



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

19th APRIL 2018

PROPOSAL TO CREATE A 3 – 19 SCHOOL AT GARTH OLWG

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING COUNCILLOR J ROSSER.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a statutory notice, to progress a proposal to create an 'all through' 3 - 19 School at the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus, Church Village. This will be achieved by closing the current Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg (the Primary school) and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg (the Secondary school), and opening a new 'all through' school on the site, utilising existing premises.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note that four objections to the proposal were received; these are summarised and responded to in the attached Objections Report, which will be published following this meeting.
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposal to create an 'all through' 3 - 19 School at the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus. The existing school buildings and facilities will continue to be used. The new school will open on 1st September 2019.

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).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 15th February 2018, approval was given to publish a statutory notice to progress the proposal to create an 'all through' 3 - 19 School at the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus, Church Village. This will be achieved by closing the current Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg (the Primary school) and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg (the Secondary school), and opening a new 'all through' school on the site, utilising existing premises. The statutory notice was subsequently published on 2nd March 2018, with the 28 day period for receipt of objections ending on 29th March.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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 outlined the proposal in detail. Copies of all reports have been provided to Cabinet previously.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal was undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. Consultation took place between 2nd October 2017 and 26th January 2018 and full details of this process was published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on 15th February and subsequently published on the Council website.

7. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 7.1 The statutory notice for this proposal was published on 2nd March 2018 and a 28 day period, to 29th March 2018 was allowed for the receipt of objections, in line with legislation. Four objections were received, these are summarised and duly responded to in the attached draft Objections Report, appended as Appendix A. This draft Report will be updated following this meeting to reflect the actual decision taken by Members and will be published on the Council website within 7 days of the confirmation of the decision. The Decision Notice for the proposal must also be published at this time.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 If the proposal to create an 'all through' school at Garth Olwg proceeds, it will realise very modest annual revenue savings of £44,000. In creating one school, sometimes redundancy costs may arise, as the number of staff required in the new school may be less than for the separate schools. The Council seeks to minimise this cost by redeploying displaced members of staff wherever possible. Therefore, it is not possible at this point in the process to identify any possible redundancy costs.

8.2 Minor building adaptations, to remodel classroom accommodation and to ensure safeguarding arrangements for younger pupils are in place may be required. These works have not yet been identified, or costed and this work will be undertaken in conjunction with the new Headteacher and temporary governing body. Such works, if deemed necessary, can be funded from capital resources.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

9.1 This particular proposal forms part of the larger school reorganisation proposals for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Members are asked to formally approve the proposal as consulted upon and agree to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, and create a new 3 – 19 school model, from 1st September 2019.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Background Papers

The background papers included as appendices to the report are:

- **Objections 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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Item:

Background Papers

[Cabinet – 15th February, 2018.](#)

Officer to contact:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTIONS REPORT

Proposal : To create an 'all through' 3 – 19 school at the Garth Olwg Campus, Church Village

1. Purpose of the Objections 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 2nd March 2018 for a period of 28 days; and
- Detail all objections received and the local authority's response to them.

2. The Statutory Notice

The Statutory Notice to progress this proposal, which was published on 2nd March 2018 is reproduced below:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

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

1. discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Main Road, Church Village, Pontypridd CF38 1DX
 - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg, St Illtyds Road, Church Village, Pontypridd CF38 1RQ
2. establish a new Welsh Medium Community Middle School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at Main Road, Church Village, on the site of the Garth Olwg Community Campus, for boys and girls aged 3 to 19 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 <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/Schoolconsultations.aspx>.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2019.

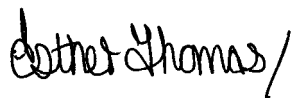
It is proposed that pupils currently attending the two schools listed above should transfer to the new Garth Olwg Middle School, on 1st September 2019, subject to parental preference. This school is proposed to be a Welsh Medium Community Middle School. The new 'all through' 3 – 19 Middle school will be accommodated in the existing buildings of the current schools, which form part of the larger Garth Olwg Community Campus.

RCTCBC will be the admission authority for the new school which will make no provision for pupil banding.

The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new Middle School shall be 350 pupils, plus Nursery provision for at least 50 children. The admission number will be 50 at age 4 (Reception Class). The proposed capacity for the Secondary Department for pupils aged 11-16 will be 900 pupils and the admission number will be 180 age 11 (Year 7) so that each year group from 7-11 will accommodate up to 180 pupils. There will be up to 170 places available for post-16 students, the admission number will be 85 age 17 (Year 12).

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school.

Within a period of 28 days after the publication of these proposals, that is to say by 29th March 2018 any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, 21st Century Schools Team, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk. 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 the period of 7 days after determination of the proposal.



Signed:

Esther Thomas
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Date: 2nd March 2018

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposal to create a new 3 – 19 'all through' school at the Garth Olwg Community Campus.

The new school will be created by closing the existing Primary and Secondary schools that are currently located at this Campus, namely YG Garth Olwg (Secondary school) and YGG Garth Olwg (Primary school) and opening a new 'all through' 3 – 19 school provision, utilising the existing buildings of the two schools. If agreed, the current schools will close on 31st August 2019 and will be replaced by the new school on 1st September 2019.

The Community Campus also accommodates a Lifelong Learning Centre, public Library, Youth Centre and a day care nursery, as well as outdoor sports pitches. No changes to these facilities are being proposed at this time.

3. Details of Objections Received

A total of 4 objections were received by the published closing time and date, namely 5pm on 29th March 2018. They consisted of 4 e-mails, from:

- An elected member representing an electoral ward within the school's catchment area, on behalf of the RCT Plaid Cymru group.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf NEU/NUT trades union
- UCAC trades union
- NASUWT trades union

4. The Objections and our Responses.

- **The consultation report doesn't adequately answer the issues raised. The Council should concentrate on increasing the number of pupils receiving Welsh Medium education and fill empty places that currently exist.**

The rationale behind our proposal is clearly outlined in the consultation document that was widely circulated last October. This proposal will increase the number of Welsh Medium Primary school places within the Garth Olwg catchment area to meet recognised demand, whilst at the same time utilising surplus capacity that exists in the Secondary school building. This is considered to be a cost effective and quick way of meeting the demand for additional places, as no new building construction will be required.

Responsibility for promoting schools and encouraging parents to send their children to schools that have surplus capacity lies with the leadership team and governing body of those schools.

- **Children attending the cluster primary schools risk being at a disadvantage**

The matter of better transition processes and improving links between all schools in the cluster is very important. This work will need to be led by the 'all through'

school, but any advice or support required to assist the new school will be provided by the local authority.

- **There has been a lack of consultation with the parents of other schools, no meetings have been held.**

Consultation has been undertaken strictly in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code; this Code does not require any meetings to be held during this process, although we always organise such sessions for the staff, governors, parents and wider community for the schools that will be directly affected, in this case the two Garth Olwg schools. An open evening was arranged on 4th December 2017, to which all consultees and persons connected with the other associated schools, namely school staff, governors, parents and the wider community, were invited.

- **The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee should consider this proposal in more depth before a final decision is made**

The process for considering any school organisation proposals involves decisions being made by Cabinet at each stage of the process, this is to comply with the School Organisation Code. It is not appropriate therefore for this matter to be considered by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee prior to its determination by Cabinet.

- **RCT must ensure that all staff are transferred to the new school and that all posts are appointed from internal candidates. there must be full consultation on any new staffing structure and the structure should not be changed to disadvantage individuals**

The responsibility for recruitment to the new school will be that of the temporary governing body, not the local authority. The LA will offer support, advice and guidance to the GB throughout this process and will strongly advise them to 'ringfence' all posts, including that of Headteacher, in the first instance, i.e. ensure that existing staff only are given the first opportunity to apply for posts in the new school. This however will be a matter for the temporary governing body to determine. The temporary governing body will also be responsible for agreeing a staffing structure for the new school and undertaking the required consultation.

- **There should be a gradual move towards an all through system rather than a cliff face sudden change**

We have to follow the guidance outlined in the statutory School Organisation Code and it would not be possible to undertake the legal process that is required to create

the new school using this suggested method; this would not be compliant with this Code.

- **The Council should move to a process of ‘changing the character’ of the schools involved in proposals to create new schools rather than closing existing schools and opening new ones**

The statutory processes outlined in the School Organisation Code, that we must follow when considering any changes to school provision do not allow us to simply ‘change the character’ of a school. To create a new school model from more than one existing school, such as a 3 – 19 school, the process can be undertaken in one of two ways:

Close one of the two schools and extend the age range of the other or;
Close both schools and open a new one in their place.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC has **always** undertaken this process by adopting the second method above (we have done exactly the same when creating new Primary schools from separate Infant and Juniors). This is the method clearly outlined in our consultation document and this cannot be changed at this point in the process in any case. This method ensures that both schools involved in the process are treated equally with no preference given to one over the other; if the first method was used this would give full protection to one set of staff and none to the other, which we consider to be unfair.

- **Detailed risk assessments to ensure that campus facilities are appropriate and fit for purpose in relation to the age of pupils must be undertaken**

Any risk assessments that are required will be undertaken; we have also made a commitment that any building adaptations that may be required to facilitate the safe transfer of pupils between buildings on the Campus will be done. As we have not made any decisions on this proposal yet this work has not been undertaken at this stage of the process, the input of the Headteacher and governing body will also be required in the first instance. It must also be noted that Primary aged pupils have been successfully taught in the Secondary building at Garth Olwg for several years, with no problems or safeguarding issues raised in that time.

5. Conclusion

It is considered that all of the reasons for objection outlined in this report have been properly responded to and there are no reasons for not implementing this proposal, as outlined during the consultation process. The Council’s Cabinet has, therefore, given its approval to the creation of the new ‘all through’ 3 – 19 school on the Garth

Olwg Community Campus, which will open on 1st September 2019. The existing Primary and Secondary schools will therefore close on 31st August 2019 with all pupils transferring to the new school subject to parental preference.

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