



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27TH FEBRUARY 2017

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A RHYMNEY
 3 – 18 SCHOOL**

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult Members on the above proposal.
- 1.2 To give Members the opportunity to comment on the proposals as part of the consultation process, prior to the move to Statutory Notice being considered by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 To update on the formal consultation process undertaken to date and provide details of responses received from relevant parties.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report contributes to the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016. In particular, as follows:
 - A healthier Wales, supporting learners can improve their well-being and add educational achievement;
 - A more equal Wales, a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background is; and
 - A Wales of cohesive communities (in the context of improving quality of life with attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities).

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 30th November 2016, agreed to proceed to a formal consultation process in relation to the above proposal. (Attached as Appendix 1).
- 4.2 A formal consultation process (accompanied by a consultation document) took place between 3th January 2017 to 16th February 2017. During this period a series of meetings were also convened which are outlined below:

16th January 2017 (Rhymney Comprehensive) : Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers, governing body and public/community meetings.

18th January 2017 (Pontllytyn Primary) : Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers and governing body meeting.

30th January 2017 (Abertyswg Primary) : Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers and governing body meeting.

4.3 A summary of the main issues from the consultative meetings are outlined below and the accompanying notes of the meeting are available on the members portal.

Rhymney Comprehensive School

4.3.1 Drop In Session – Pupils/Teachers

- Sharing of facilities across the age ranges
- Younger Pupils causing disruption in the Secondary School
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales
- Safe Routes/Access
- Distance of Pupils from Pontllytyn/Footbridge
- School Council/Start Times/Uniforms

4.3.2 Drop In Session – Parents

- Impact on Certain Year Groups
- Transition
- Sharing of Facilities/Teachers across age ranges
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales

4.3.3 Drop In Session – Governors

- Teaching across Age Ranges particularly Middle Phase
- Transition
- Access to School/Car Park
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales
- Leadership
- Make Up of Governing Body

Pontllytyn Primary School

4.3.4 Drop In Session – Pupils/Teachers

- Leadership/Management
- Job Security
- Timescales of Appointment of Staff
- Safe Routes
- Staffing Structures

4.3.5 Drop In Session – Parents

- Transition
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales

- Flying Start
- Location of School
- Cost

4.3.6 Drop In Session – Governors

- Transport
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales
- Teaching across Age Ranges
- Staffing Structures
- Car Parking/Access/Distance
- Transition

Abertysswg Primary School

4.3.7 Drop In Session – Teachers/Pupils

- Teaching of Age Ranges
- Transition
- Flying Start
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales
- Amalgamation of Primary Schools
- Timescales
- Staffing Structure
- Access/Safe Routes
- School Council/Start Times/Uniforms

4.3.8 Drop In Session – Parents/Community

- Car Park/Access to School
- Future Use of School Site
- Sharing of Facilities/Teachers across the Age Ranges
- Safe Route/Access
- Transition
- Flying Start
- Success of 3-18 Schools in Wales
- Start Times/Uniforms
- Amalgamation of Primary Schools

4.3.9 Drop In Session – Governors

- Safe Routes
- Finances
- Start Times
- Transition
- Flying Start
- Staffing
- Structure of Governing Body

4.4 The consultation document provided relevant parties the opportunity to provide a written response to the proposal. A number of responses have been received, as outlined below. There are 3 responses in favour of the proposal, with 7 against and 3 who do not feel strongly either way.

The responses are largely consistent with those outlined during the consultation meetings and are summarised below.

- An amazing opportunity for our children
- Good idea to incorporate the two schools together
- Modern environment for the children
- Support of transition of children

However, a number of concerns were expressed, mostly in relation to:

- Safe routes to school
- Mixing of children from both schools
- Success over 3-18 schools in Wales
- Teaching across age ranges

4.5 The School Organisation Code 2013 requires the LA to obtain the views of Estyn with regards to the proposal. A copy of the response is attached as Appendix 2.

4.6 In conclusion, the main issues raised during the formal consultation process, both written and orally, are summarised below and include officers comments:

4.6.1 Evidence of success of 3 – 18 across Wales.

The growth of 3 – 18 schools across Wales is a new and innovative proposal. There are neighbouring 3 – 18 schools that are categorised red, however it cannot be assumed that this is directly related to the age range of the school. The Leadership of the school, funding and structure of management and quality of teaching are important factors to get right to ensure success. A Wales All-through Schools Forum (funded by Welsh Government) has recently been established in order that schools are able to share good practice and work collaboratively to seek solutions to common challenges.

4.6.2 Safe route to schools.

Safe routes to the school have been designed as part of the planning application and the 21st century proposals. The routes were shown on the plans that parents were able to see at the three consultation meetings.

4.6.3 Teaching across age ranges.

The transition from Primary to Secondary school can be a challenging time for learners. The consultation document includes a proposal for 3 phases, Nursery to year 4, Years 5 to 8 and years 9 to 13. There is a national dip in performance between years 6 to 8. A phase leader for this age range will ensure a more coordinated approach to transition. This does not mean that years 5 to 6 will be taught in the Secondary school. However the 3 – 18 proposal will allow primary school age pupil to access the excellent facilities within the Secondary school eg Science laboratories, sports facilities etc. The Donaldson report supports this principle.

4.6.4 Quality of transition of pupils from other feeder schools

It is expected that the improvements the 3 – 18 school brings to transition would be incorporated within all feeder schools. The Headteachers of all the feeder schools have been involved in the process and are extremely positive about the benefits this will bring.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 The content of the report contribute to the well-being goals (as noted in 3.1) and in particular in the context of

- Involvement/Collaboration – this report is the result of a detailed and thorough consultation process.

- Long Term – this proposal as evidenced above produces long term benefits for the school learners and the community in general.
- Prevention – the proposal supports a smooth transition from Primary to Secondary School.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this proposal.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This will be dependent upon the Staffing structure recommended by the Governing Body.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Detailed consultations have taken place, as referred to in the report, and comments have been reflected in the report. The detailed notes of the consultation meetings are available on the Members' portal.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider the report and provide comments as part of the consultation process, prior to the move to Statutory Notice being considered by Cabinet.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To consult Members on the proposal.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998
 The Learning and Skills Act 2000
 The School Organisation Code. Welsh Government (2013)
 School Standards and Organisation Act 2013

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Appendix 1 – Cabinet 30th November 2016 (Proposed Rhymney 3 – 18 All through School)

Appendix 2 – Estyn Response

Background papers: Notes of Consultation meetings are available on Members Portal and will also be e-mailed to Committee Members :

Drop in session 16 January Rhymney Comprehensive - Pupils and Teachers
Drop in session 16 January Rhymney Comprehensive - Parents
Drop in session 16 January Rhymney Comprehensive - Governors
Drop in session 16 January Rhymney Comprehensive - Community
Drop in session 18 January Pontlottyn Primary - Pupils and Teachers
Drop in session 18 January Pontlottyn Primary - Parents
Drop in session 18 January Pontlottyn Primary - Governors
Drop in session 30 January Abertysswg Primary - Pupils and Teachers
Drop in session 30 January Abertysswg Primary - Parents
Drop in session 30 January Abertysswg Primary - Community
Drop in session 30 January Abertysswg Primary – Governors