



To Consultees re Supply of School Places

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

The National Assembly for Wales
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay

Caerdydd / Cardiff

CF99 1NA

1 Mehefin 2000/ 1 June 2000

POLICY REVIEW: SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES

At its meeting on 25 May the Committee agreed to take forward a review of the policy on the 'Supply of School Places' in Wales. The Committee confirmed that its remit would be:

To look at provision of school places, in particular the level of unfilled places with a view to:

- I. establishing what is the optimum level of unfilled places, allowing for flexibility;
- II. determining the costs of retaining levels of surplus in excess of this optimum; and
- III. identifying the actions local authorities need to take to effectively manage their stocks of school places.

I enclose a copy of the paper considered by the Committee at their meeting, PRE 16 08-00(p.1), which you might like to refer to before you begin to frame your response.

The Committee, in taking this forward will have regard to the work already done by the Audit Commission and District Auditor and to guidance that has issued from the Welsh Office, and now the National Assembly for Wales, to Local Education Authorities (LEA). The main source of evidence for the Committee on how LEAs are tackling this problem will be their School Organisation Plans.

In addition the Committee would like to invite you to contribute to the review by letting it have your views on the three areas that it will be considering as listed above. One of the key findings of an analysis of the School Organisation Plans received to date is the absence in many cases of conclusions on the need to remove or add school places

The Committee would like to hear from local authorities as to:

- I. Their monitoring arrangements;
- II. Their plans they have to improve and develop your pupil forecasting methodology;
- III. How conclusions are drawn and action plans drawn up and implemented.

The Committee would like to hear from the Audit Commission and District Audit their assessments of the conclusions they draw about the extent of surplus places in Wales, the cost of continuing to provide such places and the action being taken by LEAs to improve their planning and to implement action plans.

The Committee would like to hear from LEAs; and from the Welsh Language Board and the

Inter Diocesan Schools Commission (Roman Catholic Church) and the Board of Mission of the Church in Wales on the subjects of provision of places respectively for Welsh Medium and Denominational education.

The Committee would welcome the views of organisations representing school governor and parents on the issue of supply of school places.

A full list of those being consulted is attached at Annex A to this letter for your information.

The Committee will be inviting some organisations to present oral evidence on the issues identified during the autumn term. A list of those organisations is attached at Annex B.

The Committee would be grateful if you could submit your contributions to this review by **Wednesday September 20**. It hopes that this will give you sufficient time bearing in mind that the school holiday period occurs during the consultation period. All contributions received will be summarised and put before the Committee during the autumn term. The Committee intends to complete this policy review by Easter 2001 and publish a full report of its consideration and recommendations together with all the contributions received.

Contributions should be provided bilingually and electronically by e-mail to pre16education.comm@wales.gsi.gov.uk., in Word format if possible. If this causes you any problems please phone me so that we can discuss alternatives.

The Committee will also be inviting any interested party who may wish to comment to do so via its website.

If you wish to discuss any of this please do not hesitate to contact me on 029 20 898164 or the Deputy Clerk, Brian Duddridge on 029 20 898154.

Yours sincerely

Delyth Thomas

Clerk to the Committee

Annex A

List of Consultees

All local authorities in Wales

Inter-Diocesan Schools Commission

Board of Mission, Church In Wales

Welsh Local Government Association

Welsh Secondary Schools Association

Wales Primary Schools Association

Association of Teachers and Lecturers, Wales

National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, Wales

National Association of Head Teachers, Wales

National Union of Teachers, Wales

Professional Association of Teachers, Wales

Secondary Heads Association, Wales

Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru

Parent Teacher Association Wales

Governors Wales

Welsh Language Board

Further Education Funding Council for Wales

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

District Audit

Estyn

Rheini dros Addysg Cymraeg

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Cymraeg

Annex B

List of those to be invited to give oral evidence

District Audit/Audit Commission

Estyn

Welsh Local Government Association and some individual local authorities

Welsh Language Board

Inter-Diocesan Schools Commission

Board of Mission, Church in Wales\