

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET

10 JUNE 2015

Cabinet Members:

Councillors: A.H.Thomas, P.A.Rees, M.L.James, E.V.Latham, Mrs.S.Miller, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance:

H.Jenkins, A.Evans, N. Jarman, G.Nutt, D.Michael, A.Thomas, R.Gordon, R.Bowen, Mrs.R.Crowhurst, N.Evans and Mrs.A.Manchipp

1. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor M.L.James	Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Chair of Govenors at Llangiwig and Govenor of Pontardawe Welsh School and confirmed his dispensation to speak but not vote thereon;
Councillor E.V.Latham	Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Chair of Governors at Tywyn Primary School, Govenor at Traethmelyn Primary School and Chair of Govenors at Ysgol Newydd Bae Baglan and confirmed his dispensation to both speak and vote thereon;
Councillors Mrs S.Miller	Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as she is Chair of Govenors at Melin Infant and

Melin Junior Schools and confirmed her dispensation to both speak and vote thereon;

Councillor P.A.Rees

Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Govenor at Cefn Saeson and Crynallt Primary Schools and confirmed his dispensation to speak but not vote thereon;

Councillor P.D.Richards

Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Vice Chair of Governors at Blaenbaglan Primary and Baglan Primary Schools and confirmed his dispensation to both speak and vote thereon;

Councillor J.Rogers

Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Chair of Govenors at Eastern and Groes Primary Schools and confirmed his dispensation to both speak and vote thereon;

Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Report of the Head of Transformation re Strategic School Improvement Programme as he is Chair of Governors at Tairgwaith Primary School and confirmed his dispensation to both speak and vote thereon.

2. **MEMBER APPOINTMENT TO THE ERW JOINT COMMITTEE**

Decision:

That this Authority's Member representation on the ERW Joint Committee be Councillor A.H.Thomas.

Reason for Decision:

To approve this Authority's Member representation on the ERW Joint Committee.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

3. **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TONMAWR EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT CENTRE AND TO PROVIDE SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE ATTEND THERE AT YSGOL NEWYDD DYFFRYN CLYDACH**

Cabinet received, circulated at the meeting a copy of the Options Paper which had been considered at the meeting held on 15th April.

Decision:

That, having given due regard to the EIA and other relevant documentation as detailed in the circulated report, in respect of this proposal, in line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposal to discontinue the early years assessment provision based at Tonmawr Primary school and to make provision at Ysgol Newydd Dyffryn Clydach Primary school for pupils who would otherwise have attended Tonmawr Early Years Assessment Centre, be approved with an implementation date of 1st September, 2015.

Reason for Decision:

The concerns raised by those objecting to the proposal can be mitigated by management and organisational arrangements as set out in the objection response and, as such, the case for closure remains strong. With no requirement for approval by the Welsh Government, the decision to implement the proposal rests with Cabinet. Implementing the proposal will enable the Council to meet its commitment and responsibility to:

- a. promote high standards and the fulfillment of every child's potential;
- b. meet its duty to secure efficient and sustainable education in its area;
- c. comply with legislative requirements.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

Consultation:

Consultation on the closure of the Early Years Assessment Centre with specialist provision being made for pupils at Ysgol Newydd Dyffryn Clydach commenced on 5th January 2015, with comments invited until 15th February 2015 (6 weeks). A statutory notice was published on the 21st April 2015 allowing 28 days for receipt of objections.

4. **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE BRYN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TO PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR PUPILS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE ATTEND THERE AT CWMAFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cabinet considered the report in relation to the above and in particular the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the transport of nursery aged pupils to Cwmafan Primary School. Member asked whether the possibility of providing free transport for nursery aged pupils could be looked at and a further report submitted for consideration.

Decisions:

1. That, having given due regard to the EIA and other relevant documentation as detailed in the circulated report, in respect of this proposal, in line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposal to discontinue the Bryn Primary school and to make provision for pupils who would otherwise have attended there, at Cwmafan Primary school, be approved with an implementation date of 1st September, 2015;
2. That Officers investigate the possibility of free school transport being provided to nursery education pupils for a two year period and report back to Members for consideration.

Reasons for Decisions:

The concerns raised by those objecting to the proposal can be mitigated by management and organisational arrangements as set out in the objection response and, as such, the case for closure remains strong. With no requirement for approval by the Welsh Government, the decision to implement the proposal rests with Cabinet. Implementing the proposal will enable the Council to meet its commitment and responsibility to:

- d. promote high standards and the fulfillment of every child's potential;
- e. meet its duty to secure efficient and sustainable education in its area;
- f. comply with legislative requirements.

Implementation of Decisions:

The decisions will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

Consultation:

Consultation on the closure of the Bryn Primary school with provision being made for pupils at Cwmafan Primary school commenced on 10th November 2015, with comments invited until 16th January 2015 (approx. 10 weeks). A

statutory notice was published on the 21st April 2015 allowing 28 days for receipt of objections.

5. **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TONMAWR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TO PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR PUPILS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE ATTEND THERE AT CRYNALLT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cabinet considered the above proposal and the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee. In particular it was highlighted that not only schools' teaching standards were being considered but the condition of the buildings (Bulletin 99). In addition the facilities available were also taken into account in order to provide wrap around care, which would in some case require additional resources whilst in others could not be achieved due to the size of the school. Some of the alternatives proposed would also not address the problem of surplus places – which had been the subject of a recent letter from the Welsh Government Minister. There was in the region of 6,000 surplus places across the County Borough .

In addition, as a result of the funding formula, the funding of small schools resulted in an inequality in per pupil costs to the detriment of larger schools.

It was also noted by Cabinet that once the Early Years Assessment Centre moved to Abbey Primary School (formerly known as Ysgol Newydd Dyffryn Clydach) , Tonmawr Primary School would be in deficit.

Decision:

That, having given due regard to the EIA and other relevant documentation as detailed in the circulated report, in respect of this proposal, in line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposal to discontinue the Tonmawr Primary school and to make provision for pupils who would otherwise have attended there, at Crynallt Primary school, be approved with an implementation date of 1st September, 2015.

Reason for Decision:

The concerns raised by those objecting to the proposal can be mitigated by management and organisational arrangements as set out in the objection response and, as such, the case for closure remains strong. With no requirement for approval by the Welsh Government, the decision to implement the proposal rests with Cabinet. Implementing the proposal will enable the Council to meet its commitment and responsibility to:

- g. promote high standards and the fulfillment of every child's potential;
- h. meet its duty to secure efficient and sustainable education in its area;

- i. comply with legislative requirements.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

Consultation:

Consultation on the closure of Tonmawr Primary school with provision being made for pupils at Crynallt Primary school commenced on 10th November 2015, with comments invited until 16th January 2015 (approx 10 weeks). A statutory notice was published on the 21st April 2015 allowing 28 days for receipt of objections.

6. **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE PONTRHYDYFEN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TO PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR PUPILS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE ATTEND THERE AT CWMAFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Decision:

That, having given due regard to the EIA and other relevant documentation as detailed in the circulated report, in respect of this proposal, in line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposal to discontinue Pontrhydyfen Primary school and to make provision for pupils who would otherwise have attended there, at Cwmafan Primary school, be approved, with an implementation date of 1st September, 2015.

Reason for Decision:

The concerns raised by those objecting to the proposal can be mitigated by management and organisational arrangements as set out in the objection response and, as such, the case for closure remains strong. With no requirement for approval by the Welsh Government, the decision to implement the proposal rests with Cabinet. Implementing the proposal will enable the Council to meet its commitment and responsibility to:

- j. promote high standards and the fulfillment of every child's potential;
- k. meet its duty to secure efficient and sustainable education in its area;
- l. comply with legislative requirements.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

Consultation:

Consultation on the closure of the Pontrhydyfen Primary school with provision being made for pupils at Cwmafan Primary school commenced on 10th November 2015, with comments invited until 16th January 2015 (approx. 10 weeks). A statutory notice was published on the 21st April 2015 allowing 28 days for receipt of objections.

7. STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Following the decisions taken by Cabinet, the Portfolio holder, Councillor P.A.Rees, stressed the level of work that had been put into developing the proposals together with the consultation undertaken and the comprehensive reports before Members today. Whilst the decisions taken were difficult, they were in line with the principles outlined by Welsh Government and Estyn in relation to efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The Authority had clear principles in provision, cost effective use of public funds and the reduction in the number of surplus places. Closure results in reinvestment and redistribution. The aim of the Authority was to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young people, to manage the school estate and making decisions which benefit all students.

CHAIRMAN