

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

1 SEPTEMBER 2015

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION

#### SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF PUBLIC NOTICE ON PROPOSAL TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG CWM GARW BY RELOCATING THE SCHOOL

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report is to inform Cabinet of the statutory objections received by the Authority during the objections period in respect of the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw by relocating the school to a new school building on the Betws Primary School site, to request a determination on the proposal and to seek Cabinet's approval to publish the draft 'Objections Report' (Appendix A) on BCBC's website .

#### **2 Connection to Corporate Plan/Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 The school modernisation programme supports many of the corporate priorities, in particular:
- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

#### **3 Background**

- 3.1 In November 2013 the Council used statutory procedures to consult on relocating the Welsh medium primary provision of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (YGG) Cwm Garw from Pontycymer to the existing Betws Primary School site. In May 2014 Cabinet determined to relocate the school to a new Welsh medium school on the site currently occupied by Betws Primary School. The proposal was to co-locate YGG Cwm Garw with the new English medium primary school serving the south of the Garw Valley. In February 2015 Cabinet further determined that the relocated YGG Cwm Garw should be a 1.5 form entry.
- 3.2 Following the outcome of a challenge ,in respect of Betws and Tynyrheol Primary Schools the Council reconsidered the scheme. The proposal relating to YCG Cwm Garw has not been significantly affected and the authority proposes to make a regulated alteration to YGG Cwm Garw by relocating the school to a new building on the Betws Primary School site. .
- 3.3. On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, Cabinet approval was received for the Council to adopt revised principles as a framework for school organisation in Bridgend; five key principles were set out to inform the organisation and modernisation of our schools:
- i. Commitment to high standards and excellence in provision.
  - ii. Equality of opportunity, so that all pupils can access quality learning opportunities, regardless of which school they attend.

- iii. Inclusive schools, which cater for the learning needs of all their pupils.
- iv. Community focussed schools, where the school actively engages with its local community.
- v. Value for money.

- 3.4 The Policy and Planning Framework sets out 17 areas where these principles should be applied in practice.
- 3.5 The principles which are particularly relevant in the context of this proposal concern the size of primary schools (to ensure that “all Bridgend’s primary schools are large enough to make the full range of necessary provision”) and value for money, efficiency and effectiveness and the provision of local schools, planning new provision to reflect changes in the distribution of the population.
- 3.6 Welsh-medium primary school provision for the north east of the county borough is currently provided at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw, which is located in Pontycymer. This school is typical of a number of valley schools, being built on a hillside and with poor access for disabled pupils and visitors. It is not suitable for the delivery of today’s curriculum and the last Condition Survey(2007) graded the building as ‘Poor’ (exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended) with an estimated £700,000 backlog of repairs and maintenance
- 3.7 The current capacity of the school is 210 with 123 (4-11) on roll as of January 2015, resulting in 87 surplus places. The number on roll is projected to rise to 161 in 2022, which would mean that surplus places would be 49. It is the ambition of the Council to increase the numbers of parents choosing Welsh medium education for their children and this needs balancing with the number of surplus places being held. Whilst there are surplus places in this school and our other Welsh-medium provision in the north of the county borough, Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, we have a deficit of places in the south.
- 3.8 Mobile classroom units were installed at both Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr in December 2013 and Ysgol y Ferch o’r Sger in 2014 to meet the immediate sufficiency issues, but a longer term solution is required and this proposal will reduce the pressure on Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr. The relocation of YGG Cwm Garw closer to the Valleys Gateway area would make the school more accessible, as it would be more centrally located. The school would allow for growth in demand for Welsh medium education and accommodate extra pupils coming from an enlarged catchment.
- 3.9 This relocation proposal involves a change to the school’s catchment area to encompass an area north of Bridgend town, which would reduce the pressure on places at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr in Bridgend, which is nearing its full capacity and will not be able to meet the expected needs of housing developments in the Bridgend and Valley Gateways areas in the near future. This balancing of Welsh-medium places across the county borough would also make YGG Cwm Garw a more viable size in terms of education provision and provide a school that is fit for purpose and more efficient in terms of operating costs.
- 3.10 This report outlines the statutory objection received during the statutory notice period.

## **4 Current situation**

4.1 In order to progress the proposal, consultation was carried out between 25<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code. A copy of the consultation document was also made available during this time on the Council's website:

<http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/services/consultation/hub/ygg-cwm-garw.aspx>

4.2 The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. A summary of these views and opinions were then published on the Council's website in the form of a Consultation Report.

4.3 A statutory notice outlining the proposals was subsequently published on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 for a period of 28 days and formal written objections were invited during this time.

4.4 Since a single objection letter was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 an objections report must now be published summarising the objections and the Authority's response to the objections. Cabinet will need to consider the proposal in light of the objections and responses to those objections. Cabinet can then accept, reject or modify the proposal.

### Summary of Statutory Objections

4.5 One statutory objection to the proposal was received. See Appendix 1 of the objections report for details of the objections and the Authority's consideration of them.

## **5 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the consultation. The assessment has concluded that there is no negative impact on the duties of the Council towards protected groups.

The existing YGG Cwm Garw School is predominantly inaccessible to disabled pupils and visitors with mobility issues. It is anticipated, therefore, that accessibility of provision will be significantly improved upon occupation of the new build school on the current Betws site (since the new build would be designed with due regard to Building Regulations).

6.2 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the consultation.

6.3 A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the consultation.

## **7 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The project is one part of the Garw Valley South scheme and the anticipated cost of the new school will be funded by the Council and Welsh Government under the 21st Century Schools Programme for which the Authority has received '*approval in principle*'. The project is included within the Council's capital programme as approved by Council. The total approved budget for the Garw Valley Scheme is £10 million. The financial profile for the scheme has been revised and approved by Welsh Government to reflect the construction programme. The total cost of the scheme will be reviewed in the context of the proposed changes outlined above.
- 7.2 The costs of the scheme will be contained within the approved capital programme budget of £10 million. The scheme is in design phase and some highways works are expected to be required to ensure safe access to the new school, but guidance from the Welsh Government explicitly states that "where a capital project requires works to be done to improve highways access to the school this would not qualify for Welsh Government grant, and would fall to the Local Authority to fund". The highways works are currently estimated to cost in the region of £200,000. The Welsh Government will provide half of the funding for the eligible elements of the scheme with the rest coming from capital receipts that Council has agreed will be ring fenced for the School Modernisation Programme.
- 7.3 There are currently three buses transporting pupils to YGG Cwm Garw (one from the Nantymoel area one from the Blackmill area and one from Betws/Llangeinor area). The current cost of this bus service is £63,000 per academic year. A school bus service, with sufficient capacity to transport the required projected number of pupils to the Betws site would cost approximately £92,000 per academic year. Additionally, should there be a change in the school catchment area to incorporate the Valleys Gateway area and subsequently relieve pressure on YG Bro Ogwr, one additional bus would be required which is estimated to cost £20,000 per academic year. Therefore, total transport costs relating to this proposal could amount to an estimated £112,000, which is £49,000 more than current transport costs. This will have to be met from existing directorate revenue budgets. The Garw Valley South scheme is not linked to any MTFs budget proposal.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- 1) note the statutory objections received and the consideration of those objections as detailed in the attached draft objections report and appendices;
  - 2) approve the draft objections report for publication
  - 3) determine to implement the proposal with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

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Background documents:

Council Report 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006, "LEARNING COMMUNITIES – SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE – STRATEGY, PRINCIPLES, POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK".

Cabinet Report 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006, "LEARNING COMMUNITIES: SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE" – SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROPOSALS.

Cabinet Report 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW & SUBMISSION TO WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT".

DESKTOP STUDY OF EXISTING PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE IN BETWS FEBRUARY 2011, COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE BCBC.

SCHOOL MODERNISATION GARW VALLEY SCHOOL PROVISION – FEASIBILITY STUDY, FEBRUARY 2012, CHILDRENS DIRECTORATE BCBC

BETWS PRIMARY SCHOOL TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT JULY 2012 CAPITA SYMONDS.

Cabinet Report - CONSULTATION 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013, "PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON PRIMARY PROVISION IN GARW VALLEY SOUTH".

Cabinet Report -Consultation 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013, "PROPOSAL TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO YGG CWM GARW PRIMARY SCHOOL BY RELOCATING THE SCHOOL".

GARW VALLEY SOUTH STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE (SOC) NOVEMBER 2013

Cabinet Report 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 "OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE BETWS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TYNRYHEOL PRIMARY SCHOOL"

Cabinet Report 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014 "PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE BETWS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TYNRYHEOL PRIMARY SCHOOL – DRAFT OBJECTIONS REPORT"

Cabinet report -Decision Notice 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014, "PROPOSAL TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO YGG CWM GARW PRIMARY SCHOOL BY RELOCATING THE SCHOOL"

Bridgend County Borough Council Consultation Paper 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014: "PROPOSAL TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG CWM GARW IN THE FORM OF AN ENLARGEMENT"

Cabinet report –Decision Notice 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 'SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – PROPOSED ENLARGEMENT OF YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG

CWM GARW – OUTCOME OF PUBLIC NOTICE’

Cabinet report 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 “PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT”

GARW VALLEY OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Cabinet report 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015 “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSAL TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG CWM GARW BY RELOCATING THE SCHOOL”

Appendix A – Draft Objections Report