



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH OCTOBER 2023

SUBJECT: SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 – PROPOSAL FOR
THE CLOSURE OF CWM GLAS INFANTS SCHOOL

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to officially consult with Members in respect of the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infants School by July 2024

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Due to the falling rolls at Cwm Glas Infant school which are projected to decrease further, a meeting was arranged by the Head Teacher and the Governing body with Local Authority representatives including the Chief Education Officer, to discuss the future viability of the school.
- 2.2 The conclusion of the meeting as outlined in 2.1, agreed the school could no longer maintain a balanced budget and an appropriate staffing level, therefore a decision was made by the Head Teacher and Governing Body of the School to pursue closure of Cwm Glas Infant School.
- 2.3 The purpose of the report is to consult with members on the proposal outlined below:

- **The closure of Cwm Glas Infants School**

Currently Cwm Glas Infant School shares a catchment area with Coed Y Brain Primary School where pupils transition to at Key Stage 2 subject to parental preference.

This proposal seeks to transition the pupils at Foundation Phase, to deliver an inclusive all-through primary school provision. Subject to Cabinet approval, this will result in the proposed closure of Cwm Glas Infants School with effect from July 2024.

- 2.4 The consultation process will proceed in line with the requirements of Welsh Government Statutory Code document no 011/2018 - School Organisation Code 2nd Edition 2018 where exemptions do not apply.
- 2.5 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 28th September 2023 and ends midnight on the 9th November 2023.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- a) Note the information contained in the report and the attached consultation pack.
 - b) To obtain Members views as part of the consultation process for the proposal which will be noted as part of the minutes of this meeting and included in the Consultation Report which will be presented to Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are consulted with regards to the outlined proposal and assist the Council in discharging its duty in consulting stakeholders in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 where applicable.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Consultation in respect of the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infants School.
- 5.1.1 Cwm Glas Infants School provides education to pupils between the ages of 3 and 7 and has a published capacity figure of 55 places with a published admission number of 19.
 - 5.1.2 The current pupil roll as of September 2023 is 34 pupils (31 Full Time Equivalent) with over 50% of these pupils residing outside of the catchment area of the school
 - 5.1.3 Surplus places are currently at 50.38% rising to 57.89% in September 2024 and projected to increase in future years as the number of pupils predicted to attend the school is anticipated to decline linked to a reduction in live birth rates in the area and parental preference.
 - 5.1.4 The projected pupil numbers and resultant financial outlook for the school provides a significant challenge to the ability of the Head and School Governors to agree a balanced budget to maintain the school and an appropriate staffing level which has led to a request to the local authority to consider closing the school from July 2024.
 - 5.1.5 Under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, Individual school budgets are determined using a locally agreed funding formula in accordance with factors which are learner led. Schools must be able to demonstrate via a financial action plan that the school will work to deliver a balanced budget. However, the Head Teacher and Governing Body have acknowledged that Cwm Glas School is facing a significant

financial deficit with pupil numbers projected to further decrease moving forward.

- 5.1.6 Reasonable alternatives to closure, such as reduction in the number of classes, collaboration, federation and colocation were considered by the Head Teacher and Governing Body in partnership with the Local Authority but deemed not viable or sustainable.
- 5.1.7 Cwm Glas Infants School is a feeder school for Coed Y Brain Primary at Key Stage 2. Both schools share the same catchment area and are both located in Llanbradach within circa 1 mile of each other. Should the decision be taken to close Cwm Glas Infants School, based on current and future projections for both schools, all pupils could be accommodated within Coed Y Brain Primary School.
- 5.1.8 In order to progress the proposal for the closure of Cwm Glas Infants by July 2024, a consultation exercise is required in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.1.9 As part of the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 and Section 42/44 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, consultation must be undertaken with Members and wider Stakeholders as outlined in the attached documentation.
- 5.1.10 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 28th September 2023 and will close midnight on the 9th November 2023.
- 5.1.11 Following consultation, all the comments received during the consultation period will be compiled into a Consultation Report as prescribed by Welsh Government in respect of the Cwm Glas Infants Proposal.
- 5.1.12 The report will be taken to Cabinet who will then decide as to whether to proceed, make changes or not to proceed with the proposal.
- 5.1.13 Should Cabinet decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so at this stage. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing and sent to the Council within the notice period. Formal Responses can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.
- 5.1.14 Full details of the Consultation Process for the proposal can be found in the main Consultation Document as part of the attached consultation pack.

5.2 **Conclusion**

- 5.2.1 Members are asked to note the information contained in this report and the supporting consultation pack documentation with a view to providing views on the proposal in their capacity as a 'consultee' under the School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.2.2 Members views will be included in the Consultation Report which will be taken to Cabinet who will then decide on how the proposal will progress as outlined in 5.1.12 and 5.1.13.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report. The process outlined by Welsh Government is being adhered to ensure transparency, balanced and open decision making.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed in relation to the proposal to ensure compliance with the socio-economic duty, Sections 1 to 3 of Equality Act 2010.

[Link to IIA \(Cymraeg\)](#)

[Link to IIA \(English\)](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, Individual school budgets are determined using a locally agreed funding formula in accordance with factors which are learner led.
- 8.2 Schools must be able to demonstrate via a financial action plan that the school will work to deliver a balanced budget.
- 8.3 The Council's Education Finance Team have been working closely with the school for a number of years, however, the Head Teacher and Governing Body have acknowledged that Cwm Glas School is facing a significant financial deficit with pupil numbers projected to further decrease moving forward and are unable to demonstrate via a financial action plan their ability to reverse the deficit.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the consultation process.
- 9.2 The Council's Human Resources Team will work closely with all relevant parties to ensure that processes are adhered to, and support is provided as required.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
Legislation (Wales) Act 2019

Author: Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Appendices:

[Link to Consultation Pack – Cwm Glas Infants School \(Cymraeg\)](#)

[Link to Consultation Pack - Cwm Glas Infants School \(English\)](#)