strategy as set out in the July 2017 report, reflects a consistent objective assessment and prioritisation of condition, suitability and sustainability issues as well as areas of basic need for additional provision and also in consideration of the deliverability of potential options. It also remains consistent with local policies, corporate priorities and commitments, as well as the priorities and specific criteria set down by the Welsh Government for Band B as follows:

To provide an efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for places by 2024

- *Ensuring the right size schools in the right location, with enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education, whilst ensuring effective and efficient use of the educational estate*
- *Reducing backlog maintenance costs by at least 50% whilst improving any category C or D condition buildings to A or B*

To optimise the use of infrastructure and resources to deliver public services for our communities by 2024. This includes:

- *Flexibility of assets with the aspiration that all facilities receiving investment commit to making assets available for community use if local demand exists*
- *Co-located public services on site if local demand exists*

The early part of the next stage of the QEd programme is in progress and has included engagement with all stakeholders including councillors and with reports being brought to Cabinet as appropriate.

3. **Councillor P M Black**

In relation to Councillors Questions 5

What are the criteria for the commissioning process in Cultural Services for supporting groups such as Abertawe Festival of Young Musicians, who makes the decision on support for those Organisations and can we have a list of successful bodies since this process and partnership model was initiated.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

The requirements and remit of Abertawe Festival of Young Musicians are not easily compared to the way Cultural Service partners, collaborates and commissions cultural activity generally. The Festival seeks performance premises only from the Service, by dint of their role as venue managers, as their participants are advancing through formal education attainment in music grading, resulting in the opportunity for them to perform to fellow pupils and family.

Cultural Services' remit is to increase participation in arts, sports and culture in the community broadly, but particularly those most at risk of exclusion. The Service overall exists to expand our cultural offer; promote tourism; health and wellbeing and increase the economic viability of the city, through the sustainability of our venues and services. The support required by the AFYM is to meet the rising costs of utilising a commercial concert venue and ancillary meeting rooms in the Guildhall.

In previous years, the service held monies which could be utilised as 'grants', to support third party costs for delivering activity related to a wider cultural offer. Several organisations benefited from this and it was utilised to meet the costs of AFYM usage of the Brangwyn Hall and Guildhall. This budget was removed in 2015, as part of the significant cuts faced by the service and affected organisations were advised accordingly. A great deal of discussion, collaboration and engagement took place with all affected, as it has with the Festival Committee, to attempt to find a way to work more collaboratively, and identify new ways for the service to support them, within the terms of its remit.

In order to meet this remit, the service has retained a budget for cultural strategy and development, which is purposely intended for working with arts, cultural, sports and tourism organisations to develop projects and activities that deliver our priorities – in particular for a vibrant and viable city and tackling poverty. We describe this way of working as collaborative, partnership based and 'commissioning'. This helps us differentiate it from being a grant, enables us to prioritise the Council's requirements and also retain accountability and transparency, with impact measures and agreements in place with the partners. It is not a 'grant scheme', available to be applied for, nor is it a traditional commissioning process to deliver specific requirements, as with other Council service areas.

In practice, Cultural Services staff actively work with local and regional arts organisations, community groups and funders, to discuss priorities, identify needs in the community, apply for grants and design and deliver projects, events and programmes accordingly. Examples are the Fusion

programme, which is a partnership between the Council, Welsh Government and 42 local arts organisations to deliver projects that tackle poverty. Swansea Jazz Festival has previously benefited from match funding toward an Arts Council Wales application, and Marc Rees' 14-18 Now the Hero project, one of several national commissions commemorating the centenary of the 1st World War, was also supported by us as a joint commission with Taliesin and 14-18Now. Projects with Race Cymru Wales, resulting in exhibitions at the Houses of Parliament by refugees and BAME groups; young writing squads and the Music Academy (BBC supported initiative to introduce young people to careers in the music industry) have also been supported by the service budgets.

As with the whole Cultural Service budget, authority on how the budget is utilised to deliver outcomes in support of our priorities, lies with the Head of Service, as the designated Responsible Officer, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member