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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Julie Lloyd
(Tel: 01443 864246 Email: lloydj4@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 10th July 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, 16th July, 2024 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

This meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Harrhy'.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes:-

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| 3 | Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 20th May 2024. | 1 - 6 |
| 4 | Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 4th June 2024. | 7 - 12 |
| 5 | Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure. | |
| 6 | Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. | 13 - 24 |
| 7 | To receive and consider the following Cabinet reports*:-

1. Federation of Schools – 5 th June 2024;
2. Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes Under the New Common Inspection Framework (CIF) – January 2022 to March 2024 – 5 th June 2024. | |

**If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above Cabinet reports to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Julie Lloyd 01443 864246, by 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 15th July 2024.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 8 | School Organisation Code 2018 - Proposal for the Closure of Rhydri Primary School. | 25 - 28 |
| 9 | Annual Corporate Safeguarding Reports for 2023-2024. | 29 - 64 |
| 10 | School Organisation Code 2018 - Proposal for the Amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School. | 65 - 68 |

Circulation:

Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, D. Cushing, Mrs P. Cook, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C.J. Gordon, T. Heron, A. Leonard, B. Miles (Vice Chair), T. Parry (Chair), J.E. Roberts, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, J. Winslade and K. Woodland

Co-opted Members:

Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative (with voting rights on educational matters)
Mr M. Western

Parent Governor Representatives (with voting rights on educational matters) T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative)

Outside Body Representatives (without voting rights)
Mrs P. Ireland (NEU) and Mrs K. Cole (NEU)

Caerphilly Governors Association (without voting rights)
Mr D Davies

Users and Carers - Vacant

And Appropriate Officers

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Agenda Item 3



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 20TH MAY 2024 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Gordon - Chair
Councillor B. Miles - Vice Chair

Councillors:

E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson, A. Leonard, J. Simmonds, J Winslade, and K. Woodland.

Cabinet Members:

Councillors C. Andrews (Education and Communities), and E. Forehead (Social Care).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), G. Jenkins (Interim Director of Social Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director – Adult Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), A. West (Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), C Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

Councillors S. Morgan and J. Pritchard, and E. Pryce (EAS), D. Hartevelde (EAS), S. Speedy (EAS), and co-opted Member Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), Councillors A. Broughton-Pettit, P. Cook, D. Cushing, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, T. Heron T. Parry, J. Roberts, and S. Skivens. Mrs T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative), Mrs P. Ireland (NEU), Mrs K. Cole (NEU), and Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association).

It was noted that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor T. Parry (Chair), and due to the technical issues being experienced by Councillor B. Miles (Vice Chair), it was moved and seconded and supported by the majority present by a show of hands that Councillor C. Gordon preside as Chair for this meeting.

In giving his apology for absence, Councillor J. Roberts requested that it be recorded that he was unable to join the meeting due to technical issues.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Bishop declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10. Federation of Schools as she is a school governor at one of the schools affected.

As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for her to leave the meeting and she could take full part in the debate and vote. Details are also minuted with the respective item.

3. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2024.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2024, be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 8 For, 0 Against, and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 12th March 2024 (minute nos. 1 – 10) be approved as a correct record.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2024.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2024, be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 7 For, 0 Against, and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 20th March 2024 (minute nos. 1 – 4) be approved as a correct record.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE.

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

6. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period May 2024 to March 2025.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers, be published on the Council's website.

7. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. AN OVERVIEW OF HOW THE EAS SUPPORTS CAERPHILLY LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) TO DELIVER THEIR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNCTION.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which provided Members with an overview of how the Education Achievement Service (EAS) supports Caerphilly Local Authority (LA) to deliver their school improvement function, and to seek Members' views on current arrangements for how this support is delivered, within the context of an ongoing review.

Members were also referred to the presentation supporting the report, which gave a detailed overview of the ways in which the EAS supports Caerphilly Local Authority to deliver their School Improvement function.

A Member queried when the vacant Assistant Director post was expected to be filled and sought clarification on the reduction of EAS funding and whether standards would be maintained in Caerphilly. Members were advised that there are no plans to fill the vacant Assistant Director post in the current financial climate and staff are being utilised within the service to take on some of the roles required. Members were also assured that standards would be maintained even though funding had reduced. Members also referred to the presentation in the agenda pack and noted the font size was too small.

A Member sought clarification on the 'team around the school' meetings, how frequently they occurred, and whether they included all schools or just schools that required this process. Members were advised that the process is put in place for schools that need additional support, in early intervention circumstances or following an Estyn report where the school is classed as a 'follow up' category. The frequency of the meetings would depend on the needs of the school, usually on a monthly basis.

Following consideration and scrutiny of the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee asked questions and offered views about current arrangements.

9. SUMMARY OF ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES UNDER THE NEW COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK (CIF) – JANUARY 2022 TO MARCH 2024.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which informed Members of the judgements made by Estyn inspection teams of Caerphilly schools from January 2022 – March 2024 (where published), and Members views were sought on the Estyn outcomes.

Members were advised that the schools included in the report were inspected from January 2022 onwards. Each of them was inspected under the arrangements for inspections that came into effect from 1 January 2022, with the first two terms being considered pilot arrangements. The report identified the schools and the dates on which the inspections took place, together with the follow up category. The cumulative report included outcomes already reported between January 2022 and March 2023.

Members received an overview of the process and the level of engagement between Estyn and Schools over the past few years was explained. Reference was made to the progress by Crumlin High Level Primary school which has made satisfactory progress and has been removed from the category of 'special measures.' This was a testament to the hard work by the head teacher and all the staff. Officers stated that they were delighted with the result.

Members were advised that it was pleasing to see the representation from Caerphilly schools in the Estyn report and examples of strong practice which will be shared. The recommendations in the report will be examined to look for commonalities and themes to help with future strategic planning.

A Member noted that the 'Pupil Referral Unit' (PRU), as referred to, suggested that this was for 'problem' children and sought clarification on this description. Members were advised that this 'Glanynant PRU' had been the preferred option when considered by Estyn.

Following consideration and scrutiny of the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee asked questions and offered views about overall school outcomes.

10. FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS.

Councillor C. Bishop declared a personal interest as she is a school governor at one of the schools affected. As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for her to leave the meeting and she could take full part in the debate and vote.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which sought Scrutiny endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, in respect of the Federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School, with effect from the start of term January 2025.

Members were advised that the report provided a background to the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations introduced in 2014, and it outlined processes and practical aspects of establishing a federated school governing body. The report also identified the Schools and Governing Bodies who wish to proceed to formal consultation in partnership with the Local Authority (LA).

The Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Councillor Teresa Parry had been contacted by the Chairs of the Governing Bodies of both schools affected by the recommendations to assure the scrutiny committee that they are fully supportive of the recommendation to proceed with the federation of Cwmaber Infants and Cwmaber Junior schools.

A Member queried what the performance of both schools is currently like and will the federation be assessed periodically to ensure it is effective. The Scrutiny Committee was advised that performance at both schools is good and there are no causes of concern. Both schools have a history of strong performance, and it is felt that the federation will provide further opportunities for sustained growth and development. Members were also advised that all schools are monitored to see how they are operating and delivering so a federated school would be no different. Evaluations of this process would be carried out and pupils would also be spoken to

for their views. In addition, the 'team around the school' would be checking in to ensure everything is working properly.

Officers have also met with the Governing Bodies to take them through the federation process, and it should be noted that the schools have already been working collaboratively for a number of years. It was very clear after the presentation to the governing bodies that they were confident with each other and consider it as the next logical step forward.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

To proceed to consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, in respect of the Federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School with effect from the start of term January 2025.

11. SAFEGUARDING.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which updated Members regarding the work of the education department to support schools. Members were advised that safeguarding children and young people is a key statutory duty of the Council and is embodied in the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 and Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019).

Members were also informed that the Local Authority (LA) is focused on ensuring a culture of safeguarding is embedded, and has clear policies and procedures linked to safeguarding children in education services, which are reviewed and updated when required. Safeguarding underpins priorities within the Directorate Plan (2023-2028) and all related plans and reflects the introduction of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) within its principles and practices.

A Member sought clarification on physical intervention, and whether safeguarding, risk assessments and legislation reviews are put in place around each individual child that requires this type of intervention, and if a compulsory de-brief is undertaken following each incident to identify and reduce the need for them in the future. Members were advised that these safeguards are put in place for those children that need physical intervention and de-briefs are always undertaken where that approach has been necessary.

A Member queried whether the 'peer on peer' and exploitation issues, required specific additional training or were included in the safeguarding training. Members were advised that CCBC had developed its own action plan in relation to 'peer on peer.' The Member sought clarification on whether 'train the trainer' created a conflict of interest as the Headteacher may also be the Safeguarding Officer of the school. Members were advised that the Local Authority delivers 'train the trainer' to the Headteachers, who are then responsible for ensuring that all Members of the school team receive safeguarding training and updates on a regular basis. Headteachers in primary schools are normally also the Safeguarding Officer and would receive specific separate training for this role. The Member sought clarification on the number of schools that were involved out of the 129 staff that attended the tier 3 training. Members were advised that this information would be confirmed and circulated to Members following the meeting. The Member also clarified that 'prevent' training was undertaken by all school staff, with additional information provided by the Local Authority.

A Member queried whether 'vaping' in schools is now included in safeguarding policies. Members were advised that it is not specifically included under 'safeguarding' but is recognised as an issue within schools and is dealt with under 'healthy schools' and well-being for young persons. Members were assured that the issues with 'vaping' are a priority which is

being addressed and were also referred to the Members Seminar on vaping in schools, which is due to be held on 13th June.

A Member queried whether 'knife crime' was covered under 'prevent.' Members were advised that this would be considered under the schools' behaviour policy, safety, and 'protect,' together with 'prevent.'

Following consideration of the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) reminded Members that the Youth Forum meeting was taking place on 23rd May and Members were invited to attend.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2024.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 4



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2024 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor T. Parry - Chair
Councillor B. Miles - Vice Chair

Councillors:

E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, P. Cook, D. Cushing, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Gordon, T. Heron, A. Leonard, J. Roberts, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, and J. Winslade.

Cabinet Member:

Councillor C. Andrews (Education and Communities).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), G. Jenkins (Interim Director of Social Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director – Adult Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), A. West (Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), J. Duggan (Assistant Head), K. Honey (Principal Educational Psychologist), J. Southcombe (Finance Manager), L. Pine (Lead Education Welfare Officer), C. Parry (Lewis School, Pengam), L. Denton (Lewis Girls School), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

Councillors S. Morgan and J. Pritchard, and co-opted Member Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Woodland, Mrs T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative), Mrs P. Ireland (NEU), Mrs K. Cole (NEU), and Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE.

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

4. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period June 2024 to March 2025.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers, be published on the Council's website.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. POST 16, SINGLE SEX AND SURPLUS PLACES BOARD – PROPOSAL TO CLOSE LEWIS GIRLS SCHOOL AND MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO LEWIS SCHOOL PENGAM.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which officially consulted with Members in respect of the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board recommendation to close Lewis Girls School and make a regulated alteration to Lewis School Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.

Members were advised that the Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

A Member queried the cost implications of retaining Lewis Girls School as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to aid the transition process. The Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager advised Members that school properties are maintained through existing school condition surveys and provided assurances that additional investment was not expected at the Girls School site. Members also heard how the two-year period proposed in the report was subject to change.

A Member enquired if staff at Lewis Girls School would have to apply to retain employment and expressed concern that staff at both schools were not being treated equally in this regard. The Chief Education Officer advised Members that when a decision had been reached the

Council would be working with both Headteachers to achieve good outcomes for existing staff if the proposed changes went ahead and the number of pupils at Lewis School Pengam doubled as a result. This had been achieved with staff at Cwmcarn Comprehensive School under similar circumstances. However, it was reiterated to Members that under the proposal Lewis Girls School would be closed. The Headteacher of Lewis School Pengam (Mr Chris Parry) outlined to Members how it was anticipated that staff would follow the Girls School pupils if the proposal were accepted and highlighted the collaborative work which he was already undertaking with the Headteacher at Lewis Girls School. The Member queried if there was an underlying presumption that employment at Lewis School Pengam was secure and it was not at Lewis Girls School.

The Chief Education Officer acknowledged the interpretation but reiterated that if the proposal was accepted Lewis School Pengam was committed to expanding its staff team to include and absorb as many staff as possible from the Girls School. The Member sought clarity on her interpretation that staff at both schools were being treated differently. The Chief Education Officer accepted that this was the case due to the different status at each school as the proposal was for Lewis Girls School to be closed.

The Member expressed the view that the plans amounted to a takeover rather than a merger, and the Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager advised Members that the Council had followed Welsh Government guidance in proposing the closure of one school and the regulated alteration of the other school. The Member expressed concerns as staff at both schools were being treated differently and enquired about the viewpoint from the Trade Unions. The Chief Education Officer advised the Committee that the Trade Unions had been supportive so far as they had confidence in the Council due to the way similar situations had been handled previously.

A Member enquired if there would be any single sex classes in the future if the proposal were accepted. The Chief Education Officer highlighted that moving to co-education status was one of the driving factors for the proposal and advised that a transition programme had been drawn-up by both headteachers which would allow Year 11 pupils currently going through qualification routes to be taught in single-sex classes. All classes would reach co-education status from 2026 onwards.

A Member enquired about when it was first suggested that both schools be merged on one site. The Chief Education Officer advised Members that discussions within the cluster had been taking place since circa 2000. The Member also enquired about the views of pupils. The Headteacher of Lewis School Pengam (Mr Chris Parry) advised Members that the proposal had received unanimous support at School Council. The Headteacher of Lewis Girls School (Ms Lynette Denton) outlined how she was yet to formally consult with her pupils but highlighted that the general mood was positive as all pupils had experienced co-education at Primary School level. The Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager also highlighted that the views of pupils would be included as part of the consultation process. The Member clarified that Lewis School Pengam had the capacity to accommodate the extra pupils, as the school was currently operating below capacity.

A Member asked if additional building work would be required if the proposal was accepted. The Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager advised that projections up until 2031 had been included in the Consultation Pack and based on this data it was concluded that no additional building work would be required at the Pengam site. Members also heard how officers had worked with colleagues in the Planning department and the possible impact on pupil numbers from any future developments had been included in the plans.

A Member requested an update on the PFI (Private Finance Initiative) contract at Lewis School Pengam, as Council had agreed to terminate the contract earlier than scheduled due to the maintenance costs involved. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services advised Members that this was the case, and that the Council was currently

negotiating with the PFI provider and had also been advised that the proposal under discussion had no bearing on these negotiations.

A Member queried the pupil travel arrangements and enquired if some pupils would no longer be entitled to free transport if the proposal went ahead. The Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager advised Members that this had not been considered at this stage, but a Transport Policy was in place which would be applied appropriately after a decision had been reached on the proposal.

Following consideration of the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the information contained in the report and the attached consultation pack. Members offered their views as part of the consultation process for the proposal which will be noted as part of the minutes of the meeting and included in the Consultation Report which will be presented to Cabinet as part of the decision-making process.

6. PROGRESS IN WORKING WITH SCHOOLS TO EMBED APPROACHES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THAT IMPACT ON REDUCING EXCLUSIONS.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which provided an update for Members of the progress of the Local Authority education department support teams in working with schools to embed approaches to meet the needs of children and young people that impact on reducing exclusions. The report also aimed to provide an update on current exclusion rates.

A Member queried how pupils are selected for intervention purposes and whether the services will still be available to pupils when the project ends. Members were advised that schools select their own pupils as they are well known to them. The Member also queried whether the pupils were aware of these services. Members were advised that all the services would continue to be available to the pupils and would not be time limited. Members were also informed of recent work undertaken with the Youth Forum to design a survey regarding the well-being interventions that are available.

A Member sought clarification on how Caerphilly County Borough Council compares with other Local Authorities in Wales. Members were advised that currently the Council's data did not compare well from a national perspective, but officers assured the Committee that work to address exclusion issues was being undertaken. Members were also advised that Local Authorities host events to share 'good practice.' It was also noted that the level of exclusions since the Covid-19 pandemic was a national issue, and that associated challenges faced by children needed to be addressed by schools.

A Member queried whether exclusion of a pupil is carried out where bullying has occurred. Members were advised that where a 'fixed term' exclusion applies, restorative sessions could be undertaken with the pupils involved. Where a permanent exclusion occurs, the education psychology service can become involved and determine the best option for the pupil going forward. Discussion followed regarding bullying in schools and the support given to the children who are being bullied. Members were assured that the relevant support should be available to all pupils involved.

A Member queried the Welsh Government funding available for interventions for a 3-year period. Members were advised that in-house training has been given to schools to promote sustainability if the WG funding were to cease at the end of the 3-year period. The Education psychology service would continue to support schools where needed.

Following consideration of the information contained in the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee offered views and comments, and it was moved and seconded

that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED to:

Endorse the approach taken by the LA to embed approaches to meet the needs of children and young people that impact on reducing exclusions.

7. PUPIL ATTENDANCE.

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities) introduced the report which provided Members with an overview of the strategies currently being developed to improve pupil attendance, and advised Members that this is identified as a main priority for improvement in the 'Pursuing Excellence Together' education strategy.

A Member noted that attendance figures did not consider the reasons for absence, and that parents could receive a 'red' letter when their child has been genuinely ill, and the school has been notified. Members were advised that if a child is unwell, they should not be in school, however attendance in school is a priority and it was acknowledged that a child's attendance at school affects their opportunities in the future. Discussion followed regarding absence monitoring and the reasons being sought where 'patterns' of absence occur, i.e., a child may be absent on the same day each week/month. The Member sought clarification on the FPN (Fixed Penalty Notice) process and the level of attendance before this is used. Members were advised that this process is used as a 'last resort' and prior to this the school would have had ongoing discussions with parents to determine the reason for absence, and the most appropriate way forward to resolve any issues. In the event that a school wishes to use the FPN process, this has to be approved by the governing body of the school and can only be used if it is in the schools' attendance policy. Members were also advised that only 13 notices had been issued this academic year and contact between the parents and the CCBC Education Welfare Officers would remain ongoing throughout the process.

A Member sought clarification on the number of pupils going on family holidays during school term time and whether this had reduced. Members were advised that guidance from Welsh Government is that a pupil can take up to 10 days holiday in exceptional circumstances which would reduce their attendance level to around 90%. The decision is made by the headteacher of the individual school as they would consider the pupils' family circumstances.

A Member queried whether the FPN fines are all paid, and the action undertaken for any unpaid fines. Members were provided with information regarding Fixed Penalty Notices and Non-School Attendance Prosecutions. Members were advised that the prosecutions could result in an increased fine of up to £2,500 and the parent would then also have a criminal record. The Member also sought clarification on pupils who receive free school meals having the lowest attendance levels, and whether FPNs would be suitable, considering the financial circumstances of the family. Members were advised that the school would issue the FPN if they deemed this appropriate and any unpaid FPN would then be referred to the Education Welfare department, where ongoing contact would continue with the family, including meetings with the school to resolve any issues. Members were assured that the issue of a FPN would always be the 'last resort' when dealing with pupil attendance.

A Member queried how attendance is recorded by a school and, in particular whether this is monitored to confirm that the reason for absence is recorded correctly. Members were advised that the Education Welfare Service obtain data from school registers and undertake spot checks to ensure registers are accurate. Training is provided in workshops, for school clerks, family liaison officers, and headteachers so that the required information is recorded correctly.

A Member requested information on the attendance seminars attended by headteachers. Members were advised that this was a new initiative specifically for headteachers in addition to the workshops attended by other staff members. Members were informed that the first seminar had been held in the Spring following an Estyn report on attendance and best practice to get pupils back into school. The second seminar covered new guidance regarding reduced timetables and both seminars were attended by approximately 60 headteachers out of 86 schools.

A Member sought clarification on the high level of pupils with severe cases of anxiety and whether this was included in the attendance figures. Members were advised that the strategy followed regarding attendance includes contact with the family and whether there are any actions that could be taken to resolve any attendance issues. The Member queried whether schools recognise a pupil suffering with anxiety issues in a timely manner. Members were advised that schools are provided with a strategy toolkit in order to assess the child and to determine the school interventions that can be used to increase the level of school attendance for that child.

A Member queried whether available resources were affected by attendance and self-evaluation of schools, including the 'team around the school' process. Members were advised that the self-evaluation process included an Officer visit to schools, and discussions with the governing body to determine the situation at that particular school, which is then followed up with a report by the Officer to the school. Members were advised that it is proposed to cover all secondary schools by the end of this academic year.

A Member sought clarification on children 'missing in education' and whether this referred to children moving out of the area. Members were advised that following statutory guidance from Welsh Government this covers children who are not registered anywhere for education. This could be caused by movement between schools or outside of the Borough or UK, or homeschooling where the child has never been registered at a school. Members were also advised that Welsh Government is producing a database for information sharing purposes in order to locate these children if they are living within the County Borough.

A Member enquired whether Service children are 'tracked' as they can relocate frequently due to the nature of their family circumstances. Members were advised that these children are 'tracked' within schools as they are included in vulnerable groups. Members were also advised that all attendance data following the self-evaluation process is shared with schools. The Member also noted that Welsh Government funding is available to those schools who have service children registered. Members were advised that this information has been shared with schools, and that there is a designated officer within CCBC who is the lead link for service children.

Following consideration of the report, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the impact of strategies to improve pupil attendance and Members had the opportunity to ask questions, seek further clarification and offer views.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2024.

CHAIR



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16TH JULY 2024

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the Committee Meeting on Tuesday 4th June 2024. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period July 2024 until March 2025.
- 5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the

cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the council website. The Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 24th June 2024. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate

Services

Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer

Gareth Jenkins, Interim Director of Social Services

Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer

Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
Legal Services

Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny
Committee

Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services
Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work
Programme

Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme

Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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Forward Work Programme - Education and Social Services

Appendix 1

Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
16/07/24 17:30	Social Services - Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report	To ensure Scrutiny Committee is fully aware of the Council's arrangements for corporate safeguarding and is satisfied and assured that these arrangements are effective.	Jenkins, Gareth;	Cllr. Forehead, Elaine;
16/07/24 17:30	Amalgamation of Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	For Scrutiny Members to endorse a recommendation to consult on the proposal following the Statutory process as prescribed by the 'School Organisation Code 2018'.	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
16/07/24 17:30	Proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School	For Scrutiny Members to endorse a recommendation to consult on the proposal following the Statutory process as prescribed by the 'School Organisation Code 2018'.	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
16/07/24 17:30	Information Item - Complaints		Williams, Jo;	Cllr. Forehead, Elaine;
23/07/24 17:30	2024-25 Social Services Revenue Budget	To provide Members with details of the 2024/25 revenue budget settlement for Social Services.	Jones, Mike;	Cllr. Forehead, Elaine;
23/07/24 17:30	Social Services Grants 2024-25	To inform Members of grant funding available for social care in the 2024/25 financial year.	Jones, Mike;	Cllr. Forehead, Elaine;
23/07/24 17:30	Education Revenue Budget		Southcombe, Jane;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
23/07/24 17:30	Education Grants 2024-25		Southcombe, Jane;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
03/09/24 17:30	The proposal to move to coeducation for Lewis Girls and Lewis School Pengam	To obtain the views of Scrutiny on the consultation update report prior to Cabinet making their decision to proceed to Statutory Notice.	Edmunds, Richard 'Ed';	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
03/09/24 17:30	Federation of Cwmaber Infants and Junior Schools	For Scrutiny Members to provide their 'views', via vote, on the proposal to federate Cwmaber Infants and Junior Schools	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
03/09/24 17:30	Amalgamation of Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	For Scrutiny Members to provide their 'views', via vote, on the proposal to amalgamate Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
15/10/24 17:30	Proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School	For Scrutiny Members to provide their 'views', via vote, on the proposal to close Rhydri Primary School	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;

15/10/24 17:30	LGES Inspection Report		Cole, Keri;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
15/10/24 17:30	Annual Report for the Director of Social Services		Jenkins, Gareth;	Cllr. Forehead, Elaine;
26/11/24 17:30	Federation of Cwmaber Infants and Junior Schools	To obtain the views of Scrutiny on the consultation report prior to Cabinet making their decision to implement the Federation	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
26/11/24 17:30	Amalgamation of Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	To obtain the views of Scrutiny on the consultation update report prior to Cabinet making their decision to proceed to Statutory Notice	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
26/11/24 17:30	The proposal to move to coeducation for Lewis Girls and Lewis School Pengam	For Scrutiny Members to consider the Objection Report and endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to implement the proposal	Edmunds, Richard 'Ed';	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
26/11/24 17:30	Proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School	To obtain the views of Scrutiny on the consultation update report prior to Cabinet making their decision to proceed to Statutory Notice	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
28/01/25 17:30				
11/03/25 17:30	Amalgamation of Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	For Scrutiny Members to consider the Objection Report and endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to implement the proposal	West, Andrea	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
11/03/25 17:30	Proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School	For Scrutiny Members to consider the Objection Report and endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to implement the proposal	West, Andrea	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;

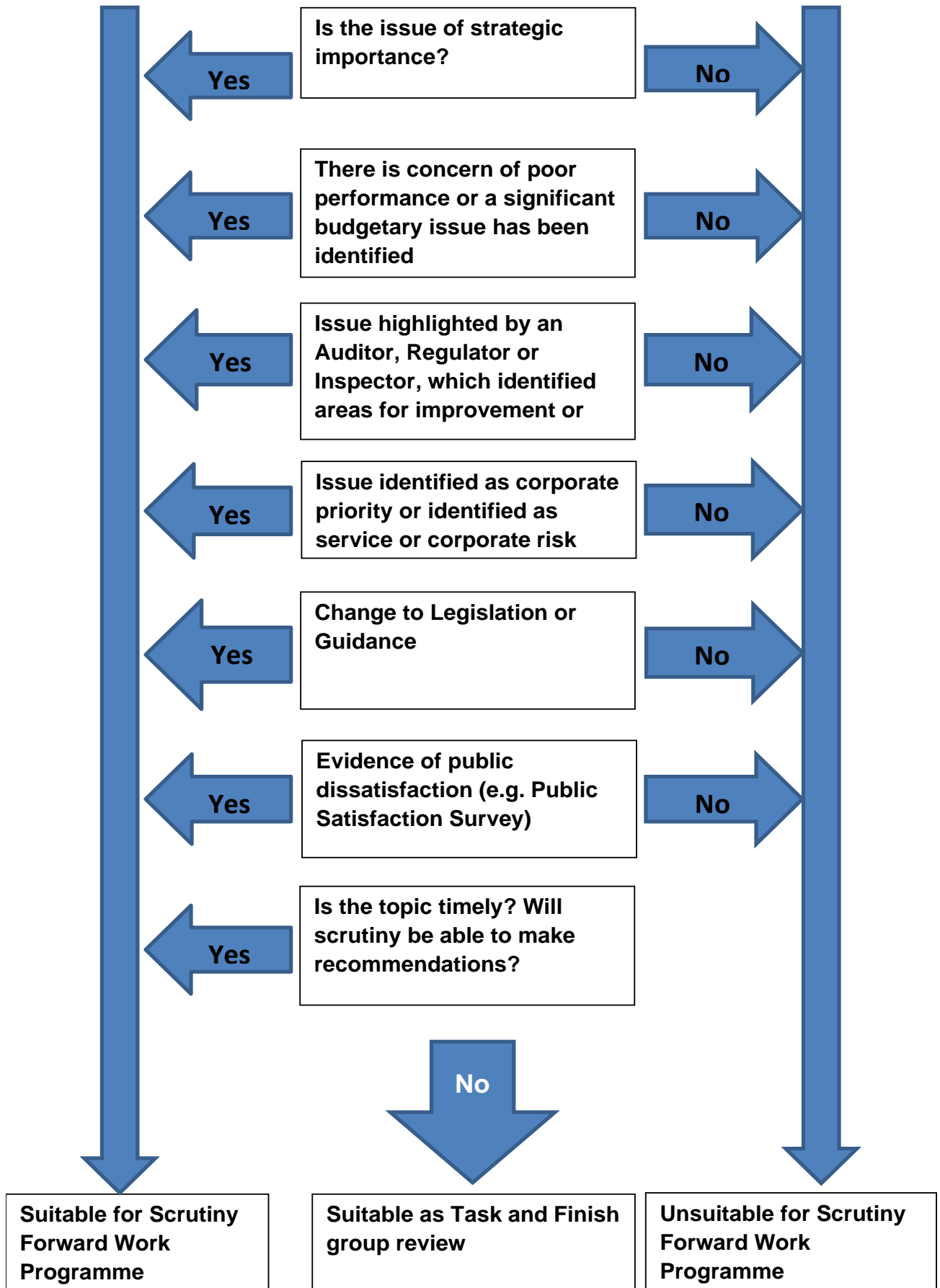
Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
Special Cabinet 17/07/24 13:00 p.m.	Leasing Scheme Wales	To seek Cabinet agreement to adopt the Welsh Government leasing scheme Wales to increase access to the private rented sector	Nick Taylor -Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook
Special Cabinet 17/07/24	Social Services - Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report	To present the 2023-24 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, Forward Work Programme and Safeguarding Key Activity Data for information to ensure Cabinet is fully aware of the Council's arrangements for corporate safeguarding and is satisfied that these arrangements are effective.	Gareth Jenkins/Nicola Barrett	Cllr. Elaine Forehead
Special Cabinet 17/07/24	Proposed increased charges for kennelling stray dogs	Following a recent procurement process to renew the contract for stray dog kennelling provision the costs to the Council have increased significantly. The report will seek approval to increase charges to owners reclaiming their dogs to ensure that the Council's costs are recovered.	Gary Mumford/Rob Hartshorn	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
Special Cabinet 17/07/24	Provisional Revenue Budget Outturn for 2023/24.	To provide Cabinet with details of the provisional revenue budget outturn for the 2023/24 financial year and to seek Cabinet endorsement of proposals for the use of General Fund balances prior to consideration by Council.	Steve Harris/Leanne Sykes	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
Special Cabinet 17/07/24	Exempt Item - Tourism Review: Memorandum of Understanding in respect of Cwmcarn Forest with Natural Resources Wales	This item is subject to a public interest test.	Allan Dallimore	Cllr. James Pritchard

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
24/07/24 13:00 p.m.	Proposed Waste Strategy and Consultation Feedback.	Consideration of public consultation feedback in regard Draft Waste Strategy and finalisation of new Waste Strategy to allow development of Full Business case for submission to Welsh Government.	Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones/ Hayley Lancaster	Cllr. Chris Morgan
24/07/24	Renewal of Winter Maintenance Fleet	To consider options to replace 5no frontline gritting vehicles	Chris Adams/Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Nigel George
24/07/24	Community Empowerment Fund - Treatment of underspends	Recommend to Cabinet that all underspends from previous years are to be made available only until the 30th September each year, before return to the General Fund	Kath Peters/ Vicki Doyle	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
24/07/24	Amalgamation of Hendre Infants and Junior Schools	To seek approval to proceed to Consultation	Sue Richards, Andrea West	Cllr. Carol Andrews
24/07/24	Proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School	To seek approval to proceed to consultation on the closure of Rhydri Primary School.	Sue Richards, Andrea West	Cllr. Carol Andrews
24/07/24	Team Caerphilly – Place Shaping	To update Members on the current Place Shaping Programme and seek Cabinet approval regarding the allocation of funding to individual projects.	Sue Richards/Andrea West/ Lisa Thomas	Cllr. Sean Morgan

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
24/07/24	Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013 - Proposed increase in re-rating fee.	To seek approval to increase the charge. The fee to apply for re-rating of a Food Hygiene Rating score has been reviewed by the Environmental Health Wales Food Safety Expert Panel. The panel has concluded that the fee should increase from £180 to £255 from 1st October 2025. It is proposed that the CCBC charge is increased in line with other Welsh Local Authorities.	Maria Pinch/Rob Hartshorn	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
18/09/24 13:00 p.m.	Annual Directorate Performance Assessments and Corporate Performance Assessments (DPA's/CPA's)	To update Cabinet on the year end DPA's and CPA's	Ros Roberts/Kath Peters/Sue Richards	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
18/09/24	Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board Next Steps - Stage 1 (The proposal to move to coeducation for Lewis Girls and Lewis School Pengam)	To seek Cabinet approval to publish the Statutory Notice	Sue Richards/Andrea West	Cllr. Carol Andrews
18/09/24	Gwent Serious Violence Strategy	To seek Members views and Cabinet approval for the Gwent Serious Violence Strategy	Natalie Kenny/Rob Hartshorn	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
16/10/24 13:00 p.m.	Asset Management Strategy	To seek Cabinet approval of the proposed Asset Management Strategy	Ben Winstanley	Cllr. Nigel George

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
16/10/24	Sport Caerphilly Disability Sports Camps	To seek approval to cease the existing model of delivery of Disability Sports Camps noting that there is a level of community provision in school holidays that is delivered from education settings that are tailored to meet the need of attendees.	Jared Lougher	Cllr Chris Morgan
16/10/24	Universal Credit - Housing	To provide Cabinet with an update as to the current situation with Universal Credit	Sandra Isaacs/Fiona Wilkins	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation



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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 16TH JULY 2024

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 - PROPOSAL FOR
THE CLOSURE OF RHYDRI PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to consultation in respect of the closure of Rhydri Primary School with effect from July 2025.
- 1.2 To ensure Members are apprised of the rationale for the proposal and relay the views of the Head Teacher and School Governing Body.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Due to the falling rolls at Rhydri Primary school which are projected to decrease further in future years, meetings were 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 held on 14th March 2024, agreed the school could no longer maintain a balanced budget, therefore a decision was made by the Governing Body of the School to pursue closure of Rhydri Primary School with effect from July 2025.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Prior to a report being presented to Cabinet, Scrutiny Members are asked to: -
 - a) Note the contents of this report
 - b) Endorse the recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to consultation on the proposal to close Rhydri Primary School with effect from July 2025.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To seek Scrutiny Member endorsement to Cabinet to proceed to consultation stage in respect of the proposal to close Rhydri Primary School with effect from July 2025
- 4.2 To assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 where this statutory legislation applies.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Rhydri Primary School

- 5.1.1 Rhydri Primary School provides education to pupils between the ages of 3 and 11 and has a published capacity figure of 91 places with a published admission number of 13.
- 5.1.2 At time of writing, the pupil roll is 45 pupils (Full Time Equivalent) with over 50% of these pupils residing outside of the catchment area of the school. Surplus places are currently at 50% 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.
- 5.1.3 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 2025.
- 5.1.4 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 Rhydri Primary School is facing a significant financial deficit with pupil numbers projected to further decrease moving forward.
- 5.1.5 Reasonable alternatives to closure, which included reduction in the number of classes and federation with Bedwas Junior School have already been implemented by the Head Teacher and Governing Body in partnership with the Local Authority but deemed not viable or sustainable moving forward.
- 5.1.6 In order to progress the proposal for the closure of Rhydri Primary School by July 2025, a consultation exercise is required in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.1.7 Subject to Cabinet approval, a prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the code will be written to. A consultation document will be published in both hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website based on the recommendation for closure. Reasonable access to information will be promoted from an Equalities perspective and other formats will be made available on request.

- 5.1.8 The consultation period will be for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for consideration and response and conscientious consideration will be given to any responses received.
- 5.1.9 The principles of engagement outlined in the Local Authority's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020 will also be acknowledged and the team will engage with any additional 'interested parties' as required, through appropriate channels to ensure the dissemination of information and provision of a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known is made available.
- 5.1.10 Following the consultation period, a consultation report along with any responses received will be collated and reported back to Members, where a decision will be made as to whether to proceed with the proposal as outlined and publish a Statutory Notice.

5.2 Conclusion

Members are asked to note the information provided and give endorsement to Cabinet to proceed to consultation stage in respect of the proposal to close Rhydri Primary School with effect from July 2025

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not required at this stage in the process. A full Integrated Impact Assessment will be completed at the relevant stage in the process.

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 Rhydri Primary 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

Author: Andrea West, Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning
Service Manager

Consultees: 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 Education Planning and Strategy; Place Shaping
Programme Director
Stephen 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

Background Papers:

None



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16TH JULY 2024

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORTS FOR
2023 - 2024**

REPORT BY: INTERIM STATUTORY DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the 2023 - 2024 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, the Forward Work Programme and Safeguarding Key Activity Data to Scrutiny Committee for information.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, attached at Appendix 1, offers valuable assurance in relation to the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements and provides updates on the progress made in implementing the Forward Work Programme, attached at Appendix 2. Key safeguarding activity data is also reported and is attached at Appendix 3 for information.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the content of the three reports and the progress made in implementing the Forward Work Programme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Scrutiny Committee Members are fully aware of the Council's arrangements for corporate safeguarding and are satisfied that these arrangements are effective.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This is the ninth Annual Report and it provides a strategic overview of the progress made in implementing the Forward Work Programme during 2023-2024.

- 5.2 The Annual Reports were presented to the Corporate Safeguarding Board on 3rd May 2024 where they were ratified and approval was given for them to progress to Social Services Scrutiny Committee today and directly into Cabinet tomorrow (17th July 2024). The reports are for information purposes and there are no decisions required.
- 5.3 The Corporate Safeguarding Board provides appropriate governance arrangements to oversee and support the implementation of the actions included in the Forward Work Programme.
- 5.4 The Annual Report reviews the actions that were rated as Red or Amber in the Forward Work Programme and provides updates in relation to the ongoing actions in place to address these ratings. In turn, the Annual Report identifies the priorities for the Board going forward into 2024-2025 and these will now be added to the Forward Work Programme.
- 5.5 The Key Safeguarding Activity Data Report covers general referral rates to Social Services including those progressing through adult and children's safeguarding processes, schools safeguarding audits and HR safer recruitment.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no funding implications arising from this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report is for information purposes and reflects the views of members of the Corporate Safeguarding Board.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

Author: Gareth Jenkins, Interim Director of Social Services
jenkig2@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Councillor Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Councillor Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services

Appendices: 1. Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report for Board dated 3rd May 2024
2. Corporate Safeguarding Board Forward Work Programme 2023-24
3. Corporate Safeguarding Key Activity Data for 2023-24

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CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD – 3RD MAY 2024

SUBJECT: ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2023/24

REPORT BY: SERVICE MANAGER FOR SAFEGUARDING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Safeguarding Board with an update on progress made during the 2023/24 financial year.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Board was established in February 2015 following a review by Audit Wales, of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures were in place and being adhered to. On 17th November 2015, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy was ratified at full Council. Since that time the Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated when required to ensure the policy continues to reflect relevant safeguarding matters. The Policy is available on the Council's Intranet pages.
- 2.2 Audit Wales subsequently undertook a follow-up review of arrangements in 2019 and identified a number of areas for improvement and consideration. A comprehensive Action Plan was developed in response which was monitored and signed off by the Board. Since that time a Forward Work Programme was developed and is reviewed via the Board regarding the progress of work under the auspice of corporate safeguarding.
- 2.3 This is the 9th Annual Report which provides an overview of the progression of the Forward Work Programme during 2023/2024 and safeguarding practices across the Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Board is requested to:
- note the content of the Annual Report including the recommendations.
 - note the progress made regarding the Forward Work Programme
 - approve the Report being presented to Corporate Management Team, Social Services Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee in due course.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the Board is fully aware of the Council's arrangements for corporate safeguarding and is satisfied that these arrangements are effective.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 During 2022/23, safeguarding children and adults has continued to be the main priority for Social Services. As reported last year, management and operational structures have remained consistent in both Children and Adult Services, this has ensured the continued consistency of safeguarding practices and the availability of support regarding safeguarding on a corporate level. From an Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) perspective, it was recognised that the complexity of work being referred for children and adults and the increased resource demands in the team, that the Team Manager capacity should be increased to provide dedicated roles for children and Adults. Therefore, as of the 15th of April 2024, there are 2 Team Managers in post within IAA.

- 5.2 The following recommendations were made in the 2023/24 Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report ratified at Board on the 22nd of May 2023:

- All new starters complete the Group A eLearning module available on the Caerphilly Page of the Learning@Wales digital platform
- HR induction process to be updated to reflect this for all new employees
- Update the Caerphilly Safeguarding Training Framework for all PC users to complete Group A as their Tier 1 basic awareness training. The Tier 1 safeguarding videos, SWAY presentation and written presentation for Basic awareness can still be available for non PC users as required
- Roll out the Corporate Safeguarding Credit Card leaflet for use by service areas – printing costs need to be approved.
- Safe Recruitment training plan to be developed so that this is made available to all those involved in the recruitment process
- Implement the Gwent regional self-assessment format for 2023/24 and begin discussions about comparison data being collected to report during the year
- On going liaison with the Workforce Development Team and links to Itrent to improve data collection for safeguarding training and consider job roles to specific levels of safeguarding training requirements
- Review the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework in line with the National Safeguarding Training Framework after November 2023
- Continue to invite speakers to the DSO Development Group to increase knowledge of DSO's on matters relating to safeguarding
- Review the current work and decision making relating to the LMS
- Incorporate the amber/red rated issues from the self-assessments into the forward work programme as agreed by the DSO Development Group.

Overall progress to date

5.4 The DSO Development Group has continued to meet via the virtual platform (MS Teams) where the Forward Work Programme and other matters relating to safeguarding have been discussed. This includes presentations to the DSO's regarding safeguarding matters or service provisions to ensure continued learning regarding safeguarding matters. The group has met virtually on the following dates:

- 10.07.2023
- 16.10.2023
- 22.1.22024
- 15.04.2024

A further meeting took place on the 10th of April 2024 which was an extraordinary meeting to consider the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF) and the impact of this on the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework. This is detailed in 5.9 below.

5.5 The Corporate Safeguarding Board last met on the 22nd of May 2023. A Board meeting was scheduled for the 27th of November 2023; however this was cancelled due to the work in the Forward Work Programme progressing and the availability of the Safeguarding Service Manager, who was at that time also supporting operational requirements in the Information, Advice and Assistance Team due to resourcing matters. Even though Board has only met once, corporate safeguarding data was presented to CMT and PDM in November 2023 by the Head of Children's Services and the Safeguarding Service Manager.

5.6 The recommendations for future work relating to corporate safeguarding has been captured in the Forward Work Programme. This was reviewed in preparation for Board and is attached as Appendix 1. The following points are noteworthy regarding the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating status:

- a. Recommendation 1: (RAG rated Amber) Relates to the delivery of safe recruitment training supported via People Services. Progress has been made in the training package has been developed and a delivery pilot has taken place. However, People Services are reviewing their processes, and any changes would need to be reflected in the training before this is rolled out. It is anticipated that the training will be available approximately summertime 2024. This will ensure the training accurately reflects updated HR process and practice.
- b. Recommendation 3: (RAG rated Amber). This relates to Corporate Safeguarding Training. Several actions are highlighted as Amber under this recommendation, which mainly relate to the implementation of the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF). There is much work to be completed regarding this in relation to linking job

roles to the relevant level of training under the NSTF which would then inform the updated Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework. This is detailed in 5.9 below.

- c. Recommendation 4: (RAG rated Amber). In terms of the matters raised by DSO's via the self-assessments for 2022/23, this has remained Amber due to the issues related to training which are yet to be resolved and are now linked to the implementation of the NSTF and will be taken forward into 2024/25.
- d. Recommendation 5: (RAG rated Amber). Internal Audit continue to work with Heads of Service regarding the outstanding actions. One main point regarding outstanding actions does relate to the role out of Safe Recruitment training which has already been outlined under point (a) above. Further reference to Internal Audit outstanding actions is referenced further in the report at point 5.12.
- e. Recommendation 7: (RAG rated Amber). The work relating to the LMS system has progressed and reference to the current position is highlighted further in the report at 5.10.
- f. Recommendation 9: (RAG rated Amber). The regional work regarding corporate safeguarding arrangements has made some progress over the past year. The regional self-assessment tool is now in use in 4 of the Gwent LA's. However, comparison data from the 5 LA's has not been available for reporting for 2023/24. This is due to the reporting structures in each of the Gwent LA's not being aligned. Initial discussions have been held regarding a regional response to the NSTF, however again the 5 LA's are at different stages regarding the implementation and this is being further considered by Gwent Heads of Service.

5.7 As noted in previous annual reports, the delivery of safeguarding training and the monitoring and tracking of this has remained an ongoing concern throughout 2023/24 and continues to be a risk for the Council. The Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework is now superseded by the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF). The NSTF sets out different levels of training (Group A to F) which is linked to the job role and involvement and decision-making responsibilities in the safeguarding process. Under each level is a set of training standards that must be linked to the training package to be delivered under each Group. Social Care Wales (SCW) developed an eLearning package that meets the requirements of the Group A standards outlined in the NSTF. This was made available via the learning@wales platform however issues arose with accessing the platform so this has not been fully embedded. Due to this the Work Force Development Team developed a PowerPoint Presentation based on the eLearning module. This

has now been rolled out to CMT and Elected Members and completion is tracked via the use of a questionnaire captured via google forms with a request to complete the training by the end of March. As of the 3.4.24, this figure stands at 31 – 3 members of CMT and 28 Elected Members. Elected Members and CMT members make up Group F of the NSTF due to their strategic positions in the Council. The NSTF states that Group F Council members can undertake Group A training. The PowerPoint presentation was made available to CMT and Elected Members

- 5.8 There is a need to make Group A training available to all employees in job roles who require this level of training. Work is in progress to make the Group A PowerPoint presentation available on the council intranet safeguarding page prior to the roll out of the LMS platform.
- 5.9 Under the current Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework will need to be updated to reflect the NSTF, however the first piece of work required is for DSO's to consider the level so training required against job roles within the service areas. This is a large piece of work for DSO's and has been supported via CMT. A deadline of the 10th of May has been provided to DSO's to complete this piece of work.
- 5.10 As noted in 5.6 (e) above, the work regarding the LMS has progressed to the point where Caerphilly now has access to a pilot Caerphilly site within Thingi. What is positive is that the Caerphilly Thingi site has been prepopulated with the Group A Safeguarding Package and the Group 1 VAWDASV eLearning package. To manage the risk to the Council with regards to safeguarding training, the focus of work for 2024/25 will be ensuring that the implementation of the NSTF moves forward.
- 5.11 The Self Assessments for 2023/2024 were completed using the updated regional tool which is now in use for 4 of the Gwent local authorities. The self-assessments have been reviewed by the Safeguarding Service Manager and the following themes have been identified to feed into the Forward Work Programme for 2024/25:
- Ensuring that policies are updated and reviewed on a regular basis and how this is communicated within service areas.
 - Delivery of safeguarding training and the tracking and monitoring of training to ensure compliance, this includes the availability of training for DSO's
 - Availability and delivery of safe recruitment training. This is also noted by Internal Audit as an outstanding action for services areas and is already noted within the Forward Action Programme
 - Ensuring that service areas that are accessed by citizen's are made aware of who the DSO is for that service area.

- Site security was raised by 2 service areas as requiring action and this related to ensuring visitor badges were available and used and also ensuring supervision is require of contractors when accessing sites.
- Maintaining confidentiality for information shared about a child or staff member.
- Consent regarding information and what can and cannot be shared.
- On line safety responsibilities
- Monitoring of complaints
- The commissioning of services and ensuring safeguards are in place for commissioned services.
- The need for safeguarding to be linked to service area strategic plans - this question was not answered in some self-assessments.

5.12 As noted in the Forward Work Programme, an Internal Audit regarding Corporate Safeguarding has completed across all Directorates. Internal Audit colleagues on the 4th of April 2024 advised that there are 12 outstanding recommendations. 7 of the 12 relate to the availability of safe recruitment training with 1 related to basic safeguarding training being available for volunteers, new starters and contractors. As already noted within the report, it is anticipated that safer recruitment training will be available later this year. The remaining 5 recommendations relate directly to the self assessment return from Land and Property Services which the Head of Service is fully aware of.

5.13 From an education perspective, safeguarding underpins all priorities within the LEA. There are several areas of focus for the work of education safeguarding including advice and support, training, safeguarding audits of education provisions and support for practitioner concerns. This activity ensures that, not only safeguarding compliance is met, but that there is a robust and effective culture of safeguarding which is centred on the welfare of learners, protecting them and creating conditions for them to thrive.

5.14 There is excellent partnership working across Education with Children's Services and other key stakeholders in safeguarding to ensure that there is a robust approach towards safeguarding arrangements. There is on-going representation from social services and education at multi agency' safeguarding forums including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee meeting (MARAC), Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE), Case Practice Review's (CPR's) and Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC). Education is also supportive of Operation Encompass to support children in school impacted by domestic abuse. There are positive links between Education Safeguarding, education provisions and the Information Advice and Assistance Team (IAA) to ensure the right service

is provided at the right time and safeguarding concerns re responded to effectively.

- 5.15 Caerphilly Children's Services hosts the Gwent Police West Safeguarding Hub in IAA at Foxes Lane. The Hub supports Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and fosters regional working arrangements for children who are at risk of exploitation or missing or require early intervention and prevention.
- 5.16 Appendix 2 highlights the corporate safeguarding key data set which provides relevant safeguarding data for 2023/24.

Planned Future Work

- 5.17 The following recommendations are made for further work to be completed under the auspice of Corporate Safeguarding for 2024/25:
- Continue to deliver existing training packages until the NSTF is fully implemented and packages of training to meet the required standards are available
 - Make the PowerPoint presentation available for all employees who require Group A basic safeguarding awareness training via the intranet
 - Update the HR Induction process to include the Group A PowerPoint presentation to be completed by all new employees as part of the induction process, moving to accessing the LMS system once available.
 - Implement the LMS product Thingi and ensure all required safeguarding training is linked to the LMS, including Group A Basic Safeguarding Awareness eLearning module.
 - Designated Safeguarding Officers to link job roles to the required level of training under the National Safeguarding Training Framework by the 10th of May
 - Once available via Gwent Safeguarding Board, deliver Train the Trainer sessions to the current in house training delivery group to deliver Group B training on a corporate basis.
 - Group A PowerPoint presentation to be translated and made available in Welsh, pending the eLearning module being available for use by employees in Thingi. A Welsh eLearning Model is available on the Social Care Wales Website
 - Monitor completion of the Internal Audit recommendations
 - Support the Head of Land and Property Services to meet the required recommendations identified by Internal Audit and review the Designated Safeguarding Officers role within the service to ensure compliance the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
 - Ensure that Safe Recruitment Training is finalised and rolled out
 - With the Head of Children's Services, consider resources available to roll out Group B and Group C training across the Council

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Safeguarding training has been provided within existing resources and this has continued to date.
- 8.2 The National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF) has now been launched and work is underway to align the levels of training within the framework against job roles so that the Council can be compliant with the framework and employees receive the right level of safeguarding training commensurate with their job role in the Council. As stated within the report, there are resource implications for training delivery and the commissioning of training to ensure compliance may need to be considered. The costing of this will be impacted by the numbers of employees that require training via Group B and Group C.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report is for information purposes and reflects the views of consultees.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

Author: Nicola Barrett, Service Manager – Children's Services

Consultees: Gareth Jenkins, Head of Children's Services
Cllr Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board
The Corporate Safeguarding Board
The DSO Development Group

Appendix 1: Forward Work Programme

Appendix 2: Key Data Set 2023/2024

**CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 – updated April 2024**

	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
1	Delivery of training on the safe recruitment policy to employees involved in recruitment processes	Training for all managers involved in the recruitment process to ensure Safe Recruitment is embedded in practice	HR/ DSO for HR	A pilot for the training took place which was positive, and feedback was fed into the training. However, update from Carole Brimble is that HR processes are being updated and this needs to be fed into the training and some actions are outstanding. It is hoped this will be finalised by the end of April and the training can be then rolled out around June 2024.	AMBER
2	Ensuring corporate safeguarding and the duty to report is considered in all Job Descriptions	HR to ensure that this is included in any reviews, updates, or development of new Job Descriptions	HR/DSO in HR	<p>This is already included in many Job Descriptions and will be included in the development of all new JD's and when existing JD's are updated and/or reviewed. This will also be reflected in the Safe Recruitment Training when rolled out.</p> <p>Due to this matter being raised in the self-assessments 2022/23, it has been confirmed the following is included in JD's-Work within the policies and procedures of the Council including recognising the duty to protect vulnerable</p>	GREEN-recommend action is removed

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				adults, children and young people.	
3	Corporate Safeguarding Training	Corporate Safeguarding Framework to be updated in line with revisions to available training	Nicola Barrett	<p>Framework has yet to be updated in line with the National Safeguarding Training Framework.</p> <p>Further, there have been on going issues with the Learning@Wales Platform, those employees asked to undertake the eLearning training have had difficulties in accessing the platform. Therefore, the use of the Group A basic safeguarding awareness eLearning Module has not progressed and the framework has not been updated due to this.</p> <p>The Workforce Development Team have developed a PowerPoint presentation based on the eLearning Group A module which has a questionnaire at the end linked to google forms. When this is completed, google forms can track who has completed the training. This is yet to be rolled out</p>	Amber

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				and made available to all employees who require basic safeguarding awareness training. The eLearning will sit in the LMS when available, however this also needs to be available on the Intranet prior to the LMS being implemented. Discussions have been held with Carole Brimble regarding this and a meeting is planned with the workforce development team.	
		DSO's to complete safeguarding training data collection feedback sheets on an annual basis to inform Annual Report	DSO's	Deadline was the 29.2.2024, the date is a reflection of the need to complete the annual report in time for CMT, Scrutiny and Cabinet.	Green
		eLearning for Group A of the National Safeguarding Training Framework to be made available on the Learning@Wales Website for Caerphilly employees, to be accessed by all as part of the induction process and to be updated to the Corporate	Nicola Barrett/Neil Cooksley	Group A is available on the Caerphilly page of the Learning@Wales platform, however, there have been access issues which were identified when elected members were asked to do the training, therefore this hasn't been updated for all staff requiring Tier 1 training or in the induction	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
		Safeguarding Training Framework for all employees who required Tier 1 training		<p>process until access to the resource is resolved.</p> <p>As noted above there were on going issues with accessing the eLearning module so a PowerPoint presentation has been developed based on the Group A eLearning Module, this now needs to be made available to all employees who require Group A training.</p>	
		CMT, Elected Members, management network to complete the Group A eLearning	Nicola Barrett/Gareth Jenkins	CMT, Elected Members and management network were asked to complete the Group A eLearning Module on the Learning@wales website, however due to difficulties with accessing this platform, a PowerPoint presentation was developed with a questionnaire at the end linked to google forms to track completion of the training. First off, CMT and Elected members have been asked to complete the training by end of March. Updated data on completion has been requested from the workforce development team. 31 members of CMT/Elected	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>members had completed the training via the learning@wales platform.</p> <p>This will subsequently be rolled out to management network via the LMS when available or via the safeguarding tab on the intranet.</p>	
		Tier 1 English and Welsh training video's to be available to be accessed by Caerphilly employees only on the learning@wales website	Nicola Barrett/Neil Cooksley	<p>There continued to be issues relating to the learning@wales platform, therefore this has not progressed. However, the video's are accessible via the Intranet. It is proposed that this action is completed as the new Group A training will be made available via the PowerPoint presentation via the LMS or on the Intranet. The presentation will need to be made available in Welsh.</p>	AMBER – recommend action is removed.
		Monitoring of training delivery via all Tiers under the framework and any issues raised at DSO development group.	DSO's	Further dates for 2024 are to be delivered by Mike Portlock and Deb Lewis	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>Service areas are also responsible for delivery of training via the group of facilitators in their service areas.</p> <p>Training delivery now has to be considered under the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF) which had a soft launch in November 2023, the monitoring of this will need to be considered going forward as DSO's will need to consider job roles against the required level of training under the NSTF. A meeting is being held on the 10th of April to begin this piece of work with DSO's.</p>	
		WG implementation of a National Safeguarding Training Framework	Corporate Safeguarding Board/ Nicola Barrett/DSO's	<p>As above, the framework was launched in November 2023.</p> <p>Group A eLearning module has been converted to a PowerPoint presentation with a questionnaire linked to google forms to collate data on completion. This needs to be rolled out fully to all employees</p>	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>who required Group A training under the NSTF.</p> <p>A meeting is being held on the 10th of April with DSO's in order for them to map out job roles related to the level of training within the NSTF in their service areas.</p> <p>It is suggested that for those employees who require Group B training, that the existing pool of facilitators for Tier 2 training, receive train the trainer to deliver the Group B package of training. It is anticipated that the Group B package currently being developed by Gwent Safeguarding Board can be used on a corporate basis. This package will hopefully be available summertime 2024 after it is piloted via Gwent Safeguarding Board. Those staff who require Group B training will require 6 hours of safeguarding training for understanding safeguarding children and adults.</p>	

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>Both Group A and B will require refresher training every 3 years.</p> <p>Employees who require Group C training are those involved in and offering supervision regarding safeguarding processes and practice. This in the main relates to Social Services employees, however all DSO's will also require this level of training. Gwent Safeguarding Board is developing Adult Safeguarding and Children's Safeguarding training packages under Group C and these can be made available on a Corporate basis. However, a significant consideration is the delivery and tracking of this training going forward. Currently the Adult Safeguarding Team have been supporting delivery of Adult safeguarding training equivalent to Group C and this could continue. From a Children's Services perspective, there is currently no one available to deliver Group C training due to the lack of</p>	

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>availability of the child protection coordinator and Safeguarding Service Manager. Decisions are also required as to whether some staff in service areas who require Group C Training need to undertake this for children and for adults due to their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Groups D and E relates to Social Services Team Managers, Service Managers, Heads of Service and Directors for Social Services and this is linked to continuous professional development.</p> <p>Group F is for strategic leaders such as the CEO and Elected Members who require a basic understanding of safeguarding and can complete Group A training.</p> <p>Implementation of the above is in its infancy, however the delivery of training under Group B and Group C needs consideration. Some discussions have been taking</p>	

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				place on a regional level as requested by Directors of Social Services, however it has become apparent that progress is at different stages in some of the Gwent LA's. This is being further considered via Heads of Service.	
4	Self-Assessment Tool	DSO's to review action plan for service area on a quarterly basis within service area	DSO's / Nicola Barrett	<p>The below issues were identified by DSO's as requiring attention via the self assessment process for 2022/23-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all DSO's are fully aware of the Corporate Safeguarding Training requirements for the role of the DSO, this is an identified need where there is a change of DSO or cover arrangements within a service area. • Reinforcement of the Procurement Safeguarding Protocol for all newly commissioned providers, again an identified need for 	Amber

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>new DSO's or those undertaking cover arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and tracking of employees' completion of safeguarding training has continued to be Amber rated for several service areas, along with resource availability to provide Tier 2 safeguarding training in specific service areas • Reinforcing the need for 3 year refresher training was highlighted by 1 service area and Rag rated RED. • Implementation of the National Safeguarding Training framework and the need to update the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework so this is in line with the national framework 	

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the corporate safeguarding responsibility is included in all Job Descriptions was also highlighted in some self-assessments, however this matter is being managed by HR when JD's are being reviewed and updated and has been discussed in the DSO Development Group- See above update regarding this matter • Safe Recruitment training continues to be highlighted as an Amber issue, however there is a plan via HR to roll out relevant training. See above update regarding this matter • Implementation of Agile Working policy has also highlighted as an area for further consideration related 	

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<p>to access to buildings – Needs to be considered within each service area</p> <p>The above matters have been discussed in DSO development Group in January. The issues related to training are on going due to the implementation of the NSTF and the tracking of training and refresher requirements continue to be impacted due to the wait for the LMS system to become available</p>	
		DSO's to update self-Assessment on an Annual Basis to feed into the Corporate Safeguarding Board Annual Report	DSO's	<p>Deadline was the 29.2.2024, this date is a reflection of the need to complete the annual report in time for CMT, Scrutiny and Cabinet.</p> <p>Self assessments have been received from service areas to inform the forward work programme for 2024/25</p>	Green
		DSO's to raise any issues in the quarterly DSO Development Meetings	DSO's	This matter is ongoing. No specific issues being raised currently; however, the completion of the	Green On going

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				updated self-assessments will raise any issues that need further consideration.	
		New Regional Self-assessment tool to be implement	Nicola Barrett	The agreed regional self-assessment tool has been issued to DSO's for completion for 2023/24	Green-suggested removal from plan
5	Corporate Safeguarding Internal Audit	Findings of internal audit to be feedback to Corporate Safeguarding Board and actions considered by all DSO's.	Internal Audit / Nicola Barrett / DSO's and service areas	Internal audit continue to work with Heads of Services regarding outstanding actions identified within the Internal Audit. Awaiting updated from Internal Audit, requested on the 3.4.24 as to updates on the progression of required actions	AMBER
6	Media Campaign	Media campaign now developed by communication team, requires roll out.	Comms Team Nick Rutter/ Nicola Barrett/DSO's	During safeguarding week in November 2023, there was communication to all employees regarding corporate safeguarding, toilet doors posters were used and communication via social media.	Green – on going to be considered again in 2024.
		Development of a safeguarding credit card sized	Leisure Services/Nicola Barrett/DSO's	The credit card leaflet is now available and all DSO's have been	Green – recommend removal

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
		leaflet which can be made available to employees		<p>asked to collect copies for staff in their service areas.</p> <p>Safeguarding Service Manager, Adult Safeguarding Team Manager, Child Protection Coordinator and Cabinet Member for Social Services will be handing out the leaflet in the Hive in Ty Penalta between 12.30pm and 2 pm on the 17th of April 2024.</p> <p>A version of the leaflet is also available on the Intranet under the safeguarding tab.</p>	from the plan
7	LMS	Monitor progress of the WFD and digital services project linked with WG regarding LMS System and its implementation in order for safeguarding training to be supported via the LMS when available	Digital Services/WFD/ Nicola Barrett	<p>In terms of the LMS, access is now available to the Thingi Caerphilly platform. The pre-populated content includes the eLearning Wales Safeguarding Group A module and VAWDASV module eLearning Group 1 module. The next steps, prior to any pilot test, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> designing local essential content e.g. Welcome to Caerphilly 	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning interaction with iTrent for the people structure, and • single sign-on and interaction with MS Teams. • Need to pre load prior learning <p>There is no timeframe for the next stages currently, updates are required from people services.</p>	
8	Increase knowledge of DSO's in respect of Safeguarding	Invite speakers on safeguarding topic's to DSO Development Group	Nicola Barrett	<p>Presentation provided by Caerphilly Cares on the 10.7.23. Presentation from Supporting People on the 16.10.23. Police Firearms presentation took place on the 22.1.24. Presentations from Recovery which is a gambling service is scheduled for the 15th of April 2024 and a presentation on the Serious Violence Duty is scheduled for the July 2024 meeting.</p>	GREEN Ongoing
9	Corporate Safeguarding on a regional basis	Links with Corporate Safeguarding Leads in Gwent Region to look at consistency of practice.	Nicola Barrett/Corporate Safeguarding	This is work is ongoing and will now focus on the National Safeguarding Training Standards.	AMBER

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	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
			regional counterparts		
		Consider regional self-assessment tool	Nicola Barrett	Regional Self-Assessment tool has now been agreed to be used for 2023/2024	GREEN – recommend removal from the plan
		Consider aligning corporate safeguarding training for consistency	Nicola Barrett	This work will be linked to the National Safeguarding Training Framework. A meeting has been held on a regional basis and is being considered further by HoS as it is apparent the Gwent LA's are at different stages with the implementation.	AMBER
		Develop comparison key data set.	Nicola Barrett	Agreement was reached regarding a data set to compare data across Gwent. However, this hasn't progressed for 2023/24, this is not from a Caerphilly perspective, it is related to reporting structures and timings across the 5 LA's. This is impacting the availability of comparison data in time for reporting in Caerphilly.	AMBER
10	Role of the DSO	The responsibilities of the DSO to be recognised as being an additional task for the	Board/ HoS/ DSO's	DSO's have not raised any ongoing issues in relation to this	GREEN

APPENDIX 2

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 – updated April 2024

	Recommendation	Action	Who	Progress / Completion	RAG Status
		employee on top of the requirements of the employee's substantive role		matter at the DSO Development Groups	
11	Reporting of Safeguarding Data to CMT	6 monthly Reports regarding key safeguarding data to PDM/CMT	HoS/ Safeguarding Lead	The Annual Report, to be presented to CMT on 23 rd May 2024 and PDM on the 19 th of June 2024.	GREEN- On going

Total Number of referrals received by IAA, Children's & Adults Services, Families First and Space Wellbeing:

Total number of contacts received by the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Team	19102
The number for Adult Services	6600
The number for Children's Services	9617
The number for Families First / SPACE Wellbeing:	Families First = 1085 SPACE = 1800

Adult Services	
Referral Source for Duty to Report (DTR's)	Number of referrals: 1644
Self	8
Relative	37
Friend or neighbour	9
Early Intervention /Prevention Service (Step-up)	0
Health	285
Education	6
Housing	38
Police	104
Probation	9
Third Sector Organisation	134
Local Authority	16
Independent Hospital	63
Ambulance Service	60
Care Regulator	18
Provider	611
Advocate	2
Other	18
Internal (Social Worker, other team)	226
Total	1,644

All other Adult Services Referrals	4956
Number of DTR's progressed to enquiries stage?	1154
Of which, the number resulting in actions required	296

Children's Services	
Percentage of contacts where the decision making is within 24 hours (Children's Services NPI)?	9463 of 9557 = 99%
Referral Source	
Self	196
Relative	731
Friend or neighbour	88
Early intervention prevention service (Step-up)	56
Health	1,113
Education	1,361
Housing	132
Police	4,184
Probation	319

Children's Services	
Third Sector Organisation	138
Local Authority	230
Independent Hospital	17
Ambulance Service	12
Provider	9
Advocate	3
Other	590
Internal (Social Worker, Other Team)	378
Total	9,557

Number of DTR's progressing to Strategy Meeting/Discussion?	701 relating to 1090 children
Number progressing to Section 47 investigation?	512 related to 786 children
Number of children progressing to Exploitation Strategy Meetings?	22 of 27 requests progressed to a meeting
Number of Section 5 (practitioner concern) Strategy Meetings?	147 of which relate to- Adults – 65 Childrens 82
Of which the number relating to CCBC employees/ volunteers?	27 of which related to Adults 8 Children 19

Breakdown of professional background - as some practitioners, have more than one role

Practitioner Background	Children's Services	Adult Services	
Education	38		38
Families First	1		1
Foster Carer	24		24
Health	8	13	21
Health- Vol	1		1
Hospitality		2	2
Police	2	1	3
Social Services/Internal	2	8	10
Sports/Coach	2		2

Practitioner Background	Children’s Services	Adult Services	
Provider/Support Worker	1	38	39
Transport	2	3	5
Not recorded	1		1
TOTAL	65	82	147

Number of children on the Child Protection Register?	As at the 31.3.24 138 (+ 2 unborn)
Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held in timescale?	96.36%
Percentage of Review Child Protection Conferences held in timescale?	98.65%
Education	
Number of school audits undertaken in the academic year?	4 (42 were undertaken in the previous school year)
Number of school audits undertaken where action was required as a result of the audit?	<p>2 schools rated ‘GREEN’.</p> <p>2 Schools rated ‘AMBER’- following issues noted- (these were EOTAS provisions, 1 of which is in temporary accommodation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fob access to secure the kitchen area to prevent pupils entering - Head and Deputy to attend DSP training. - OE alerts to be securely stored with limited access. - Ensure all staff are clear how to report to IAA (inc. agency staff). - Keep a record of staff DSB checks
Human Resources	
The percentage of new employees ‘safely recruited’	100%

The number of employees who have been subject to RA1, RA2 and RA3	10
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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 16TH JULY 2024

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 - PROPOSAL FOR
THE AMALGAMATION OF HENDRE JUNIOR SCHOOL AND
HENDRE INFANTS SCHOOL**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Scrutiny endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, in respect of the amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The report provides a background to the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018. It outlines processes and practical aspects of amalgamation.

2.2 The report identifies the Schools and Governing Bodies who wish to proceed to formal consultation in partnership with the Local Authority (LA).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Prior to a report being presented to Cabinet, Scrutiny Members are asked to: -

- a) Note the contents of this report
- b) Endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, in respect of the amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To seek Scrutiny Member endorsement to Cabinet to proceed to formal consultation on the proposal to amalgamate the following schools:

- Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School

- 4.2 To work in partnership and support the schools identified in 4.1 in undertaking a consultation exercise on the proposal to amalgamate which if approved will formalise a successful collaboration that has been in place for a number of years.
- 4.3 To assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 where this statutory legislation applies.

5. THE REPORT

Background

- 5.1 The term "Amalgamation" describes a formal and legal agreement by which two or more existing schools become one school, for example where an Infant and Junior school become a Primary.
- 5.2 The amalgamation of schools is a more formal way of extending existing collaboration and promoting closer working relationships.
- 5.3 The advantages of amalgamation include the added benefits of a single school entity with one consistent vision and ethos, continuity, progression of learning through a seamless transition, shared teaching expertise and more effective deployment of resources.
- 5.4 To be successful, amalgamation needs to be based on a commitment to work as a single school entity with one budget, one development plan and one governance structure and a willingness to do things differently for the added benefit of all pupils, their well-being and achievements.
- 5.5 **Proposal – Amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School**
- 5.5.1 The proposal relates to the amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School to create a single Primary School provision for pupils aged 3 to 11.
- 5.5.2 Both schools have been informally 'collaborating' since September 2022 and share the same Head Teacher with both Governing Bodies working together for the best interests of the school, pupils and wider community.
- 5.5.3 Subject to approval, there would be one governing body established, the composition of which should have a minimum of 15 Governors and a maximum of 27 with a proposed composition made up as follows:
- (a) at least one but no more than two parent governors elected or appointed to represent the interests of parents of registered pupils at that school;
 - (b) at least one but no more than two teacher governors;
 - (c) at least one but no more than two staff governors;
 - (d) at least two but no more than four LA governors;
 - (e) at least two but no more than four community governors;
 - (f) the Head Teacher

- 5.5.4 It is proposed that the current school sites would remain in operation but function as a single Primary school campus. Both schools are located in the same locale within the Caerphilly basin (130 yards on opposite sides of St Cenydd Road) and there are no proposed changes to the existing shared catchment arrangements.
- 5.5.5 The Governing body of both schools that have been working in collaboration for a number of years, have agreed to proceed to formal consultation for amalgamation status in partnership with the Local Authority, subject to Cabinet approval.
- 5.5.6 In order to progress the proposal, a consultation exercise is required in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.5.7 Subject to Cabinet approval, a prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the code will be written to. A consultation document will be published in both hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website based on the recommendation for amalgamation. Reasonable access to information will be promoted from an Equalities perspective and other formats will be made available on request.
- 5.5.8 The consultation period will be for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for consideration and response and conscientious consideration will be given to any responses received.
- 5.5.9 The principles of engagement outlined in the Local Authority's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020 will also be acknowledged and the team will engage with any additional 'interested parties' as required, through appropriate channels to ensure the dissemination of information and provision of a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known is made available.
- 5.5.10 Following the consultation period, a consultation report along with any responses received will be collated and reported back to Members, where a decision will be made as to whether to proceed with the proposal as outlined and publish a Statutory Notice.

5.6 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, in respect of the amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Not required at this stage in the process. A full Integrated Impact Assessment will be completed at the relevant stage in the process.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The amalgamation 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 combined provision.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the consultation process.

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 2013 (Welsh Government)
School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Andrea West, Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning
Service Manager

Consultees: 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 Education Planning and Strategy / Place Shaping
Programme Director
Stephen 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

Background Papers:

None