



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) – PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

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Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to:
- Amalgamate the currently federated Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the one objection received in response to the publication of the statutory notice to progress this proposal.
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposal with no amendments.
- 2.3 Note the financial implications as set out at section 8 which will be subject to further reports in due course.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 3.2 To increase capacity and improve the quality of the English medium primary education provision available to learners in Glyncoch.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th of December 2021, approval was given to begin a process to formally consult on a proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools by way of closing the existing schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.
- 4.2 Following the conclusion of the consultation period, and at a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet held on the 21st of March 2022, a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish the required Statutory Notice.
- 4.3 The Statutory Notice was published on the 4th of April 2022 which triggered the commencement of the Objection Period. This ran until the 11th of May 2022. One objection was received during this period, details of this can be found in the Objection Report at Appendix A.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
- 5.2 Equality and Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code").

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code"). This document is still available to view on the Council's website.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined within the Code and in accordance with Welsh Government coronavirus guidance for schools in place at the time.
- 7.2 The consultation took place between the 10th of January 2022 and the 21st of February 2022 and full details of this process were published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on the 21st of March 2022 and subsequently published on the Council website.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Based on current estimates it is proposed that circa £15M is required to build the new school to ensure the pupils currently attending Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. It is proposed that that this be funded in partnership by the Council and Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, through their Mutual Investment Revenue funding stream which includes an 81% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 19% share of the costs will be factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 8.2 As part of the funding arrangements, the Council will have to part fund (at 35%) capital costs in respect of fit out (e.g. furniture, ICT) and resources have already begun to be set aside within the Capital Programme in this regard.
- 8.3 Any costs that arise in preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council's powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 9.2 Section 13A(3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.
- 9.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act then provides that the Council shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary education and secondary education are available in the Council's area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity for appropriate education.
- 9.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 9.5 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with

any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the Code is found here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES / WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*'. The proposal will also support delivery against the five strategic priorities, most notably:

- Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
- Strategic Priority 5 – Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

10.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

10.3 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.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving zero-carbon buildings and constructing to BREEAM excellent.
- Providing additional school places.
- Opening new community facilities that would create opportunities for local people to utilise.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating new school environments that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.

- Providing first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contributing towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to build the new schools.
- Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the communities to engage throughout the process.

10.4 The Equality Impact Assessment includes further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

10.5 An Equality Impact Assessment, including further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future generations Act, formed an integral part of the consultation document. This was and is still available for all stakeholders to view.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11. The Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning funding is a strategic investment programme that delivers physical improvements to our schools to benefit learners throughout the County Borough. However, the new school proposed is located within the Glyn-coch electoral ward.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools by way of closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school will significantly improve English medium primary education in Glyncoch. A new 21st Century school with first class facilities will create a learning environment which nurtures and supports pupils and staff, it will deliver exciting opportunities for the community focussed schools' agenda, and will also support us in realising our Net Zero Carbon targets.

12.2 It is recommended therefore that Members formally approve the proposal as consulted upon, with no amendments, allowing the project to progress.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and Organisation (Tel: 01443 744062)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

PROPOSAL: AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of the Objection Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the statutory notice published for this proposal, which was published on the 4th of April 2022 for a period of a minimum of 28 days; and
- Include a summary of the statutory objections received and the local authority's response to them.

2. The Statutory Notices

The Statutory Notice to progress this proposal, which was published on the 4th of April 2022, is reproduced below:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education and Inclusion Services, Tŷ Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, proposes to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Cefn Primary School, Greenfield Avenue, Glyncoch, Pontypridd CF37 3BD
 - Craig yr Hesg Primary School, Cefn Lane, Glyncoch, Pontypridd CF37 3BP
2. Establish a new English Medium Community Primary School, to be maintained by RCTCBC in a new school building to be constructed for this purpose. The new school building will be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Tŷ Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit) for boys and girls aged 3-11 years.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/CurrentConsultations/ProposaltoamalgamateCefnPrimaryandCraigyrHesgPrimarySchools.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals by no later than the 1st of September 2026.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending Cefn Primary School and Craig yr Hesg Primary School should transfer to the new English Medium Community Primary School by the 1st of September 2026, subject to parental preference.

The proposed new school will be an English Medium Community Primary School.

RCTCBC will be the admissions authority and there will be no arrangements for pupil banding.

The proposed capacity of the new English Medium Community Primary school shall be 360 pupil places, plus nursery. The admission number for pupils aged 4 to the Reception Class at the new school in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented is proposed to be 51.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with RCTCBC's Transport Policy. RCTCBC provides free transport for pupils who attend their nearest suitable Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1.5 miles walking distance to that school, or if there is no safe walking route. The term 'nearest suitable' school applies to the catchment area or nearest Welsh, English, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which these proposals were published, that is to say by the 11th of May 2022, any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Tŷ Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ, or e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

Where objections have been received, RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within 7 days of the determination of the proposal.

Signed:



Gaynor Davies
Director of Education and Inclusion Services
For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Date: 4th of April 2022

3. Details of Objections Received

During the Statutory Notice period, a total of 1 objection was received by the closing date of the 11th of May 2022. This objection is included below along with the Council's response to the objection.

4. Objection and Responses

The objection detailed in the report reflects the language used in the submission. The following table reflects this.

<u>HYSBYSIAD STATUDOL – YMGYNGHORI AR GYNNIG I UNO YSGOL GYNRADD CEFN AC YSGOL GYNRADD CRAIG-YR-HESG ER MWYN SEFYDLU YSGOL GYNRADD GYMUNEDOL NEWYDD AR SAFLE NEWYDD</u>
<u>STATUTORY NOTICE – TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL</u>
<p>Fel y bydd yr awdurdod lleol yn gwybod, mae teimlad cryf yn yr ardal hon nad oes Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg i ddiwallu anghenion yr ardal. Pan benderfynodd yr awdurdod gau Ysgol Gynradd Pont Sion Norton, bu ymgyrchwyr yn glir am yr angen am ysgol Gymraeg ar gyfer ardal ynysybwl, glyncoch, coedycwm, trallwn a cilfynydd. Gofynwyd i'r Cyngor ystyried y safle hwn ar gyfer ysgol o'r fath, gan nodi ei leoliad perffaith o ran trafndiaeth gyhoeddus hefyd.</p> <p>Os yw'r Cyngor yn ymrwymo i'r targed miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg, pa ffordd well hynny na diwallu'r angen drwy newid yr ysgol newydd i fod yn ysgol Gymraeg neu o leiaf i ddechrau yn un gyda ffrwd Gymraeg y gellir ei thyfu. Oes ystyriaeth wedi ei roi i hyn, gan weithio gyda ymgyrchwyr lleol ac i sicrhau mynediad cydradd i Addysg Gymraeg yn y rhan yma o'r Sir?</p> <p>As the local authority will know, there is a strong feeling in this area that there is no Welsh Medium Primary School to meet the needs of the area. When the authority decided to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton, campaigners were clear about the need for a Welsh-medium school for the area of Ynysybwl, Glyncoch, Coed-y-cwm, Trallwng and Cilfynydd. The Council was asked to consider this site for such a school, also noting its perfect location for public transport.</p> <p>If the Council commits itself to the target of one million Welsh speakers, what better way than to meet the need by changing the new school into a Welsh medium school or at least initially one with a growing Welsh stream. Has consideration been given to this, working with local campaigners and ensuring equal access to Welsh Medium Education in this part of the County?</p>
<p><u>Response:</u></p> <p>The Council is fully committed in supporting the Welsh Government in achieving its Cymraeg 2050 target of creating one million Welsh speakers, and further information on this has been captured within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment which was included within the consultation documentation and can still be found on the Council's website.</p>

The new Welsh medium primary school, which will open in September 2024 in Rhydyfelin, has been designed to accommodate all pupils that wish to pursue a Welsh medium education from the areas listed. We have also ensured that there has been additional capacity designed into the new school to accommodate growth in the number of pupils attending to further support the Welsh Government's overarching Cymraeg 2050 outcome. We will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in the development of this school and ensure that all staff, parents and carers, are kept up to date with progress.

The rationale for delivering a new English medium school in Glyncoch is contained within the consultation document. The existing school buildings at Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools require significant repairs and are no longer fit-for-purpose, with collective outstanding maintenance costs of more than £783,000. The age and construction of the buildings prevent either school from receiving any significant upgrades which would allow them to be deemed a 21st Century Schools' provision.

The site of Cefn Primary and the school building itself is not accessible and does not comply with the Equality Act 2010, and Craig yr Hesg Primary also requires significant improvement to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The new school would be fully accessible for all staff, pupils as well as the community ensuring that the facilities at the school can be fully utilised ensuring we drive forward and support the Welsh Government's community focussed agenda. The new school's extensive external facilities, including a Multi-Use Games Area, will allow staff, pupils, and the community to benefit from a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.

The school will be designed to be energy efficient and will include renewable energy systems including photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting. The school will be built to BREEAM Excellent standards, and will be Net Zero Carbon in operation, contributing to the delivery of the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy for 2021-2025 and the ambitious goal of being a carbon neutral Council by 2030.

The site that will be used to accommodate the new school will incorporate the existing Craig yr Hesg School site as well as the land adjacent to it (formerly the Ty Gwyn site). The land adjacent to the school is not large enough to accommodate a school without utilising the existing school site. In accordance with Building Bulletin 99, to accommodate a school of this size with the appropriate external areas, a site of approximately 1.5ha is needed, both sites cumulatively provide an area of circa 1.6ha.

The Council believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard educational standards for the future and provides a platform for improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit-for-purpose facilities. It delivers the facilities required to meet the new curriculum allowing teachers to focus on maximising educational outcomes. It will be fully accessible, it will provide quality outdoor spaces not just for the school but the wider Community delivering the Community Focused school agenda, and it will achieve Net Zero Carbon supporting the Council's ambitious target of being a carbon neutral Council by 2030.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
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22ND JUNE 2022

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**Item: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME (FORMERLY
21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) – PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR
HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Background Papers

13th December 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme – Proposals to Improve English Medium Primary Education Provision for Glyncoch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn](#)

21st March 2022

[21st Century Schools programme – Consultation on Proposal to Create a New Community Primary School in Glyncoch](#)

Officer to contact:

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