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Ask for/Gofynwch am P McLoughlin

Telephone/Rhif ffôn 01446 729250

e-mail/e-bost pmcloughlin@strichardgwyn.school;

Your Ref/Eich Cyf

My Ref/Cyf SCFL/SRG



ARCHDIOCESE
of CARDIFF
ARCHESGOBAETH
CAERDYDD

To: Parents, Carers and Guardians of children attending St Richard Gwyn High School.
Headteacher and Staff of St Richard Gwyn High School; Prescribed Consultees.

Dear Consultee,

ESTABLISH A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING FOR ST RICHARD GWYN HIGH SCHOOL TO INCREASE ITS CAPACITY FROM 813 TO 1,050 PLACES AND TO ESTABLISH A 60 PLACE SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE FROM SEPTEMBER 2025.

The Governing Body consulted with prescribed consultees in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 on the proposal to establish a new school building for St Richard Gwyn High School from September 2025.

In line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018, a consultation exercise with prescribed consultees was undertaken between 5 September to 17th October 2023. The aim of the consultation was to inform prescribed consultees about the proposal to increase the number of Secondary school places by expanding St Richard Gwyn from 813 to 1,050 places. 43 individual responses were received by the consultation closing date, all supporting the proposal.

On 16 November 2023, following consideration of the consultation report, the Governing Body determined to progress the proposal through the publication of a statutory notice. The statutory notice was published on the school and Council website on 1 December 2023 and was issued to prescribed consultees and posted at the main entrances of St Richard Gwyn. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing or by email, and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published ("the objection period"). As the statutory notice was published on 1 December 2023, statutory objections had to be received by 29 December 2023. It was noted that no statutory objections were received during the statutory notice period.

On 18th January 2024, the Governing Body of St Richard Gwyn approved the proposal to expand St Richard Gwyn from 813 to 1,050 places and establish a 60 place specialist resource base. As a result, a new building for St Richard Gwyn will be built on the same site with capacity for 1,050 pupils and the school will move in from September 2025.

In determining the proposal, the Governing Body were satisfied that the proposal will:

- Enable the school to further improve while catering for a greater pupil population.

- Ensure the school is able to accommodate the future demand for Secondary education based on current trends.
- Provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and will challenge and support children to reach their full potential.
- Increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school's educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school.
- The new building will meet BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Excellent standards and be built to an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) A rating.

The reasons for the decision in respect of the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code are as follows:

Quality and Standards of Education

In Estyn's response to the consultation, they concluded that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area. Estyn advised that the proposal identifies fairly that a move to a school that is purposely built should result in improved teaching and learning experiences through the provision of modern education facilities. This includes break out spaces and an SRB unit for pupils with additional learning needs as well as improved digital infrastructure throughout the new school building reflecting the digital curriculum standards. Estyn commented in their response to the consultation exercise: 'The design of the building is likely to support effective pedagogy through improved facilities, standardised classroom sizes and through providing a building and outdoor spaces. It further notes that a better learning environment will also have a positive impact on support and guidance by having a larger and improved outdoor area to enhance pupils' wellbeing'.

The Council's clear ambition is that educational outcomes in the Vale of Glamorgan are the best in Wales and match those of the most successful authorities in England with similar socio-economic profiles. The proposal will help deliver that ambition.

The new school building will provide greater opportunities for curriculum development and pupil well-being. Pupils will have greater access to digital facilities and outdoor learning areas. Enhanced provision for students with special educational needs will be available at the school.

During the transition stage following the determination, the Council will take all practicable steps to minimise disruption for the staff and pupils by working closely with them.

The proposal will provide much needed investment in St Richard Gwyn High School and will help deliver the transformational change necessary for all students to achieve their full potential.

Need for places and the impact upon accessibility of schools

The proposal will ensure that there is a sustainable balance between the supply and demand for secondary school places across the Vale of Glamorgan. for the long term. The proposal will increase secondary education places in the Vale of Glamorgan for those requiring a faith education.

Under the proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of students to and from schools.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for pupils of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance to the nearest appropriate school. Due to the new school being built on its original site, this proposal will not provide any changes and therefore there will be no impact on the transport for pupils.

The Council will be working with the school to review the schools active travel plan and will encourage as many pupils as possible to walk, cycle or scoot to school. The location of the new school building would not result in any changes to the catchment area.

The proposed new building will have improved access for disabled pupils and other users.

Resourcing of education and other financial implications

Funding is provided through the school funding formula which allocates the majority of funding for schools on the basis of pupil numbers.

This proposal will mean that significant capital investment will be made in establishing the new school and developing state of the art facilities. The estimated cost of the scheme is £62 million. It is anticipated that part-funding would be provided by the Welsh Government under Band B of its Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The remainder of the capital funding would be contributed by the Council.

The revenue budget delegated to St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School for 2023/24 was £4.125M for 836 pupils. The increased cost of £935k (which excludes the impact of inflation) would occur incrementally over a period of five years as the school's larger capacity would be filled each year from year 7. The increased cost for the first year is estimated at £208k and a suitable financial plan is noted in the proposal.

Other general factors

The Equality Impact Assessment identifies that there would be a positive impact on persons with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment/ identity and religion and belief. The proposal would support the school to ensure that it has the improved facilities to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with different protected characteristics.

There has been no perceived negative impact on the protected characteristics identified. Successful implementation of the proposal would enable compliance by providing a fully accessible building with gender neutral facilities.

The Community impact assessment identifies that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 2 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community across 6 of the 8 measures assessed. Overall, the proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community.

Yours faithfully,



Paul McLoughlin, Chair of Governors at St Richard Gwyn High School