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**Date: 14th March 2024**

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational Special meeting of the **Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 20th March, 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](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

**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 receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 3 | Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board - Further Recommendations to Cabinet. | 1 - 8  |
| 4 | Youth Forum Priorities.  | 9 - 12 |

**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) Tracy Millington (Parent Governor Representative) and Mr G. James (Parent Governor Representative)

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

**Caerphilly Governors Association** (without voting rights)  
Mr D Davies

**Users and Carers - Vacant**

And Appropriate Officers

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: POST 16, SINGLE SEX AND SURPLUS PLACES BOARD –  
FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

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

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on two linked proposals to Cabinet that have been made by the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board.
- 1.2 The proposals seek Cabinet agreement to undertake a formal consultation on the provision of Single Sex Education at Lewis School Pengam and Lewis Girls School as well as a proposal to address some long-standing issues of Surplus Places across Secondary School provision in the Upper Rhymney Valley area.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Post 16, Single Sex Surplus Places Board was set up in 2019 to develop recommendations for change that would be considered by Caerphilly's Cabinet.
- 2.2 The Board is made up of a wide range of stakeholders including Head Teachers, College Representatives, Scrutiny Members, Governor Representatives, TU Representatives, EAS representatives and Local Education Authority Officers.
- 2.3 The Board's initial work focused on the development of a set of proposals for a sustainable approach to 6<sup>th</sup> form provision across the whole of the County Borough.
- 2.4 The Upper Rhymney Valley (URV) Sixth Form Partnership and the Caerphilly Sixth Form Partnership were subsequently formed with schools working together to ensure as broad a curriculum could be offered to learners as sustainably as possible.
- 2.5 The Board has recently been reconvened to conclude its work by developing recommendations to Cabinet in respect of single sex provision across the Lewis Schools and reducing the level of surplus places, specifically across Secondary Schools within the Upper Rhymney Valley.

- 2.6 The Board met on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Members considered a presentation that built on the previously established informal consensus on Single Sex provision and addressing surplus places, as well as providing additional information that the Local Authority had been tasked with establishing to aid decision-making.
- 2.7 At its meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> February, the Board voted unanimously in support of the proposals set out in 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) of this report and asked that they be progressed through Scrutiny and onwards to Cabinet in accordance with the identified timeline.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1.1 That the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee:
- 1) Note the unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board (the Board) on the proposals set out in within 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) of this report
  - 2) Comment on and scrutinise the content of this report and the stated proposals ahead of their consideration at Cabinet

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To establish the views of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the proposals set out in 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) ahead of their onward consideration by Cabinet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.

### **5. THE REPORT**

#### **Single Sex Education**

- 5.1 Through previous discussions in 2021, the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board had reached an informal consensus that co-education would be the way forward in the Upper Rhymney Valley (URV).
- 5.2 Having gained Board consensus at that time, Local Education Authority (LEA) officers engaged directly with the four URV Secondary Head Teachers as educational experts to consider this position further.
- 5.3 The URV Head Teachers agreed the following wording to reflect their position on Single Sex provision as well as the potential benefit of moving toward co-education across the Lewis Schools:
- “We explore ways in which families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11”.
- 5.4 At the Board Meeting of the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Board Members received a presentation from the Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services.

5.5 The presentation:

- confirmed the previous position of the Board and the Upper Rhymney Valley Secondary Head Teachers on a move away from single sex provision;
- recognised the fact that the schools share the same catchment areas;
- highlighted the significant levels of surplus places at both Lewis Schools (circa 40% at each);
- highlighted the fact that these were the last two local authority-maintained schools providing single sex education in Wales

5.6 Having received the presentation, the Board were keen to afford time to both new and returning members to reflect on the information that had been provided and to raise any further questions prior to considering the proposal more formally. On this basis, the Board agreed to reconvene prior to the February half term to determine the single sex proposal.

5.7 This subsequent meeting took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. At this meeting the Board once again received the presentation from the Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services. Having done so and following a number of questions being dealt with by Officers, the Board resolved unanimously to support the following linked proposal, and for its onward consideration at Scrutiny and Cabinet:

The Council should formally consult stakeholders with a view to:

- (1) moving from Single Sex provision to co-education in the Upper Rhymney Valley
- (2) locating Lewis catchment pupils at the Lewis School Pengam site, while retaining the Lewis Girls School site 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)

5.8 Subject to Cabinet approval, this proposal will proceed to consultation in late early June 2024 and will follow the processes as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018.

#### **Surplus Places (Upper Rhymney Valley)**

5.9 The Board had previously found informal consensus that on the basis of surplus places and demographics, the Council should consider moving from four secondary schools to three in the Upper Rhymney Valley (URV). However, at that stage, the Board did not make any suggestions in terms of that configuration.

5.10 Council officers once again engaged directly with the four URV Head Teachers as educational experts to consider this position further.

5.11 The Head Teachers agreed the following wording in respect of the surplus places position in the Upper Rhymney Valley:

“When considering current and projected demographics and the variable quality of the secondary school buildings it would seem appropriate to reduce the number of secondary schools in the URV from four to three and consider the possibility of a new build in this revised configuration.”

5.12 Recognising the building condition at Lewis School Pengam combined with the building condition and recent investment at Idris Davies 3-18 School, the URV Heads asked that the Council:

“Commission survey works to identify the possibilities / constraints of a new build school being at Lewis Girls or Heolddu.”

5.13 During the intervening period, the Council has commissioned a range of external consultants to undertake detailed survey and initial design works at both the Lewis Girls School and Heolddu Comprehensive School both sites. The survey works undertaken by external consultants were as follows:

- BB98 building size & site constraints
- Intrusive Site Investigation Works
- Ecological Surveys
- Tree Surveys
- GPR Survey
- Topographical Survey

5.14 In addition to the physical survey works, work was also undertaken to gain further understanding into the following matters at each of the two potential sites:

- Historic ground investigation information
- Coal mining legacy information and existing Coal Mining Risk Assessments
- Space requirements for School build, site levels and topography
- Ancillary considerations such as existing Leisure and Sports facilities
- Number of playing fields required to serve increased pupil numbers
- Additional parking requirements for the extra teachers, etc.
- Impact of any development on highway safety and site access issues
- Potential impact of any Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Impact of any Flood Zones on build

#### 5.15 Survey Summary Findings – Lewis Girls School

5.15.1 The land available at the Lewis Girls site is at least 20% too small to accommodate a new co-ed school with this percentage likely to increase further as flood data was further analysed.

5.15.2 Due to the existing constraints of the site, the sports pitches for the new school would need to be located off site (with the nearest potential location at Ystrad Mynach park).

5.15.3 There are a number of service constraints and Flood zones that impact the sites' use with regard Welsh Governments Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15.

5.15.4 Concerns over 'highway' access were also identified given the existing challenges at the site and the adverse impact that a significant increase in pupil numbers would bring.

5.15.5 An additional challenge would exist were a new school to be built at the Lewis Girls site, in that pupils would need to be accommodated elsewhere while the school was being built and then moved back once the new school was open.

## 5.16 Survey Summary Outcomes – Heolddu

5.16.1 The Heolddu site would be sufficient to accommodate a new school with improved external leisure facilities including a new 3G pitch.

5.16.2 The survey works that had been undertaken had not identified any challenges in respect of a build at the proposed location.

5.16.3 As the new school would potentially be built across the road from the current location, pupils would be able to continue to attend the existing Heolddu Comprehensive building for the duration of the build and would not need to be transferred elsewhere.

5.17 Having received the presentation and the survey information set out above, the Board again recognised the importance of affording time to both new and returning members to reflect on the information provided and to raise any further questions prior to formal consideration of the surplus places proposal.

5.18 The surplus places proposal was then considered at the meeting of the Board of the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. At this meeting the Board once again received the presentation from the Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services. Having done so and following a number of questions being dealt with by Officers, the Board resolved unanimously to support the following linked proposal, and for its onward consideration at Scrutiny, Cabinet and Welsh Government:

The Council should formally consult stakeholders with a view to:

- (1) developing a new secondary school on the site adjacent to the existing Heolddu School and consider upgrading the existing Leisure Facilities to serve the school and the surrounding community

5.19 In order to progress this proposal, as well as seeking Cabinet approval to consult, additional reports to Cabinet will be required along with the approval of a Full Business Case by Welsh Government as well as any relevant planning and drainage approvals.

## 5.20 **Conclusion**

5.21 Having previously recommended to Cabinet some proposals on ensuring a sustainable future for Post 16 provision in Caerphilly, the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board has turned its attention to the remaining matters of Single Sex and Surplus Places.

5.22 Having reached an informal consensus on both issues previously, following some detailed survey works, the Board has now reached a position where it has formally and unanimously supported a number of proposals to Cabinet for consideration with the views of the Scrutiny Committee also being sought.

## 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 None.

## **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 None at this stage. The report seeks to establish the views of the Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet to move to formal consultation and it will not be until the consultation has concluded that a decision on next steps, and therefore costs, can be made.
- 8.2 There will be further reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet as next steps are determined and any further proposals are developed.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals that will be taken forward albeit the Trade Unions have been briefed and will continue to be briefed as the consultations progress.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The Head Teachers of Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam updated staff groups on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- 10.2 Technical briefings were then scheduled with the following stakeholders on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024:
- Cluster Head Teachers of Heolddu, Idris Davies, Lewis Girls and Lewis School Pengam
  - Chairs and Vice Chairs of the 4 URV schools
  - Heolddu Ward Members
  - Idris Davies Ward Members
  - Lewis Girls School Ward Members
  - Lewis School Pengam Ward Members
  - Opposition Group Leaders
  - JCC Members
  - Affected MSs
  - Affected MPs
- 10.3 This report has also been shared with the consultees set out below and the views of those consultees have been captured within the body of this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

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



Author: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Corporate Director Social Services  
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy and Place Shaping Programme Director  
Andrea West, Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager  
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN  
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager  
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement  
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services  
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: YOUTH FORUM PRIORITIES**

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

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report is to inform Members of the issues raised by Young People via the Youth Services Youth Forum. The report is seeking the views of members prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

### **2. SUMMARY**

2.1 Following the annual Youth Forum Conference in January 2024, Young People have identified current issues that are important to them and have voted on a Priority Issue for 2024.

2.2 The previously agreed process that follows the identification of issues has been as follows:

- Presentation of issues to Education SMT for information.
- Young People present issues to Education Scrutiny and Cabinet for information and support.
- Issues are presented directly by Young People.
- Young People form a Project Group that meets weekly to address the Youth Forum priority issue, working directly with Officers and Members as appropriate on a range of initiatives intended to have a positive impact on the issue. This work will continue until December 2024.
- Progress, outcomes, and impact, as a result of young people working to address the priority issue, is monitored through Education's termly monitoring of the Service Improvement Plan.
- The work of the project group draws to a close ahead of the next conference (January 2025), when the process restarts, and new priority issues are identified. Final impact assessments are completed, and young people receive feedback on progress made.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 Members are asked to:

- a) support the presentation of Youth Forum issues, by young people, to the Cabinet.
- b) consider how to support the Youth Forum in addressing their Priority Issue.
- c) to have due regard to issues raised within this report by Young People when making decisions which impact upon their lives.

#### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure members are informed of the priorities identified by young people, and that the voices of young people are considered as part of decision-making processes.

#### 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Youth Forum enables young people aged 11-25 to have a voice on issues that affect them. Each year, young people's ideas and issues are identified in a borough wide consultation, structured and organised around five themes: Prosperous Caerphilly; Safer Caerphilly; Learning Caerphilly; Healthier Caerphilly; and Greener Caerphilly.
- 5.2 At the Annual Youth Forum Conference Young People are provided with the opportunity to further explore the issues raised via the borough wide consultation and engage in a dialogue with peers. From exploring all themes within the context of young people's lives, young people identify and agree on a priority issue for each theme.
- 5.3 Following the Conference, an overall priority is voted for by young people representing the Youth Service, Schools, and Youth Support Services. The issues are listed below, with the percentage detailing the proportion of the vote through a borough wide ballot in which 2,428 young people participated. The issue with the most votes is the 'priority issue' and the one in which the youth forum will work on for 2024.
- 28% Learning Caerphilly - **Priority Issue**  
Drugs – We need more awareness around the dangers of drugs (e.g. Vapes laced with dangerous substances and Cannabis) also county lines in and out of the Borough.
  - 25% Prosperous Caerphilly  
Cost of Living – There is a need to raise awareness of advice and tips to help young people and families in the current cost of living crisis.
  - 23% Safer Caerphilly  
Personal safety – We need to feel safe in our communities on public transport and walking home at night to keep ourselves safe.
  - 14% Healthier Caerphilly  
Body image – We need to educate young people about positive body image and the reality vs social media influences.
  - 11% Greener Caerphilly  
Littering – We need more visible bins in our communities, and we need to educate people around littering and recycling and encourage people to be more environmentally aware
- 5.4 Following the ballot to identify the overall priority issue, the Youth Forum project group are in the process of consulting with young people via school councils and the youth service to further explore the issue and gain a more informed insight into why this is a matter of concern for young people. The consultation feedback will assist the project group in generating ideas on how to address the issue.
- 5.5 The Youth Forum will attend Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 to present the issues and give an outline of the youth forum's project group activity, including any plans to address

the priority issue during 2024.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 In considering the recommendations the following assumptions have been made:

- Enabling children and young people to have a voice in matters that affect them is a statutory duty and the Youth Forum and the processes that support it, provides the mechanism in which this statutory duty is fulfilled.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report provides information and asks for support; therefore, an integrated impact assessment has not been completed at this time.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no financial implications with respect to this report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications with respect to this report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 All responses from the consultations have been incorporated in the report. consultee

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 'Shared Purpose: Shared Future, Statutory Guidance on the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015', and in particular SPSF 3 – Annex B, which is issued in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and applies to local authorities in respect of local well-being plans and whenever they take decisions which might affect children and young people.

11.2 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, Section 12 requires local authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them.

**Author:** Lee Kabza, Youth Forum Coordinator

**Consultees:** Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Richard Edmunds Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services  
Education Senior Management team  
Cllr Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities,  
Cllr Teresa Parry, Chair of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee  
Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee

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