



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

DECISION MADE BY: Cabinet DATE DECISION MADE: 24 January, 2024

Cabinet Members Present:

Councillor A Morgan (Chair), Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair),
Councillor A Crimmings, Councillor R Lewis, Councillor C Leyshon,
Councillor M Norris and Councillor B Harris

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor G Caple

Agenda Item : 5

SUBJECT: Proposal to develop a new Special School in Rhondda Cynon Taf

1. DECISION MADE:

Agreed –

1. To note that no objections or comments were received in response to the publication of the Statutory Notice to progress the proposal;
2. To implement the proposal with no amendments; and
3. That an update to the Council's borrowing envelope is included in a future Treasury Management report to Council when costs are known and Welsh Government funding is secured.

2. REASON FOR THE DECISION BEING MADE:

The need to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to open a new 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT.

3. LINKS TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES/FUTURE GENERATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

There are links to Making a Difference, the Council's Corporate Plan for the years between 2020 and 2024, specifically:

- **People:**
 - Encouraging all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing:
 - Delivering new indoor and outdoor sporting facilities and enhancing existing sporting facilities such as changing rooms and outdoor play areas.
 - Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do:
 - Improving the social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available.
- **Places:**
 - Ensuring RCT is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion where residents feel safe:
 - Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active communities, creating the capacity for meeting the needs of residents within their communities.
- **Prosperity:**
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education:
 - Improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

- Helping people into work and better paid employment:
 - Offering employment schemes and apprenticeships in the Council, on the regeneration sites, and through other Council contractors.

1.1 There are links to the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for the years between 2021 and 2024, specifically:

- **Strategic Priority 3:**
 - Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable pupils and their families.
- **Strategic Priority 5:**
 - Delivering 21st century learning environments and innovative services for our pupils and communities.

Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which requires the Council to think about the long term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven well-being goals by:

- **A Prosperous Wales** - Should the proposal proceed, construction will be competitively tendered, thereby achieving best value for money. Main contractors will be asked to advertise work on Sell2Wales which could provide opportunities for local businesses to tender for the construction. This could provide opportunities for local business to engage with the main contractor for inclusion in their supply chain, via 'Meet the Buyer' events. This would support economic activity in the area.
- **A Resilient Wales** – The proposal could improve the sustainability of school buildings in the Council's portfolio through a commitment to achieving zero-carbon buildings and building to BREEAM excellent standards.
- **A Healthier Wales** – The new special school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Accommodation will consist of enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
- **A More Equal Wales** – The new special school and the way in which it will be used will bring neutral or positive socio-economic impacts to all of the vulnerable groups.
- **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – Fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both

during and after the school day.

- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – Although the new special school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.
- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – The new special school could build upon the good working practices and initiatives already in place to further develop extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles for the school community. zero-carbon buildings and building to BREEAM excellent standards.

The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – The proposal forms a part of the Council's wider 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contributes to the delivery of sustainable schools fit for the 21st century and supports the better strategic management of the Council's education estate. Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, with the implementation of the [ALNET Act 2018](#), building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.
- **Prevention** – The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.
- **Integrations** – The new special school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **Collaboration** – The Council will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the new 3 to 19 special school meets the short and long term needs of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** – The proposal is made in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings have been undertaken with the staff, school councils and governing bodies.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO DECISION BEING MADE:

The consultation processes in respect of the proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

The consultation took place between 4th July 2023 and 15th September 2023 and full details of this process were published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on [23rd October 2023](#) and subsequently published on the Council website.

5. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY A COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL:

[Cabinet - 28th June 2023](#)
[Cabinet - 23rd October 2023](#)

6. PERSONAL INTERESTS DECLARED:

None

7. DISPENSATION TO SPEAK (AS GRANTED BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE):

N/A

8. (a) IS THE DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Yes

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

The closing date for Call-In is 5pm on the 29 January 2024

8.(b) IF NO, REASONS WHY IN THE OPINION OF THE DECISION-MAKER THE DECISION IS EXEMPT OR NON APPLICABLE:

- I. COUNCIL / SCRUTINY FUNCTION (CALL IN IS THEREFORE NON APPLICABLE):-
Reason: N/A
- II. URGENT DECISION:-
Reason N/A

8.(c) IF DEEMED URGENT - SIGNATURE OF PRESIDING OFFICER OR DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE CONFIRMING AGREEMENT THAT THE PROPOSED DECISION IS REASONABLE IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR IT BEING TREATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 17.2:

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(PRESIDING OFFICER)

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(Dated)

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PUBLICATION

Publication on the Council's Website:- **Wednesday, 24 January 2024**

APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION: ✓