

**SUBJECT: ESTABLISH A 3-11 SEEDLING WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MONMOUTH**

**MEETING: CABINET**

**DATE: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to enter into statutory consultation processes to establish a 3-11 seedling Welsh medium primary school in Monmouth.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 For Members to agree to enter into a statutory consultation process by the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 that seeks to obtain the views of a wide range of statutory consultees as listed on page 24 of the draft consultation document which can be found at appendix 2.
- 2.2 For Members to receive and approve the draft consultation document (appendix 2) but to delegate responsibility to The Cabinet member for Education and the Chief Officer of Children and Young People, so that changes can be made to the document prior to starting the statutory consultation.
- 2.3 To agree to undertake the statutory consultation process in line with the timeline proposed under appendix 1.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The School Organisation Code (2018) places responsibility on local authorities in Wales for ensuring that there are sufficient and suitable school places across the County to educate its children and young people.
- 3.2 There are currently two Welsh medium Primary Schools in Monmouthshire, Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni located in the north of the county in Abergavenny and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin located in the south of the county in Caldicot.
- 3.3 The capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni in the north of the county has been increased to 317 and from September 2024, the school will be relocated to a new site, which will enable them to become a 420 place primary school.

- 3.4 The refurbishment and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin has been completed to ensure it has the capacity to be a 210 primary school, with a Cylch Meithrin within the grounds of the school.
- 3.5 Whilst these are significant and important developments, we acknowledge that the north east of Monmouthshire is currently without Welsh medium primary provision and pupils have to travel long distances to Abergavenny to access education through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.6 Over the last three years, officers have undertaken significant work to identify a suitable location for a new Welsh medium primary school within the Monmouth area. However, despite these efforts, we have not been able to secure a suitable site within the town because of a lack of available or suitable land.
- 3.7 To fulfil the ambition to increase the number of children educated through the medium of Welsh as set out in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which was agreed by cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. There will be a satellite class located on the Overmonnow primary school site from September 2023; this provision will be under the leadership, management and governance of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin. The provision will be for nursery, reception and year 1 pupils.
- 3.8 The admission round for children to start primary school in September 2023 is already underway; the closing date for applications is 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022. We have currently received 2 reception applications for the satellite class. We have also received 1 nursery application.
- 3.9 If there is a positive response to the consultation and the proposal to establish a new seedling school is agreed, a new maintained seedling Welsh medium primary school will be established from September 2024. This school will be its own body corporate and have its own leadership, Board of Governors and budget.
- 3.10 The location of the school is still being assessed. The current proposal is that the school will be located on the Overmonnow Primary school site however the availability of land and accessible space is a challenge therefore officers are still continuing to explore potential alternatives.

#### **4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 The attached consultation document details five options considered prior to arising at the proposal outlined in this report. These are:
  - i) Do Nothing and maintain the status quo.
  - ii) Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school on a new site in the Monmouth area to include early years and childcare provision.
  - iii) Utilise Osbaston CIW primary school site in Monmouth to create additional Welsh medium primary provision and bilingual childcare.

- iv) Utilise the former Raglan junior school building to create Welsh medium primary provision and build a new Welsh medium early years and childcare provision on the site.
- v) Utilise existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary School site to establish a seedling welsh medium primary school and early years and childcare provision.

4.2 Option 5 is the preferred option, which we propose to deliver by utilising existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary school site and carrying out appropriate refurbishment works.

4.3 A feasibility study has been undertaken on the Overmonnow site to identify the most appropriate build options and how the two schools can be co-located. The final report, which will include detailed site analysis and plans, is expected by the end of February.

4.4 The full options appraisal is available under section 3 of the consultation document, which can be found at appendix 2.

## 5. REASONS

5.1 The Council has a responsibility as part of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.

5.2 Local Authorities are required to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which must contain how they will improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh.

5.3 The proposal supports the Welsh Governments long-term strategy of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. It also demonstrates a commitment to increasing the number of children accessing Welsh medium provision and meets our targets outlined in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The reasons that this request has been brought forward have been set out above.

## 6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The initial costs for the seedling provision for the nursery / reception class will be:

Staffing costs	£90,882	One full time teacher and one full time teaching assistant for foundation phase. This includes agency costs to cover absence and PPA
Executive Headteacher	£34,700	Management of the seedling provision.
Resources	£5,000	

The costs above are for the full year, for the first year the costs will be lower to reflect the final 7 months of the financial year.

- 6.2 Overmonnow Primary School is currently fully funded for utilities, maintenance and grounds therefore no additional costs are expected.
- 6.3 The transport costs are expected to be neutral, it is anticipated that any additional costs will be offset by savings of transporting pupils to other Welsh medium primary schools.
- 6.4 As the school increases in size, the costs for each class will be:

Staffing costs	£80,882	One full time teacher and one full time teaching assistant for foundation phase.
Higher Level Teaching Assistant	£33,652	40%
Headteacher	£65,000	
Resources	£5,000	

6.5 To set up the Welsh medium seeding primary school the capital costs will be £478,000 for early years and £1,637,699 for the school. The total of £2,115,699 will be funded by a grant from Welsh Government. Officers continue to liaise with Welsh Government officials about the funding arrangements

**7. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

Please see attached.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

CYP DMT  
Cabinet Member for Education  
Welsh in Education Forum

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

School Organisation Code (2018)  
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

**10. AUTHOR:**

Will Mclean, Chief Officer, CYP

**11. CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Tel: 01633 644508**

**Appendix 1**

**Timeline for Statutory consultation process**

<b>Process</b>	<b>Key dates</b>
<b>Publication of formal consultation document</b>	June 2023
<b>Deadline for responses to consultation proposal</b>	July 2023
<b>Consultation report to be presented to Cabinet</b> <b>Publication of consultation report</b>  <i>Cabinet consider consultation report and determine whether to proceed with proposal</i>  If agreed - Proceed to next stage If not agreed - proposals will end	July 2023
<b>Publication of Statutory Notices and enter into objection period</b> <i>If approved, the Statutory Notice will be published on the County Council's website, posted in the named school and other conspicuous places within the community. Copies of the notice will be made available to the relevant schools to distribute to pupils, parents/carers and members of staff.</i>  <i>Opportunity to formally object to the proposals.</i>	September 2023
<b>Objection report presented to Cabinet</b>	November 2023

<i>Cabinet Consider objection report and determine whether to implement proposals in light of any objections received</i>	
<b>Implementation of proposals</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024

