

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

2ND NOVEMBER 2016

IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN CWMAMAN, ABERDARE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR E HANAGAN

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and Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager Tel: 01443 744227.

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 in respect of a proposal to close Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools and transfer their pupils to a new Primary school that will be created for the community, subject to parental preference, in September, 2018. It is proposed that the new school will be constructed on a currently vacant site at Glanaman Road, Cwmaman (the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note that no objections, or comments were received in response to the publication of the statutory notice to progress this proposal;
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposal to close Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools and open a new Community Primary School for Cwmaman in a new school building that will be constructed for this purpose. The new school will open on 1st September 2018.
- 2.3 Note that a separate report on funding arrangements will be submitted to full Council 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).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 23rd June 2016, approval was given to publish a statutory notice to progress the proposal to close Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools, and transfer education provision to a new Primary school to serve the catchment area, that will be constructed for this purpose, by September, 2018. It is proposed that the school be constructed on the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery at Glanaman Road, Cwmaman, subject to the satisfactory outcome of statutory investigations and the relevant planning consents.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equality and Community 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 both 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, which was introduced on 1st October 2013. Consultation took place between 1st March 2016 and 29th April 2016 and full details of this process was published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on 23rd June 2016 and subsequently published on the Council website.

7. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 7.1 The statutory notice for this proposal was published on 2nd September 2016 and a 28 day period, to 29th September 2016 was allowed for the receipt of objections, in line with legislation. No objections were received.
- 7.2 The fact that no objections were received now removes the requirement to publish an objections report. The Council must,

however publish a Decision Notice that formally outlines the reasons for implementation of this proposal; a copy of this Decision Notice is attached as Appendix A.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This proposal to create one primary school for Cwmaman will realise annual revenue savings of £162,000. In creating one school, 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 A new school building will be required to provide the accommodation and facilities for the new primary school. It is estimated that the cost of this work will be approximately £7.2m and will be funded by the 21st Century Schools Programme, which includes a 50% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 50% share of the capital costs will be met through Prudential borrowing, funded by the revenue savings generated from closing the two schools.
- 8.3 A full business case in respect of this funding has been submitted to Welsh Government and we anticipate formal approval of this in November 2016. A separate report on the funding arrangements will be submitted to full Council in due course.

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

- 9.1 This particular proposal forms part of the larger school reorganisation proposals that form our 21st Century Schools Programme for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Members are asked to formally approve the proposal as consulted upon and agree to close Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools, creating the new Community Primary School for Cwmaman, to open on 1st September 2018.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Background Papers

The background papers included as appendices to the report are:

- **Decision Notice**

Contact Officer

**Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager
01443 744227**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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COUNCILLOR E HANAGAN**

Background Papers

All Consultees

Gofynnwch Am: School Organisation

Please Ask For and Planning

Rhif Est: 744227

Ext No:

Fy Nghyf:

Eich Cyf:

Dyddiad:

October, 2016

My Ref:

Your Ref:

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMAMAN INFANTS' AND GLYNHAFOD JUNIOR SCHOOL
AND OPEN A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR CWMAMAN**

Further to my letter dated 2nd September 2016, I would confirm that, following the publication of a statutory notice on 2nd September and a 28 day notice period, **no** objections to the above proposal were received. The Council's Cabinet, at their meeting held on xx October 2016 has therefore resolved to implement the proposal, with effect from 1st September 2018.

The reasons for, and rationale behind the proposals and the reasons for this decision to implement them were fully outlined and explained in the consultation document that was widely circulated in March of this year. Cabinet also fully considered all comments received following the consultation process that ended in April of this year. As indicated, no objections were received following the publication of the statutory notice, hence the decision taken to implement the proposal as outlined. A summary of the reasons for the decision to implement these proposals is given below:

- It is the Council's view that creating a new Primary school for the community of Cwmaman will improve educational outcomes and provision for the following reasons;
 - A single school vision and ethos, with a single governing body and management team providing leadership across the full primary age range, using consistent policies and practices;
 - Improved transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (Yr 2 to Yr 3) and overall progression;
 - Greater consistency of teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages including:
 - Seamless curriculum planning and co-ordination;
 - Shared schemes of work, assessment and tracking of pupil progress;

- Greater continuity in terms of expectations, behaviour, partnerships with parents and
 - Day to day organisation;
 - Less change for parents and pupils;
 - Greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
 - Opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to the single school; and
 - The future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of one institution rather than two, in a new, purpose built school building.
- An 'all-through' Primary school for Cwmaman could offer:
 - A larger school with a bigger role;
 - A more flexible organisation;
 - Improved career prospects;
 - Improved curriculum co-ordination;
 - The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;
 - An increased range of expertise;
 - Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination

The evidence and rationale to support these statements is all contained within the consultation document that was circulated widely to all consultees in March of this year. This document is still available on the Council website for any person to view at <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/Schoolconsultations.aspx>.

The conclusion therefore reached by Cabinet when making their final decision is that the benefits that can be achieved in respect of improved educational outcomes and provision for school pupils in this area are the prime reasons for implementing these proposals.

Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools will therefore officially close on 31st August 2018, to be replaced by the new Primary School on 1st September 2018. It is proposed that the school will be accommodated in a new building to be specially constructed for this purpose, subject to the satisfactory outcome of statutory investigations and the relevant planning consents.

Yours faithfully



Chris Bradshaw
Chief Executive