



CABINET – 19TH FEBRUARY 2014

**SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON SECONDARY RATIONALISATION:
PHASE 1 ISLWYN WEST**

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the outcome of the recent Consultation and seek approval to publish the relevant Statutory Notice to progress the proposals.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 This report links to the 21st Century Schools Programme in terms of the construction of a new school at Oakdale Plateau 3, along with enhancements at Blackwood Comprehensive. Closure of the existing Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive Schools, addresses the requirement placed upon the Council, by the Welsh Government and Estyn, to reduce surplus secondary school places. Based upon current secondary provision it is forecast that secondary surplus places would increase from 22.5% at September 2013 to 24.9% by September 2016. However, implementation of these proposals will reduce the secondary surplus places to 20.4%.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 Formal public consultation commenced on 9 December 2013 and closed on 31st January 2014. As required by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 the Council has produced a Consultation Report which is attached as Appendix 1. The Consultation Report has also been made available publicly on the Council's Website.

The proposal consulted upon 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 circa 50 pupils.

It is also proposed to revise catchment areas in order to ensure they are two broadly similar sized schools in the region in the future, i.e. Blackwood Comprehensive and Oakdale Plateau.

- 3.2 The proposed catchment area changes are to make Libanus and Markham Primary Schools as feeder schools to Blackwood Comprehensive rather than Pontllanfraith Comprehensive.
- 3.3 The next step in the process is to publish a Statutory Notice highlighting the proposal. The Statutory Notice must stand for a minimum of 28 days. During that period members of the public may register objections. The Council must consider all objections before deciding whether to implement the proposal. The planned completion of the new school is September 2016.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As part of the 21st Century Schools Programme, the proposed build in terms of the Oakdale Plateau 3 school site also ensure that the new facilities are fully accessible to pupils, staff, parents and governors regardless of individual circumstances and background.
- 4.2 The methods used in the consultation period already undertaken, and the contact details in the statutory notice to be published, also ensures that any member of the public from any protected characteristic background will have been given the opportunity to support or oppose the proposals according to their viewpoint.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Council on 23 July 2013 agreed to set aside £9.265 m of funding which represents 50% of the required match funding for a scheme of £18.5 m. Further reports will be presented to Cabinet when more information is available in respect of either an update of estimated costs or confirmation of actual costs.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be personnel implications in relation to staff from the existing Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive Schools. An HR Strategy is being developed to manage this process.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Consultation Report prepared following the recent public Consultation is shown as Appendix 1.
- 7.2 The Report reflects the views of the consultees.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Approval be given to publish the Statutory Notice.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To progress the proposal relating to the Secondary Rationalisation: Phase 1 Islwyn West.

10. STATUTORY POWER

- 10.1 The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code.

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Consultees: Directorate Senior Management Team
Councillor Passmore, Cabinet Member, Education & Lifelong Learning
Gail Williams, Interim Monitoring Officer / Principal Solicitor
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services
Tim Broadhurst, Valuation Officer
Lisa Haile, Personnel Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Consultation Report – Secondary Rationalisation: Phase 1 Islwyn West