



CABINET - 13TH DECEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING BAND B PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION REPORT: YSGOL Y LAWNT AND UPPER RHYMNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PROPOSAL

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet Members in relation to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B proposal in respect of:
- **Relocation of Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School**
The proposal seeks to create a sustainable school building with shared facilities, to accommodate Ysgol Y Lawnt, Upper Rhymney Primary School and Community use. The two schools will continue to provide both Welsh and English Medium Primary education and remain as separate entities, situated within the new dual purpose building.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the information contained in the Consultation Report and approve the recommendation, via vote, to proceed to Statutory Notice.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B proposal for Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School went to formal consultation between the 28th September 2023 and the 9th November 2023.
- 2.2 To discharge the Council's duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, there is now a requirement for Cabinet members to give due regard to the content of the Consultation Report and determine whether or not it is appropriate to move to the next stage in the process.
- 2.3 A Consultation Report has been compiled and attached as an annex to this report. The Consultation Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any emerging themes that have been raised through gathering the views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1.1 Cabinet Members are asked to: -

- a) Consider the information contained in the Consultation Report
- b) Approve the recommendation, via vote, to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposal for Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To seek Members approval, via vote, to proceed to the publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal.
- 4.2 Assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.

5. THE REPORT

Band B

- 5.1 The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a major, long term and strategic capital investment programme supporting large scale capital building projects across Wales with the aim of educational transformation through enhancing school buildings and developing them as hubs for learning to meet 21st Century Educational and Community needs.
- 5.2 The Programme focuses resources on the right school, in the right place, from early years through to post-16, with funding jointly provided by Welsh Government and Local Authorities.
- 5.3 The key aims of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B investment programme, outlined by Welsh Government, is:

- *Investment Objective One* - to provide efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for places

To include:

- The right number of places for the delivery of Welsh and English medium education
- Addressing sufficiency issues where relevant
- Reducing in Backlog maintenance costs for schools
- Working towards Net Zero Public Sector Buildings in line with Welsh Government Carbon Reduction Commitments

- *Investment Objective Two* – to optimise the use of infrastructure and resources, to deliver public services for our communities.

This will include:

- Flexibility of our assets so that space and facilities available for our stakeholders are maximised.

5.4 The schemes identified for Phases 1 & 2 of the Band B programme were:

- A new replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon on the former Cwmcarn High School site.
- An extension of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre
- The amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision
- A new replacement Plasyfelin Primary School on the existing site
- The establishment of a Centre for Vulnerable Pupils (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site

5.5 **Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School**

5.5.1 The proposal seeks to create a sustainable school building with shared facilities, to accommodate Ysgol Y Lawnt, Upper Rhymney Primary School and Community use.

5.5.2 The two schools will continue to provide both Welsh and English Medium Primary education and remain as separate and segregated entities, situated within the new dual purpose building.

5.5.3 The new school build will be designed to maximise local infrastructure, sustainability and energy efficiencies in meeting the Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon School requirements.

5.5.4 Further to Cabinet approval gained on 28th June 2023, formal consultation for the proposal was carried out between the 28th September 2023 and the 9th November 2023.

5.5.5 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 were written to and a consultation document was published in Welsh and English, both available in hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website. Reasonable access to information was promoted from an Equalities perspective and other formats were available, including a child friendly version.

5.5.6 Members of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee who met on the 17th October 2023 in their capacity as a consultee under the School Organisation Code 2018, had the opportunity to consider the information contained in the consultation pack and provide their views which have been noted as part of the minutes of the meeting and summarised in the Consultation Report.

5.5.7 The consultation period ran for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for response and conscientious consideration has been given to any responses received.

5.5.8 There were 19 responses received in respect of the proposal as outlined in 1.1. In addition, a number of pupils from both schools engaged in the consultation process through 'learner voice' sessions which have been reported on separately. These are broken down into more detail in the Consultation Report.

5.5.9 A Consultation Report has been compiled and has been attached as an annex to this report. The Consultation Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any emerging themes that have been raised through gathering the

views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons. In addition, Estyn has provided a formal response in consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal which is included in the Consultation Report.

- 5.5.10 In addition, Cabinet members will be provided with copies of all the responses received within the consultation period and in their original format as part of the decision making process.
- 5.5.11 The Consultation Report will be published electronically on the Sustainable Communities for Learning pages on the Council's website.
- 5.5.12 Consultees who have indicated in their consultation response that they wish to be notified will be advised by letter or email of the availability of the Consultation Report along with the key stakeholders identified in the School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.5.13 Members of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee met once again on the 28th November 2023 to consider the Consultation Report and asked to endorse the recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to Statutory Notice. A vote was taken, 14 for, 0 against and 1 abstention.

5.6 **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, formal consultation has now concluded in relation to this proposal and this report has been compiled along with the Consultation Report to provide members with the necessary information to make an informed decision as to whether to progress the proposal to the next statutory stage which would entail permission to publish a Statutory Notice. The School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so at this stage. An Objection Report will then be brought before Cabinet in addition to an updated Integrated Impact Assessment, and at this point, a final determination regarding the proposal will be requested.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates on the progress of individual projects.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed in relation to the proposal to ensure compliance with the socio-economic duty, Sections 1 to 3 of Equality Act 2010.

[Link to IIA \(Cymraeg\)](#)

[Link to IIA \(English\)](#)

- 7.2 Subject to Cabinet approval to progress to Statutory Notice, the IIA will be further reviewed and updated after this stage. The purpose of this further assessment is to take

account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation stages or otherwise, to further support conscientious consideration prior to final determination.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The estimated proposed project cost for the relocation of Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary, which forms the next phase of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B programme, totals £17,605,140.
- 8.2 Costings are based on Building Bulletin 98 and the Welsh Government 2024 Cost allowance. Subject to approval to proceed, further verification will be undertaken by the Council's Quantity Surveyor prior to submission to Welsh Government (WG).
- 8.3 The Authority's contribution of £6,052,119 to be set aside from the Authority's Place Shaping reserve.

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
New School Build	£5,777,916 (35%)	£10,730,414 (65%)	£16,508,330
SRB (16 places)	£274,203 (25%)	£822,607 (75%)	£1,096,810
TOTAL PROJECT	£6,052,119	£11,553,021	£17,605,140

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 Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme - Consultation Report: Ysgol Y Lawnt & Upper Rhymney Primary School Proposal was considered by the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee at a meeting held on Tuesday 28th November 2023.

During the ensuing discussion Members received information on consultation response rates and a minor error was highlighted in the categories of respondents as percentages table in the appendices. Officers provided assurances that the final report would be amended.

Having noted the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations are supported and should be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms and with two verbal votes (and in noting that there were 14 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

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Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair, Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
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Appendices:

[Link to Consultation Report – Ysgol Y Lawnt & Upper Rhymney Primary School \(Cymraeg\)](#)

[Link to Consultation Report – Ysgol Y Lawnt & Upper Rhymney Primary School \(English\)](#)