

SUBJECT:	STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF YSGOL GYMRAEG Y FENNI
MEETING:	PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	5TH MARCH 2024

1. PURPOSE:

On 17th January 2024, Cabinet agreed to enter into statutory consultation processes concerning the proposed relocation and associated increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

The purpose of this report is to request that the People Scrutiny Committee conduct pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals during the period of public consultation ahead of Cabinet making any decisions at their meeting on 10th April 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the People Scrutiny Committee conducts pre decision scrutiny of the proposals and makes any recommendations to the Cabinet ahead of their meeting on 10th April 2024.

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. The major part of these proposals was to establish an all-through school on the King Henry VIII School site in Abergavenny.

- 3.3 However, as part of the proposals to establish the all-through school, it was acknowledged that the proposals would leave the Deri View site vacant, which would be repurposed to provide the necessary accommodation in order to meet the increasing demand for pupils wanting to learn through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.4 The duty to ensure appropriate provision of school places is not limited to our English Medium School places. The Council has a duty to ensure that its provision of places for those young people wishing to be educated through the medium of Welsh is suitable, sustainable and allows an opportunity for growth.
- 3.5 Members will be aware of the Council's commitment to the Welsh Government's national strategy Cymraeg 2050, which sets out a long-term vision for a Wales where the Welsh Language thrives. The strategy aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050.
- 3.6 For the Council to contribute to this national target, it must deliver on its statutory duties to ensure that there is growth of the Welsh language across the county. One of the ways of us achieving this growth is to continue to develop and improve our provision of Welsh medium education and the benefits it brings. It is hoped that by doing so, there will be an increase in the demand for Welsh medium school places across the County.
- 3.7 The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was approved by Welsh Government in June 2022 and sets out our commitments to grow the Welsh language across the county. The WESP outlines our target of having 115 learners in each primary year group being taught through the medium of Welsh by 2031.
- 3.8 The Council has so far invested significant funding into the refurbishment and extension of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin (Caldicot) which is now able to offer 210 places to Welsh medium learners. Alongside this, the Council has committed to the opening of a seedling school in Monmouth with effect from September 2024. The relocation and associated increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is the next step in providing us with the accommodation suitable for achieving our WESP targets.
- 3.9 In addition to our strategic targets to grow Welsh medium education, the proposal is also formed in response to the support that is required at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to manage their increasing numbers on roll.

3.10 Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni was originally opened as a 210 place School, however, has evidently grown in numbers since its original opening and as at September 2023, has 241 pupils on roll (excluding the Meithrin). The Council has supported the school with this increasing demand by renting temporary accommodation to provide additional classroom space. The capacity of the school is now 317, however, it is acknowledged that a large proportion of the accommodation is temporary and does not meet our aspirations of providing excellent teaching and learning environments. There are also no further opportunities to increase the capacity on its current site.

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 attached consultation document outlines 4 options for responding to our statutory requirement of growing Welsh medium education in the County:

- i) Do Nothing
- ii) Build a new 420 place School to replace Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni
- iii) Increase the capacity of the school on its current site
- iv) Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the site previously occupied by Deri View Primary School

5.2 The preferred option on which we would like to consult is option 4, which is to utilise existing accommodation available at the former Deri View Primary School site in order to increase the capacity of Welsh medium education within the area to 420 places.

5.3 This option is not only the most financially viable but delivers excellent teaching and learning facilities and a prompt solution to relieving the accommodation pressures currently experienced on the current Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni site.

5.4 The consultation process is proposed to run over the next 7 months in line with the timescales outlined below:

Consultation stage

Statutory Consultation Period to commence on	Statutory Consultation Period concludes on	Period of consultation required
29 th January 2024	11 th March 2024	6 weeks (including 20 school days)

Post consultation stage

Stage of process	Key date
Cabinet consider the results of the consultation and determines whether to proceed with proposal	10 th April 2024
Should the Council wish to proceed, statutory notices will be published and we enter into objection period	22 nd April 2024
Closure of the objection period	21 st May 2024
Cabinet consider the objection report and determine whether or not to implement the proposal	17 th July 2024
Implementation of Proposal	April 2025

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty 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 help to address the Council's commitment to growing Welsh medium education across the County, as well as addressing the increasing demand for School places at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

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

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2018

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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