



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO FEDERATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult Scrutiny members on a proposal to federate the 4 groups of schools as shown below:

Park Primary School and Gilfach Fargoed Primary School
Fleur de Lys Primary School and Pengam Primary School
Bedwas Junior School and Rhydri Primary School
Ynysddu Primary School and Cwmfelinfach Primary School

- 1.2 To give members the opportunity to comment to on the proposals as part of the consultation process as outlined in the Welsh Government Federation of Schools Regulations 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Governing Bodies of the above schools have already been working on a collaborative basis for a number of years and have now requested that the Authority support them in proceeding to formal consultation to establish Federation status.
- 2.2 Cabinet, at its meeting of 11/07/18, agreed to the request to proceed to formal consultation in partnership with the Governing Body of each school.
- 2.3 The consultation documents attached at Appendix A, B, C and D identifies the Schools and Governing Bodies who are consulting, in partnership with the Local Authority, on these proposals.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report links directly to the Authority's Corporate Plan and specifically Well-being Objective 2018 – 2023, Improving Education Opportunities for All.
- 3.2 The report contributes to the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. In particular, as follows:
- **A healthier Wales** – In supporting vulnerable learners to improve their well-being and educational achievement by pooling resources, experience and knowledge of both schools. Education is our greatest long term lever for improving the life chances of our learners.

- **A more equal Wales** – By ensuring our learners fulfil their potential irrespective of backgrounds. Underpinning all of our work is a belief that someone’s ability to benefit from education should not be determined by where they live. We will continue our drive to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to Education. Schools would work together formally to improve opportunities for all.
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** – By encouraging stakeholders to contribute to school planning and direction by a thorough and comprehensive consultation process.
- **A globally responsible Wales** – By contributing to the continued improvement of the Economic, Social, Environment and Cultural Well-being of the Borough.

4. THE REPORT

Background

- 4.1 The term “Federation” describes a formal and legal agreement by which a number of schools share Governance arrangements.
- 4.2 The Welsh Government’s Federation policy objective is to promote collaboration between all parts of the education system to improve outcomes. School federation is a more formal way of extending collaboration and promoting closer working relationships and is the principal initiative for achieving formal partnership working amongst schools to improve performance and narrow the attainment gap for deprived pupils.

Summary of Federation Regulations

- 4.3 The federation of schools is a legal process which enables schools to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation.
- 4.4 The term federation describes a formal and legal agreement by which a number of schools (between two and six) share governance arrangements and have a single governing body.
- 4.5 The most important reason for considering federation must be the benefits such an arrangement would bring for children and young people in the federating schools by enhancing educational provision through working together efficiently to raise standards, improve services and increase opportunities.
- 4.6 A federation can provide a foundation for sustainable long term development and improvement.
- 4.7 To be successful, federation needs to be based on a commitment to work as a group of schools and a willingness to do things differently for the added benefit of all pupils, their well-being and achievements.
- 4.8 One of the advantages of federation is that schools that federate remain in their communities and keep their individual identity. However the existing governing bodies will be dissolved and replaced by a new, single governing body which will have oversight of, and equal responsibility for, the work of all schools within the federation.
- 4.9 The membership of a governing body for a federation of schools is almost identical to the membership of an ordinary governing body with all stakeholders being represented although there is more flexibility in the proportions of representation of each category of governor. This means that a governing body of a federation can choose a constitution and membership which suits their particular circumstances as long as they have a minimum of 17 governors (two schools) and no more than a maximum of 27 governors (six schools) and adhere to the minimum and maximum numbers of governors set out in the regulations.

- 4.10 Schools in a federation will also be able to maintain their own delegated budget, name, character, school uniform and ethos, but will be able to explore the advantages of sharing resources such as facilities, IT, staff, school buildings, etc.
- 4.11 A decision to federate by either schools or LAs will not override the need for a LA to intervene or act on school improvement or school organisation issues.
- 4.12 Each school has its own Estyn inspection, though increasingly these are co-ordinated to happen at the same time for all schools within the federation to minimise stress and disruption.
- 4.13 The governing body of a federation can use budget, resources and staff across the federation to improve the educational outcomes for all pupils. An audit trail must be kept and separate accounts produced for each school in the federation.
- 4.14 The governing body of a federation cannot require existing staff to work across all schools within the federation, but they can negotiate with the school staff unions over whether flexible contracts can be introduced.
- 4.15 New staff can be appointed to work across schools in the federation.
- 4.16 It is a statutory requirement to seek the views of stakeholders on federation proposals, whether the federation has been proposed by the respective school governing bodies, the LA or in joint partnership.
- 4.17 Local authorities must allow the governing bodies 20 school days (excluding inset days) to respond to proposals and cannot establish a federation until a period of at least 100 days has expired from the date they publish proposals.
- 4.18 The 4 groups of schools are already working collaboratively and have done so for a number of years, as outlined in the attached Consultation Documents.
- 4.19 A full list of consultees is outlined below:-
- Pupils, staff, governors and parents/guardians of both schools.
 - Teaching and support staff associations.
 - Local ward members for each school.
 - School Councils
 - ESTYN
 - Catholic Diocesan Board of Education
 - Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
 - Education Achievement Service
- 4.20 The consultation period for these proposals will be 22nd October 2018 to 10th December 2018.
- 4.21 A summary of responses will then collated and discussed in detail with each governing Body in January/February 2019.
- 4.22 A Consultation Response report (including the views of the Governing Body) will be presented to Scrutiny for consideration in April 2019 prior to final determination by Cabinet.
- 4.23 If Federation is agreed the new Instrument of Governance for the single Federated Governing Bodies will be established in June/July in readiness for the commencement of the Federations in September 2019.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that:

- **Long Term** - The Federation principle will allow schools to formally work together effectively to raise standards, improve service and increase opportunities. This will allow for the sharing of expertise, resources and facilities.
- **Prevention** - Improving the use of Education resources across the schools will support pupils in their long term education and skills outcome in that they are more likely to succeed if their Educational experience is positive.
- **Integration** – An aligned and coherent curriculum increasing the opportunities to fulfil individual pupil needs, extending curriculum entitlement and giving the potential to share resources. This will allow for better continuity of provision from early years to the end of Primary schooling.
- **Collaboration** – A single development plan, single school policies, reducing duplication and also providing the opportunity to share resources but at the same time allowing each school to retain its own individual character within a strong overarching partnership where each school will be able to learn from each other.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils and the local community.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Equality impact assessment is not needed because the report is formalising a partnership that is already in existence, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Federation process does not bring any savings to the Local Authority but may ease financial pressures within schools by sharing resources which can be deployed across the federation.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Due to collaboration arrangements already being in place, in all 4 groups of schools, for a number of years there are no personnel implications anticipated directly resulting from this proposal.
- 8.2 Governing Bodies have the responsibility for the management of staffing within schools.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Scrutiny Members consider each Federation consultation document and give their views on each proposal to federate the following groups of schools:

Park Primary School and Gilfach Fargoed Primary School
 Fleur de Lys Primary School and Pengam Primary School
 Bedwas Junior School and Rhydri Primary School
 Ynysddu Primary School and Cwmfelinfach Primary School.

- 10.2 Following the consultation exercise a further report will be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet for final determination on the proposal.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To work in partnership and support the groups of schools identified in 1.1 in undertaking a consultation exercise on federation which if approved will formalise the successful collaboration that has been in place for a number of years.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014.
School Organisation Code 2013 (Welsh Government).
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Author: Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
E-mail: richase@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harray, Interim Chief Executive
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Philippa Marsden, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement
Councillor Derek Havard, Chair of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Nicole Scammell, Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager

Background Papers:

Welsh Government Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales May 2014
Cabinet report – Federation of Schools 11/07/18

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Proposal to Establish a School Federation - Incorporating Cwmfelinfach and Ynysddu Primary Schools Consultation Document
Appendix B – Proposal to Establish a School Federation - Incorporating Gilfach and Park Primary Schools Consultation Document
Appendix C – Proposal to Establish a School Federation - Incorporating Fleur de Lis and Pengam Primary Schools Consultation Document
Appendix D – Proposal to Establish a School Federation - Incorporating Bedwas and Rhydri Primary Schools Consultation Document