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## Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

### Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.  
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich  
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#### **Gwasanaethau Gweithredol a Phartneriaethol / Operational and Partnership Services**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656  
643148/643147

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Andrew Rees

Ein cyf / Our ref:  
Eich cyf / Your ref:

**Dyddiad/Date:** 26 July 2017

Dear Councillor,

#### **COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 26 July 2017 at 3.00 pm.**

#### **AGENDA**

9. To receive the following Question to the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration 3 - 4

#### **Question from Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration**

'Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration outline Bridgend County Borough Council's view on the Welsh Government's proposals to change the School Organisation Code'

Yours faithfully

**P A Jolley**

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

#### Councillors:

S Aspey  
SE Baldwin  
TH Beedle  
JPD Blundell  
NA Burnett  
MC Clarke  
N Clarke  
RJ Collins  
HJ David  
P Davies  
PA Davies  
SK Dendy  
DK Edwards  
J Gebbie

#### Councillors

A Hussain  
RM James  
B Jones  
M Jones  
MJ Kearns  
DRW Lewis  
JE Lewis  
JR McCarthy  
DG Owen  
D Patel  
RL Penhale-Thomas  
AA Pucella  
JC Radcliffe  
KL Rowlands

#### Councillors

JC Spanswick  
RME Stirman  
G Thomas  
T Thomas  
JH Tildesley MBE  
E Venables  
SR Vidal  
MC Voisey  
LM Walters  
KJ Watts  
CA Webster  
DBF White  
PJ White  
A Williams

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RE Young

## COUNCIL – 26 JULY 2017

### AGENDA ITEM 9

#### **Question from Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration**

*“Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration outline Bridgend County Borough Council’s view on the Welsh Government’s proposals to change the School Organisation Code”?*

#### **Response from the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration to Councillor Alex Williams**

The School Organisation Code, which came into force in October 2013, underpins the provision introduced by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code, which is the statutory process with regards to school organisation changes, has been applied to all proposals since that time.

Certain sections of the original Code were not considered sufficiently explicit which resulted in clarifications being sought from Welsh Government in relation to a number of elements prescribed within the document.

Council officers across Wales have had an opportunity to contribute to the amended Code and Welsh Government have taken their views on board and incorporated changes to reflect those clarifications within the draft revised document.

There are some proposed changes contained within the Code, one of which is in respect of surplus school places. Proposers are asked to manage excessive surplus places, however this does not automatically mean closing schools.

The Code encourages proposers to look at other options available to them and their schools, for example clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools and making use of the existing building as a community resource. They are also encouraged to rationalise school space by co-locating services within the school to offset costs.

Also, there is a change proposed in respect of a presumption against rural schools. The aim is to ensure that decisions are taken to close rural schools only after all alternatives to closure have been conscientiously considered. This will require proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

Welsh Government has produced a list of rural schools which has been included within the draft revision of the Code. While there are no schools within Bridgend currently identified within Welsh Government’s list of rural schools, we will have to consider whether there are any schools within the borough which should be given this status and ensure this is conveyed within the Council’s response.

The revised document appears to give clarity and is more explicit and this is welcomed. Officers are in the process of formulating a response to Welsh Government's consultation which closes on 30 September 2017.

Cllr Charles Smith  
Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration