

SUBJECT: Consultation on Proposed
Closure of Llanfair Kilgeddin V A
Primary School

MEETING: Cabinet

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the current position in relation to Llanfair Kilgeddin Voluntary Aided Primary School and for Members to consider the Governing Body request for the Local Authority (LA) to consult on closure of the School.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 To agree to the Governing Body request for the LA to undertake formal consultation on the proposed closure of Llanfair Kilgeddin Voluntary Aided Primary School.
- 2.2 To agree the attached formal consultation document, Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In March 2013, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) using the agreed Intervention framework, indicated that the School was in the category of a school requiring 'Critical support and intervention'.
- 3.2 The EAS provided additional support to the school from June 2013 and an Intervention Plan (IP) was put into place in July 2013 this was formally adopted by the Governing Body on 26th September 2013.
- 3.3 Following a review of progress in December 2013, the Chief Education Officer judged that insufficient progress had been made by the school. Consequently, on December 17th 2013 under Section 15 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Monmouthshire LA issued the Governing Body of the school with a 'Warning Notice'.
- 3.4 On 7th April 2014 a review of progress was carried out by the EAS and LA to determine the progress the school had made in relation to the warning notice. A second review of progress was carried out by the EAS in June 2014 at which point it was concluded that the governing body had failed to comply with the terms of the warning notice, within the compliance period and within a reasonable further period of time.

Consequently, in consultation with the Monmouth Diocesan Trust (MDT), the LA decided to take the very serious step of invoking its powers of intervention at the School, as set out in the Intervention Framework in order to secure the necessary improvements.

3.5 In September 2014 the LA put into place an Executive Headteacher as part of the Abergavenny Alliance and an Acting Headteacher.

3.6 This arrangement came to an end at the end of the Spring Term 2015. Despite efforts by the LA and Diocese to facilitate a solution to enable the Alliance to continue.

3.7 In December 2014 the school was inspected by Estyn. Following the inspection Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that special measures were required for the school, for the following reasons:

- Improve standards of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, particularly for more able pupils
- Improve standards of information and communication technology (ICT)
- Ensure that planning focusses appropriately on developing pupil skills across the curriculum
- Use assessment and tracking systems effectively to monitor the progress of all pupils
- Address the shortcomings in safeguarding and health and safety identified during the inspection
- Resolve the issues of sustainability and consistency in leadership
- Use the outcomes of self – evaluation to identify priorities and to set clear and measurable targets for school improvement
- Ensure that there are sufficient suitable resources to deliver the curriculum.

A Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was drawn up to address the recommendations and Estyn are currently monitoring progress on a termly basis.

3.8 With the ESTYN Inspection, MDT Section 50 Report and Internal Audit Report the School has 55 recommendations for improvement against it.

3.9 Given that there was no Acting Headteacher or Executive Headteacher employed by the Governing Body to address the issues as identified in the PIAP and ensure the appropriate safeguarding measures were in place the LA, in conjunction with and full support of MDT, relocated the pupils to Usk VC Primary.

3.10 The Head teacher and Governing Body of Usk VC Primary agreed to support the pupils, staff and Governing Body of Llanfair Kilgeddin VA School with the leadership and management required. This initial agreement was for the summer term only.

3.11 The Governing Body has recently followed the appointment process for a Head teacher. Four applications were received and one candidate was shortlisted. This candidate withdrew from the process before the interview.

3.12 In May 2015 the Governing Body agreed in principle to ask the Local Authority to undertake consultation to close the school in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

- 3.13 The Government of Maintained School (Wales) Regulations 2005, paragraph 46 (4) requires Governing Bodies to meet on to separate occasions to discuss requesting the LA to undertake the closure consultation. The meetings were held in June and July 2015.
- 3.14 The timeline for the consultation process is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.15 The number on roll at the school decreased from 29 in January 2015 to 20 in May 2015. Following the Governor's request the number has declined further and there will be no pupils on roll in September 2015. The capacity of the school is 40.
- 3.16 The pupils who were on roll have been admitted to Raglan VC Primary School, Usk VC Primary School Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School as well as out of county and private schools.
- 3.17 Under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 the LA has to formally consult on the potential closure MDT as the school is Voluntary Aided. This has been undertaken and MDT are in agreement with consulting on the closure of the school.
- 3.18 As there will be no pupils on roll in September the LA has arranged for the school staff to be relocated to other schools within the County until half term in February.
- 3.19 In July 2015 MDT wrote to Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills asking him to use any statutory powers he may hold to close the school. The reasons for the request being there will be no pupils on roll, the costs to the public purse of undertaking the full consultation process and the condition of the building will deteriorate further whilst the consultation process is undertaken.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 The LA, MDT and EAS have put significant support into the school and measures in place to address teaching, learning and management of the school since March 2013. The Governing Body have tried to recruit a Head teacher in the hope that the school can be brought out of Special Measures and the other recommendations could be addressed. It was felt by the Governing Body that this would attract more pupils to the school.
- 4.2 The LA and MDT believe that by closing the school, the quality of teaching and pupil attainment will be enhanced, as the LA provides the conditions at other schools that will enable pupils to prosper.
- 4.3 Members will note that the Consultation Document provides a broader perspective around the proposed closure. The reason for this is to fit in with the legislative requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2103. The covering report gives a clearer picture of where the school is at present and the reasoning behind the Governing Bodies decision to request the LA to commence consultation on closure.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The consultation process will be built into the present work programme of officers within Children and Young People Directorate.
- 5.2 At the time of the Inspection Estyn recorded the cost to educate the pupils on roll at the school was £5928
- 5.3 The home to school transport costs for the existing pupils currently cost £25,650. This figure also includes additional transport costs for the pupils relocating to other Monmouthshire schools.
- 5.4 The revenue savings that could be realised if the school were to close amounts to approx. £71,220.
- 5.5 Taking into account the additional transport costs per annum as in 5.3 above and the revenue savings outlined in 5.4 above the overall savings to close the school are £45,570.
- 5.6 The budget position for the school indicates a small surplus remaining (£500) at the end of 15/16. This position will be updated for Q2 monitoring.
- 5.6 Capital Receipts will not be realised from the sale of land and buildings as they belong to Monmouth Diocesan Trust.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 3) are summarised below for member's consideration:

Complete

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed initially throughout the consultation process

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report

8. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Members

DMT

SLT

Any comments received on the report have been incorporated into the report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The Government of Maintained School (Wales) Regulations 2005

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

School Organisation Code Statutory Code 006/2013
Welsh Government Schools Causing Concern 129/2014
Joint School Review Monmouthshire LA and EAS - June 2013
Estyn Report on Llanfair Kilgeddin V A Primary School – December 2014

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