



## CABINET- 30TH APRIL 2014

**SUBJECT: SECONDARY RATIONALISATION (PHASE 1):  
SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROPOSAL**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the findings of the Objection Report in relation to the Secondary Rationalisation (Phase 1): Islwyn West Region School Organisation Proposal (the Proposal) and subject to consideration of the above to approve the Proposal.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report presents the outcome of the Statutory Notice in relation to the Proposal. The Objection Report is attached for consideration and determination by Cabinet. Subject to consideration of the Objection Report to approve the Proposal.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Secondary Rationalisation (Phase 1) Proposal links to the 21st Century Schools Programme. It also addresses the removal of surplus school places which is a requirement of both the Welsh Government and Estyn. Based upon current secondary provision it is forecast that secondary surplus places would increase from 22.5% in September 2013 to 34.9% by September 2016. Implementation of the proposal will reduce the secondary surplus places to 20.4%.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Following the formal consultation process which concluded on 31 January 2014, the Statutory Notice was published on 3rd March 2014. The proposal in the Statutory Notice was:-
- Closure of Oakdale and Pontllanfraith secondary schools
  - A new school to be built on the Oakdale Plateau 3 site
  - The proposed new school to be designed with a capacity of 900 pupils plus provision for special needs of around 50 pupils.
- 4.2 The preceding consultation process was undertaken in accordance with the new School Organisation Code. As required the Consultation Document was prepared and published on the 9th December 2013. The period of consultation ran until 31st January 2014. The Consultation Document was available on the Council's website with electronic and hard copies distributed to relevant stakeholders in accordance with the School Organisation Code.

- 4.3 In addition public drop-in sessions were organised in January at Pontllanfraith Comprehensive and Oakdale Comprehensive schools. Consultation was also undertaken directly with pupils at the schools.
- 4.4 The consultation highlighted the rationale for the proposals which are to:-
- Construct modern teaching and learning facilities as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme
  - Remove costly and unwanted surplus places. As at September 2013 the combined surplus places at Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensives were 631 i.e. 36% of the total combined capacity. It is estimated that the resources diverted from direct teaching and learning by these surplus places is £322,000.
  - Address costly backlog maintenance requirements at Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensives which are estimated as £13.5 million
- 4.5 Responses to the consultation could be made in writing, by email or electronically on-line. As required by the School Organisation Code the Consultation Report was produced. This summarised the issues raised during the consultation period and also the Council's responses to those issues. The Consultation Report was considered by Cabinet on 19th February 2014. Following consideration of the Consultation Report Cabinet approved the publication of the Statutory Notice. The Consultation Report was then published on the Council's website and made available to relevant stakeholders in accordance with the School Organisation Code.
- 4.6 The period of the Statutory Notice ran from 3rd March 2014 to 3rd April 2014. The Statutory Notice was published on the Council's website and posted outside both Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive schools. The Notice was also published at the site of Oakdale Plateau 3. Copies of the Statutory Notice were distributed to relevant stakeholders in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. Objections could be submitted in writing.
- 4.7 During the Statutory Notice period only one objection was received. It was submitted jointly by a current Year 11 pupil and former pupil at Pontllanfraith Comprehensive. The main component of the objection was that the new school should be built on the site of the existing Pontllanfraith Comprehensive. The objection is highlighted in the attached Objection Report (Appendix 1) which also clarifies the response to the objection in terms of the rationale for choosing Oakdale Plateau 3.
- 4.8 In accordance with the School Organisation Code, members must now firstly consider the Objection Report and then determine whether the proposal should proceed.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted as part of the formal consultation process. There were no resultant implications from this Assessment.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The estimated cost of the new school is around £18 million to £18.5 million. The Council has identified and approved £9.25 million as match funding from the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Programme.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are personnel implications in relation to employees from the existing Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive schools. A HR Strategy is being developed to manage this process and engagement with the Headteachers of both schools and the whole staff base has commenced early on to deal with general queries at this point in time.
- 7.2 It is currently not possible to advise the specific impact on individual posts, if any, as it will be dependent on the curriculum delivery and staffing structure of the new school. However, support will be offered to all employees on an individual basis and the previous success of redeploying employees in schools who may be displaced will look to be replicated.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The views of the listed consultees have been incorporated into the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Cabinet consider the findings set out in the Objection Report.
- 9.2 Subject to consideration of the above Cabinet approve the Proposal. The Proposal is:-
- Closure of Oakdale and Pontllanfraith secondary schools
  - A new school to be built on the Oakdale Plateau 3 site
  - The proposed new school to be designed with a capacity of 900 pupils plus provision for special needs of around 50 pupils.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 So the objection is properly considered.
- 10.2 To enable work on the new school to commence.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 11.2 Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Function and Responsibilities) (Wales) (Amendment/Regulations 2013).

Author: Martin Donovan, Project Lead 21st Century Schools  
E-mail: donovm1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Stuart Rosser, Chief Executive  
Sandra Aspinall, Acting Chief Executive  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151  
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services  
Tony Maher, Assistant Director, Planning & Strategy  
Keri Cole, Manager, Learning Education & Inclusion  
Councillor Rhianon Passmore, Cabinet Member, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Gail Williams, Interim Monitoring Officer  
David A Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)  
Lisa Haile, Personnel Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Secondary Rationalisation: Phase 1 Islwyn West Draft Objection Report