

SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS -STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO ESTABLISH AN ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL (4-19) IN ABERGAVENNY

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 14TH APRIL 2021

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Abergavenny Wards

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members' permission to consult with stakeholders about the Authority's intention to establish an all-through school with a specialist provision for children with complex neurodevelopmental and learning needs in Abergavenny on the site of King Henry VIII Comprehensive School..
- 1.2 Members will be aware that agreement to proceed with the project and the associated funding will be subject to separate reports in the future. This report is to agree the school organisation route that will allow the creation of the school.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Agree to enter into a Statutory Consultation process as set out in the School Organisation Code (a document produced by virtue of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013¹) to obtain the views of consultees on establishing an all-through school with specialist provision for pupils between the ages of 4-19 in Abergavenny;
- 2.2 Agree and approve the draft Statutory Consultation Document (appendix 1) which proposes to establish the all-through school and specialist provision on the King Henry VIII Site: and
- 2.3 Agree to undertake the consultation in line with the timeline proposed under appendix 2.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Council is committed to giving every young person in Monmouthshire the best possible start in life as set out in the Corporate Plan. At its heart is improving the educational achievement and attainment of all children and young people in the county.
- 3.2 In October 2017 Cabinet agreed the submission of the Council's Band B proposals to Welsh Government as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme. A major part of the proposal is to establish an all-through school on the King Henry VIII School site in Abergavenny.

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

- 3.3 An all-through school combines at least primary and secondary phases of education and potentially nursery and sixth form phases within a single institution. It provides continuous education for pupils. The school is led and managed by one Headteacher, a single governing body and funded as one school.
- 3.4 Deri View Primary School is included within the proposal. If the proposal proceeds the school would form the primary element of the new all-through school and the existing Deri View site and buildings would be repurposed to provide accommodation to meet the increasing demand for pupils wanting to learn through the medium of Welsh and attend Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni which would relocate. The relocation of Ysgol Y Fenni to the Deri View site will require a further statutory consultation process. This will be introduced to the Councils workstream when this process alongside the full business case has concluded. If all options proceed as envisaged this will create a vacant site at St Davids Road, Abergavenny.
- 3.5 We believe that the proposed school will need to include facilities for:
- 30 FTE nursery pupils
 - 420 primary pupils
 - 1200 pupils aged 11-16,
 - 200 6th formers,
 - The new school will provide accommodation for 71 pupils with complex neurodevelopmental needs (16 Primary and 55 secondary)².
- 3.6 The proposed sizing of the new school has been considered in light of rising numbers of students at King Henry VIII and proposed housing developments in the Abergavenny area. There will be a further consultation considering the catchment areas in Abergavenny town and the surrounding area.
- 3.7 Since the original scoping of the provision in 2017 further work has been undertaken. The proposal now includes the relocation of the Flying Start³ and the expansion of a specialist provision to support pupils with complex neurodevelopmental disorders⁴. There is already a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) at Deri View School and this proposal would continue that provision to Key Stages 3,4 and 5 building on small class provision already offered at King Henry VIII Comprehensive School.
- 3.8 There will be nursery provision on site, our proposal is that this will be a non-maintained setting and therefore not subject to any statutory consultation process. There are benefits associated with non-maintained settings such as their ability to provide wrap-around childcare. This will be tested as part of the consultation exercise.
- 3.9 Extensive discussion has taken place between Officers and Monmouthshire's Welsh Education Forum (WEF). The outcome of these discussions is that the proposal to include a Welsh medium stream at Key Stages 3 & 4 has been removed. The WEF has consistently stated a preference for a fully immersive experience for Welsh learners (as experienced at the primary phase). The Council is preparing its new

² These numbers have been arrived at following consultation with the access unit at Monmouthshire County Council and the planning department.

³ Flying Start is the Welsh Government's targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales

⁴ These include children with disabilities that affects their behaviour, memory, or ability to learn. Examples include dyslexia, ADHD, learning deficits and autism.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The new WESP has an extended timeline, from three to ten years. This will afford the Authority a longer-term planning horizon to develop and promote its Welsh medium provision. As a part of the early considerations for the new WESP Officers are committed to reviewing the potential of establishing a SNRB and Key Stage 3 provision for Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni within the Deri View site. Torfaen County Borough Council extended Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and places will be available to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Y Fenni. Senior officers are in early discussions with neighbouring authorities to pursue a collaborative arrangement to provide Welsh medium secondary provision as a part of any future 21st Century Schools Band C proposals.

- 3.10 Evidence suggests that the construct of an all-through schools has a beneficial impact on school life. This includes but is not limited to, the day to day management of the school, professional development of staff (especially in light of the recently enacted Curriculum for Wales) and on educational experiences and outcomes for pupils. Some all-through schools have also seen significant drops in exclusions and improvement in behaviour. There have also been examples of minimising the dip in performance that pupils typically experience in the transition between Key Stage 2 and years 7 and 8. This is due to the school having an excellent awareness of prior learning and achievement.
- 3.11 All learners would belong to one educational establishment, however, it is important to note that whilst there would be opportunities for sharing facilities and resources, all-through schools provide access to separate facilities for learners of different ages e.g. separate teaching accommodation, different start and finish times as well as separate areas to use during break times.
- 3.12 The development of all-through schools aligns with the Council's Social Justice Strategy and commitment to addressing inequalities within the County to help turn lives around. All-through schools bring several potential benefits to children and young people who are disadvantaged by poverty and inequality. It is widely accepted that all-through schools are able to raise attainment by establishing continuum of education from 3-19, minimising dips in performance during transition and using improved data tracking allowing for better monitoring of progress and outcomes to inform future planning.

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

- 4.1 One of main benefits of the proposal in its current form is the redevelopment of a school that is no longer fit for purpose which will allow children to access the new curriculum in appropriate accommodation. The inclusion of a 3-19 offer alongside the extension of the specialist provision has the potential to benefit those groups who would be considered vulnerable learners.
- 4.2 A further benefit of the proposal is the expansion of Welsh medium provision in the north of the County. If the proposal proceeds Deri View Primary School will vacate their current site for Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to relocate. This will enable them to grow and supports the Welsh Government's goal to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- 4.3 This proposal will benefit children with complex neurodevelopmental and learning needs by reducing travelling to other schools and enabling them to remain in their local school and community.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The attached consultation document outlines five options for achieving the organisational structure of the new school. These are set out below.
- i) Option 1: Do nothing and maintain the status quo
 - ii) Option 2: Establish an all through school with suitable ALN provision on the King Henry VIII site and cease to maintain King Henry VIII and Deri View Schools
 - iii) Option 3: Establish an All through school with suitable ALN provision and Welsh Medium stream at Key Stage 3,4 & 5 on the King Henry VIII site and cease to maintain King Henry VIII and Deri View Schools
 - iv) Option 4: Extend the age range of King Henry VIII and incorporate Deri View Primary School.
 - v) Option 5: Extend the age range of Deri View and incorporate King Henry VIII Comprehensive School
- 5.2 In order to achieve our stated aim of establishing Monmouthshire’s first all-through school we believe that closing both schools and establishing a new school is the fairest and most equitable approach. There is a risk that if one school has its age range extended and one school closes it could be perceived as a takeover whichever option of 4 or 5 was selected. The change management around the establishment of the new school is likely to be extensive and it is incumbent upon the Authority to select an organising route that creates as a great a sense of fairness as possible. Therefore, Option 2 is the Authority’s preferred option.
- 5.3 The consultation process will run over the next eight months and will include initial consultation phasing and the publication of Statutory Notices. Below is the timeline for activity. The Authority will undertake a wide range of engagement activities with a full range of stakeholders. Currently public health regulations preclude the large-scale community engagement events which have been a feature in the past however Officers will continue to monitor the situation and seek as many meaningful engagement opportunities as possible.

Cabinet Report and consultation paper in public domain	31 st March 2021
Completion of strategic brief	31 st March 2021
Cabinet	14 th April 2021
Publication of formal consultation document	26 th April 2021
Appointment of Contractor and design team	May / June 2021
Deadline for submitting comments to proposals	6 th June 2021
Report on Consultation to Cabinet	7 th July 2021
Planning Process commences	September 2021
Statutory Notices Published	September 2021
Final Cabinet decision on proposal	November 2021

6 REASONS:

- 6.1 The Council has a responsibility as part of the School Organisation Code 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.
- 6.2 The proposed change will address the Council's commitment to develop and establish innovative approaches to securing better outcomes for children and young people.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The total capital investment to establish the all-through School will deliver approximately £50.2m into the Abergavenny area. The proposal is part of the Councils 21st Century Schools Band B Programme, the cost of which will be funded 65% by Welsh Government and 35% by the Council. This will be subject to a separate report to Council in due course.
- 7.2 The revenue budget for the proposed all-through school would be constructed in line with the current school funding formula ensuring equitable distribution of finance based on pupil need.
- 7.3 The proposed all-through school could also benefit from economies of scale and avoid cost duplication.
- 7.4 There are no direct revenue financial implications associated with this report as the consultation process will be built into the present work programme of officers within Children and Young People Directorate.

8 CONSULTEES:

CYP DMT
SLT
Executive Member for CYP and Monlife
Cabinet

- 8.1 As part of the preparations for this report Officers have undertaken informal briefing sessions with the staff and Governing Bodies of both Deri View Primary School and King Henry VIII School.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Code 2013

10 AUTHOR:

Cath Saunders
21st Century Schools Programme Manager

11 CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 07595647637

E-mail: cathsaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk

