

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD CONCERNING PROPOSALS TO RELOCATE AND INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF YSGOL GYMRAEG Y FENNI</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024</b>

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the outcome of the statutory objection period regarding the proposals to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site.
- 1.2 This report presents the objection report (appendix 1) to Cabinet and seeks their approval to proceed with the proposal

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 agree to proceed with proposals as consulted upon, namely, to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 place (plus 60 place Meithrin) through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site.
- 2.2 agree that the above proposals will be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

### **Consultation stage**

- 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 The Council has a responsibility under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of their previous commitment to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the former Deri View primary school site as part of the band B proposals that involved the establishment the 3-19 School in Abergavenny. At their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Cabinet gave their approval to engage with key stakeholders on these proposals, which would see the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni rise from 317 places to 420 places (plus a 60 part time place Meithrin).
- 3.4 The statutory processes concerning these proposals commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, and ran for a period of 6 weeks (including 20 school days) concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- 3.5 At their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Members received a copy of the consultation report which represented the Council's responsibilities (in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018) to produce a report informing interested parties of the outcome to the consultation by means of:
- Summarising each of the issues raised by consultees.
  - Responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal, or rejection to the concerns with supporting reasons.
  - Setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal
- 3.6 The consultation report that that the Council had received 18 formal responses to the proposals, with an additional two responses coming from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and ESTYN.
- 3.7 Of the 18 formal responses, 10 (56%) were fully supportive of proposals put forward, with a further 6 responses (33%) supporting aspects of the proposals. However, after unpicking the detail behind these 6 responses we are reassured that all 6 are supportive of the actual proposal itself but have asked for the Council to give consideration to other factors concerning the provision of Welsh medium education. The Council therefore accepted that 16 out of 18 (89%) responses received from the community are supportive of proposals.
- 3.8 In addition to the above, responses had been received from both Estyn and the Education Achievement Service, who both were fully supportive of the proposals put forward.

- 3.9 In light of the above information, Cabinet agreed at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to proceed with the next stages of this statutory process, which was to publish the necessary statutory notices and enter into the statutory objection period.

### **Statutory Objection period**

- 3.10 The Council entered into the statutory objection period (a period whereby consultees can submit statutory objections against the proposals) through publication of the attached statutory notices. The statutory notices were published through the following means:

- On the council website at [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#)
- On or near the main entrance of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.
- On or near the main entrance of the proposed new site (former Deri View Primary School)
- By electronic distribution to all statutory consultees

- 3.11 The Objection Period formally opened on 21st June 2024 and concluded on 19th July 2024, allowing for a 28 day objection period as per the requirements of the School Organisation Code (Wales) (2018)

- 3.12 Consultees and interested parties were advised that, should they wish to submit a statutory objection against the proposals to relocate and in turn increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places, they must do so in writing or by email within the 28 day statutory objection period, which concluded on 19th July 2024.

- 3.13 In line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (Wales) (2018), the Council has produced an Objection Report that seeks to highlight any formal objections received during the Objection Period, and the Council's response to these objections. The full Objection Report is included under appendix 1, however, it is important for Members to note that no statutory objections were received within the Objection Period window.

## **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)**

An integrated impact assessment associated with the proposals has been completed and can be found under appendix 2. This assessment will be

reviewed and updated to incorporate the feedback received during the consultation period.

## 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

### 5.1 The revised Code sets out the following requirement:

‘Following the consultation period, when the proposer is reviewing the proposal prior to publication the proposer is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper. This involves the same matters that the proposer was required to assess in formulating the proposal:

- (a) the likely impact on quality and standards in education,
- (b) the likely impact on the community and
- (c) the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.’

A further assessment of the alternative options that were considered in the consultation document was undertaken and considered by Cabinet on 5th June 2024, a reminder of this assessment is provided below:

- 5.2 **Option 1** – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean there would be no change to existing provision, and that Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni would remain on its current site with its current published capacity. Following the consultation period there were only a small number of respondents (2) that felt the Council should not be investing in Welsh medium education within the Abergavenny cluster.

The Council has considered the responses and maintains the view that there is a need to improve the teaching and learning facilities for those accessing Welsh medium education within the area, alongside the opportunities to allow for growth of the Welsh language to support the targets in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and National Welsh 2050 strategy.

- 5.3 **Option 2** – Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school in Abergavenny to replace Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. There were a small number of respondents (1) who felt that the ideal solution would be to build a brand new primary school for Welsh medium education within the cluster. Whilst we acknowledge that this would provide the ideal option, the Council do not feel that this is a feasible option to take forward, largely due to there being no suitable sites for the new primary school and the funding

available does not allow for a new build. The former Deri View primary school site will be vacant and provides excellent teaching and learning facilities for the Welsh medium community, whilst offering a prompt solution to relieving the accommodation pressures currently experienced on the current Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni site.

5.4 **Option 3** – Increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni on its current site. The Council did not receive any feedback during the consultation stages of this process to support this option. The Council continues to hold the view that the capacity on the existing site cannot be increased to meet the requirements for a two form entry school, and certainly not within the funding that is available. This option would also leave a purpose build 420 place school with excellent facilities vacant.

5.5 **Option 4** – Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the site formerly occupied by Deri View Primary School. The majority of consultees engaging in this process were supportive of this option.

5.6 On the 5th June 2024 Cabinet considered the assessment of options as detailed above and agreed to “publish the proposals as consulted on” and proceed to the next stage of the statutory process for the proposal to utilise existing accommodation available at the former Deri View Primary School site in order to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places.

## 6. REASONS:

6.1 The proposal demonstrates our commitment to increasing the number of children accessing Welsh medium education and meets our targets outlined within our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It also is supportive of the National Wales 2050 strategy

## 7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 The Council’s adopted SOP that formed the proposals to establish a new 3-19 School also identified the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the former Deri View Primary school site. Capital funding in the region of £1million was identified and agreed during this process to support the relocation and undertake any required refurbishment works associated with this proposal.

7.2 The proposal would also result in an increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to become a provision for 420 pupils / two form entry.

The school will continue to be funded in line with the adopted funding formula which will allow for the recruitment of additional staff as numbers on roll at the school increase.

- 7.3 The Council currently funds the rental of temporary accommodation located on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni which would be released should proposals be implemented.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

CYP DMT  
SLT  
Cabinet Member for Education

People Scrutiny

"The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the proposal for relocating Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and offered its support"

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2018

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