



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 4TH JUNE 2024

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

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to officially consult 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.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to consult with members on the proposal outlined below:
- 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.
- 2.2 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).
- 2.3 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 3rd June 2024 and ends midnight on the 15th July 2024.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- a) Note the information contained in the report and the attached consultation pack.

- b) To obtain Members views as part of the consultation process for the proposal which will be noted as part of the minutes of this meeting and included in the Consultation Report which will be presented to Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are consulted with regards to the outlined proposal and assist the Council in discharging its duty in consulting stakeholders in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 where applicable.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Board's initial work focused on the development of a set of proposals for a sustainable approach to 6th form provision across the whole of the County Borough.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The Board met on the 31st January 2024 and the 6th 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.
- 5.7 At its meeting of the 6th February 2024, the Board voted unanimously in support of the recommendation that 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 The "Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board – Further Recommendations to Cabinet" report was considered by a special meeting of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 20th March 2024 and Cabinet on Wednesday 3rd April 2024, where approval was received to progress to consultation.

- 5.9 As part of the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 and Section 42/44 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, proposals must be published when we make a 'regulated alteration' to a maintained school and consultation must be undertaken with Members and wider Stakeholders as outlined in the attached documentation.
- 5.10 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 3rd June 2024 and will close midnight on the 15th July 2024
- 5.11 Following consultation, all the comments received during the consultation period will be compiled into a Consultation Report as prescribed by Welsh Government in respect of the proposal.
- 5.12 The Consultation Report will be taken to Cabinet who will then decide as to whether to proceed, make changes or not to proceed with the proposal.
- 5.13 Should Cabinet decide to proceed, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and 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. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing and sent to the Council within the notice period. Formal Responses can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.
- 5.14 Full details of the Consultation Process for the proposal can be found in the main Consultation Document as part of the attached consultation pack.

5.15 **Conclusion**

- 5.15.1 Members are asked to note the information contained in this report and the supporting consultation pack documentation with a view to providing views on the proposal in their capacity as a 'consultee' under the School Organisation Code 2018.
- 5.15.2 Members views will be included in the Consultation Report which will be taken to Cabinet who will then decide on how the proposal will progress as outlined in 5.12 and 5.13.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report. The process outlined by Welsh Government is being adhered to ensure transparency, balanced and open decision making.

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](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None at this stage 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 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

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Appendices:

Link to Consultation Pack – [Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam](#)