



CABINET – 30TH APRIL 2013

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE CRAY VALLEY, WATERLOO SITE

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to issue a Statutory Notice to withdraw the above proposal.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

2.1 The report links directly to the Education for Life, Sustainability and Regeneration strategies, particularly in the context of provision of modern, fit for purpose teaching and learning environments.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 May 2009, resolved to proceed with the opening of the school from September 2012. This followed the statutory processes which resulted in the publication of a Public Notice with no statutory objections to the proposal.
- 3.2 Cabinet were advised at the time that the opening date of the school was still conditional upon the final resolution of the S106 agreement and the conditions therein, as well as the need for WG funding.
- 3.3 Following the resolution by Planning Committee in 2007 to grant planning permission for housing at the former Cray Valley site subject to an S106 agreement, the proposal became affected by the general recession. The landowner has decided to progress the remediation of the site and the proposed S106 agreement has not been completed and the planning permission not yet issued which renders the implementation of the proposal unreasonably difficult (see explanatory notes).
- 3.4 Discussions have taken place with WG officials given that the timing of the proposal has elapsed. It also became evident that it would take another minimum 6 – 12 months to complete work on the site and sign the S106 agreement. There is also uncertainty in relation to when the site would be acquired by a developer.
- 3.5 In view of these circumstances, it is proposed to commence processes to withdraw the original proposal, which has now time elapsed. This process will involve discussions with school council, staff, governing body and parents of Rhydri Primary School, together with neighbouring schools, which potentially would be affected. A public/community meeting would also be convened.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 29 January 2013, agreed to proceed with formal processes to withdraw the proposal.

4.2 Meetings were convened for Thursday 14 March as follows:

2.15pm	-	school council
4.00pm	-	staff
5.30pm	-	governing body
7.00pm	-	parents.

4.3 A drop-in session was arranged for Tuesday 19 March at the school (2.00-6.00pm), together with a public/community meeting at 7.00pm.

4.4 Notes of the meetings are available in the Members Resource Area for inspection.

School Council

4.5 The representatives were assured it was not our intention to close Rhydri Primary School as had been portrayed in the media. Soft play provision was identified as a priority for investment.

Staff

4.6 Concerns were expressed about the uncertainties and there was a request to improve facilities at the school.

Governing Body

4.7 Similar concerns were raised as per the staff.

Parents

4.8 Parents raised concerns regarding the lack of investment and the need to improve facilities at the school.

Drop-In Session

4.9 No-one attended on the designated times.

Public/Community Meeting

4.10 No-one attended the meeting.

Interpreter Meeting

4.11 A separate meeting was convened with a parent with hearing difficulties and an interpreter was employed by CCBC to facilitate this to ensure all views were sought. This meeting was convened for 27 March 2013.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality plan and no potential for unlawful discrimination has been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups.

- 5.2 Given the delay in constructing a new Waterloo School, improvements will be made on the Rhydri School site, which would include DDA related access improvements where necessary.
- 5.3 An interpreter was employed by CCBC to facilitate discussions with a parent with hearing difficulties, so that all parents' views could be received.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The school build is dependent upon both WG funding and the Section 106 monies.
- 6.2 The revenue costs in the future could be met by the transfer of funds associated with Rhydri Primary School, supplemented by floor area savings from other schools, as part of a future rationalisation process. It is not envisaged this will occur in the medium term.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This would be dependant upon parental preferences and admission numbers in accordance with Council policy.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 As detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet Members are recommended to proceed with a Statutory Notice to withdraw the proposal, as per advice from Welsh Government officials.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The original proposal has now elapsed and will require the re-commencement of statutory processes in the event that the proposal is resurrected.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Local Government Act 1972.
- 11.2 This is a Cabinet function.

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Tim Stephens, Development Control Manager
Lynne Donovan, Personnel Manager
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh language)
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager.

Background Papers:
Cray Valley/Waterloo file