



CABINET - 3RD APRIL 2024

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

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members in relation to the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme in respect of the proposal to relocate Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School, through the creation of sustainable school buildings with shared facilities.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the information contained in the Objection Report and approve the recommendations, via vote, to proceed to planning application stage and subsequent Welsh Government business case approvals.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Further to Cabinet approval gained 13th December 2023, a Statutory Notice for the proposal relating to Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School was published, and the formal objection period ran between 8th January 2024 and the 5th February 2024.
- 2.2 Under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 when objections have been received proposers must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections ("the Objection Report").
- 2.3 2 Objections were received via email and in the medium of English.
- 2.4 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 Objection Report and make a final determination as whether to implement the proposal as outlined in the documentation.
- 2.5 Should Cabinet authorise progression of the project, a Decision letter will be published setting out clearly the reasons for the decision with reference to the School Organisation Code 2018.

- 2.6 The proposal will then progress to Planning Application stage and subsequent Welsh Government business case approvals.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet Members are asked to: -

- a) Consider the information contained in the Objection Report
- b) Approve the recommendation, via vote, to proceed to Planning Application stage and subsequent Welsh Government business case approvals.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B programme.
- 4.2 To seek Member approval on the recommendations outlined in 3.1 and for Cabinet to make a final determination in respect of the proposal.
- 4.3 To 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 are:

- 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 **Phase 3 – Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School**

5.5.1 The proposal seeks to create sustainable school buildings 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 13th December 2023, a Statutory Notice for the proposal relating to Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School was published on the 8th January 2024.

5.5.5 The Statutory Notice was published on a school day and consultees were given 28 days to respond to the document, with at least 15 of these being school days as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996.

5.5.6 All documentation was published in Welsh and English, complying with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Information was also available in other languages and formats on request.

5.5.7 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 were written to and a Statutory Notice was published electronically on the Council's website.

5.5.8 Hardcopies of the Statutory Notice were made available at both Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School and displayed in the school foyers and on/in close proximity to the entrance gates. In addition, the school's internal communication network with parents and pupils was used to raise awareness of the process and publication of the Statutory Notice.

- 5.5.9 The objection period ran from Monday 8th January 2024 (a school day) and concluded at midnight on Monday 5th February 2024 to provide adequate time for response.
- 5.5.10 A total of 2 objections were received, via email and in the medium of English during the Objection Period.
- 5.5.11 Under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 when objections have been received proposers must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections ("the Objection Report").
- 5.5.12 An Objection Report in relation to the proposal has been compiled and attached as an annex to this report to enable conscientious consideration to any responses received.
- 5.5.13 At its meeting of the 12th March 2024, the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee considered the information contained in the Objection Report and endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to Planning Application stage and subsequent Welsh Government Business Case approvals.
- 5.5.14 Once Cabinet has made the final determination, a Decision Notice will be published electronically on the Sustainable Communities for Learning page on the Council's website. All consultees will be notified via email/letter and hard copies will be available on request.

5.6 **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, the formal statutory objection period has now concluded, and this report has been compiled along with the Objection Report to provide Members with the necessary information to make an informed decision as to the final determination for the proposal relating to Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School.

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 An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for this proposal was undertaken alongside the original Consultation Document forming part of the outline consultation pack which is published on the Council's website.
- 7.2 The Integrated Impact Assessment has been reviewed to include any additional elements highlighted through the statutory consultation process. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

Original [Link to IIA](#)
Updated [Link to IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The original 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, has previously been reported as £17,605,140.
- 8.2 The Authority's contribution of which has been agreed at £6,052,119, to be set aside from the Authority's Place Shaping reserve.
- 8.3 Due to ongoing market conditions it is likely that this cost will further increase and any additional ask will be reflected and considered by Cabinet through the Place Shaping Programme Reporting process.

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 Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee 12th March 2024 – Comments on Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme - Statutory Objection Report: Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School

A member highlighted the CADW listing on the existing school site and sought clarification on what its potential future use - if the new schools proceed. The committee was advised that if the new schools go ahead, and the existing site is declared surplus, it would be handed over to the Councils Property Services Team. There would be consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner to consider whether the site has any potential Welsh Language use, before any other proposals for the site would be considered.

Members asked for an update on other former school sites that have not yet been developed and assurance was given that an update will be provided.

A members asked when the plans for the new schools will be available and was advised that should Cabinet approve the proposals, the next steps would be to work with Building Consultancy Team to develop them further and which includes the a sustainable drainage process, Planning and Tender process, the full business case will need to be submitted to Welsh Government for approval in relation to funding. Once all this is completed the build can commence and it is hoped to complete by September 2027.

Following the debate the recommendations were moved and second and supported by the majority present – 16 For.

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
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Director for Social Services
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair, Education and Social Services Scrutiny
Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair Education and Social Services Scrutiny
Committee
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy and Place Shaping
Programme Director
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 Service and Monitoring Officer
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers

Objection Report – Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School

Objection Responses Document - *Cabinet members will be provided with copies of the 2
Objections received in their original format.*