



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21ST MARCH 2019

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

Authors: Mrs Gaynor Davies Director of Education and Inclusion Services and Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached consultation report, which includes details of items of correspondence received during the consultation exercise and notes of the various meetings held.
- 2.2 Consider the contents of the attached Consultation Report and note its publication and distribution to the relevant stakeholders as required by the Welsh Government School Organisation Code.
- 2.3 Agree to progress the proposals to the next stage of the review process by firstly agreeing to publish the Consultation Report, and secondly, issuing appropriate Statutory Notices after the Consultation Report is published.
- 2.4 Agree to an amendment of the proposals in relation to catchment changes such that there will be no change to the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd October 2018, approval was given to begin a process to formally consult on proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area.
- 4.2 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any Statutory Notices which will progress the proposal. It further states that this Report must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 1st August 2019 in this instance.
- 4.3 The Consultation Report prepared in respect of this particular proposal is attached at Appendix A for your attention. It contains information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposal, with copies of the notes taken at these meetings. It also contains a summary of the correspondence received during the consultation period and where appropriate, the responses given to the comments and queries raised.
- 4.4 Members' attention should be drawn to the summary of the responses from Estyn on page 6 of the Consultation Report, which are reproduced in full as Appendix 5 to the attached consultation report.

5. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 5.1 Four statutory notices will need to be published in respect of these proposals, as follows:-
- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11 – 19 years to 11 – 16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
 - The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;

- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

- 5.2 If agreed, and subject to the matter not being called in for consideration by Scrutiny, the Consultation Report will be published on 28th March 2019. Following this the Statutory Notices will be published on 1st April 2019 and will allow for a minimum 28 day period for objections, ending on 10th May 2019.
- 5.3 If any objections are received during this period, in accordance with the aforementioned Code, an Objection Report will be prepared. This matter will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, probably in June 2019, for Members to receive and consider the Objection Report and to make a final decision on this to Welsh Government approval.
- 5.4 The proposals consulted upon, in this report, are dependent on decisions taken on the future restructuring of sixth form provision. The School Organisation Code states that any proposals which affect sixth form education must be approved by the Welsh Ministers; and the Council **must** also send to the Welsh Ministers any proposals which it considers are related to the proposals requiring determination.
- 5.5 However, Welsh Government have already confirmed that they will only determine the proposal relating to the removal of the sixth form from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School. Any statutory objections received must be sent to the Welsh Ministers, in addition to the Objection Report referred to above, within 35 days of the end of the objection period for them to consider and determine the outcome of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposal. The remaining proposals will be for the Council’s Cabinet to determine.
- 5.6 The closure of the schools and the opening of new schools in accordance with the statutory notices will still be subject to the approval by Welsh Government of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme Final Business Cases associated with these proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If the proposal proceeds, it is proposed that £37.4 million be invested in building new or refurbishing / remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. This will be funded by the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, which includes a 65% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 35% share of the capital costs will be met through prudential borrowing.
- 6.2 Any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the consultation and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Equality, Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessments were prepared in respect of this proposal and were published on the Council's website together with the Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in detail. Copies of all impact assessments are included at Appendix 2 of the attached consultation report.

8 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP

- 8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have a learning environment fit for the 21st Century." The proposals considered in the report contribute to all 7 well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the attached Consultation Report, to agree to its immediate publication, and to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices on 1st April 2019 to progress these proposals.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Background Papers

The paper included as an appendix to the report is:

- **The Consultation Report**

Contact Officer

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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21.03.19

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Background Papers

NONE

Officer to contact: