

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 6 June, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education

Proposal to Increase Welsh Medium Secondary School Places

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval to consult stakeholders on a proposal to increase Welsh medium secondary school places by expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site to accommodate future demand.

Recommendations

1. Cabinet authorises the Director of Learning and Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education, to undertake consultation from 26 June 2016 for a period of 6 weeks on the proposal to increase Welsh medium secondary school places by expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site.
2. Cabinet notes that implementation of the proposal would be subject to consideration of responses to consultation to the relevant statutory processes and notes that progress would be subject to the availability of capital funding from Welsh Government.
3. Cabinet refers this report to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for consideration as part of the forthcoming consultation exercise.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To assess the level of support for the proposal to expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg.
2. To assess the views and comments of those informally consulted.
3. To ensure that the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committees is consulted on the proposal.

Background

2. During 2015 the Council consulted on a proposal to transform secondary schools in Barry by:
 - i) establishing a new mixed English-medium comprehensive school

- ii) expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg; and
 - iii) relocation to create two distinct campuses for Welsh medium and English medium education.
3. This proposal if implemented would have resulted in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg moving to the Bryn Hafren site and the English medium mixed sex school being established on the site currently occupied by Barry Comprehensive School and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg.
 4. Following consideration of responses to the consultation, Cabinet decided at its meeting of 5 October 2015 not to progress further with this proposal but to establish an Advisory Board to review options, with particular regard to the option of establishing two mixed sex English medium secondary schools as well as addressing the need to expand Welsh medium secondary school places.
 5. The new Advisory Board including the head teachers and chairs of governors of the three secondary schools, two head teacher representatives from feeder primary schools, representation from further and higher education, the relevant Cabinet Member, the Managing Director and officers of the Learning and Skills Directorate, was established in January 2016.
 6. Having considered feedback from engagement activity carried out with the public, pupils, staff and governors of Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive schools and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, the Board considered options for the future of the three schools and agreed that the preferred option was to:
 - i) Expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site with the provision of a new entrance from Port Road
 - ii) Build a new 11-18 mixed sex school on the site of Barry Comprehensive School
 - iii) Create a modern, 11-18 mixed sex school by refurbishing and modernising the Bryn Hafren buildings.
 7. The proposal to expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site would result in the school's capacity being increased by over 200 pupil places which requires a statutory process to be carried out. To establish two 11-18 mixed sex English medium secondary schools, the statutory process would involve closing Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive schools and opening two new 11-18 mixed sex schools.
 8. Unlike the initial re-organisation proposal, the two proposals are not interlinked and can progress separately. It is therefore appropriate to carry out separate statutory processes. Consulting on two separate proposals would be more straightforward than consulting on a single, more complex proposal and would result in groups of stakeholders being consulted on those issues which are most relevant to them.
 9. Taking into account the capacity required to conduct two concurrent statutory proposals and the limited resources available, the statutory processes, where applicable, will be carried out at different times. The proposal to expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg being the more straightforward of the proposals is dealt with in this report. Subject to Cabinet approval, consultation would commence in June 2016.

10. It is planned that a further report on the proposal to establish two English medium mixed sex secondary schools would be brought to Cabinet on 4th July 2016 for approval to commence consultation in September 2016.
11. Welsh medium secondary education is currently provided at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, a 3-19 all through school, located in Barry. The school provides the only Welsh Medium secondary school provision for the Authority and accommodates pupils from the seven Welsh medium primary schools located across the Vale of Glamorgan.
12. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg all through 3 – 19 school was formed through the amalgamation of Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg and Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg in September 2015. The schools were previously federated in September 2012 under a single governing body and headteacher.
13. 1361 places are currently available at the school, 210 places in the primary phase and 1151 in the secondary phase.
14. The anticipated increase in demand would require the secondary phase to accommodate 1450 secondary age pupils. This equates to an 8 form entry school with an admission number of 240 and a sixth form catering for around 250 pupils based on current transfer rates to sixth form.
15. The admission number for the school in the secondary phase will be increased from 169 to 240 places from September 2018.
16. The overall size of the school in the primary and secondary phase will increase from 1361 places to 1660 places (210 places in primary phase and 1450 places in the secondary phase) in September 2020.

Relevant Issues and Options

17. The capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, the number on roll as at the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) 2016 and projected pupil numbers are shown in [Appendix A](#). The pupil place demand for Welsh medium secondary education is forecast to increase significantly from September 2018 as pupils from two new Welsh medium primary schools established in Llantwit Major and Barry in September 2011 begin to feed into the secondary sector.
18. The capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Gwaun y Nant was increased in September 2015 from a one form entry school to two forms of entry. The additional pupils from this school are likely to require a Welsh medium secondary school place from 2022 onwards.
19. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg is forecast to be at full capacity by 2020. Additional places will be required to accommodate the additional children to allow them to continue in Welsh medium education. The Council has a statutory obligation duty to meet the demand for Welsh medium education.
20. Given a scenario in which all of the Vale's Welsh medium primary schools are full to capacity in all year groups and if all the pupils transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, 1,847 places would be required compared to the current 1,151 places.
21. There are currently 300 (16.7%) surplus places in the Welsh medium primary sector and on average over the past 5 years, 96.2% of pupils have transferred to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg. Furthermore, numbers attending the newly expanded Ysgol Gymraeg Gwaun y Nant in September 2015 and those due to start in September 2016 are significantly below the two form entry capacity of 60 for each

year group. Although these pupils will begin to feed in to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg from September 2022, initially the number will be less than originally estimated.

22. Expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg to provide 1,847 places would result in too much surplus capacity being built into the school which would not represent effective use of resources. The projections in [Appendix A](#) show that after taking into account additional pupils from new housing development, 1,366 Welsh medium secondary school places are anticipated by 2026.
23. It is difficult to forecast demand for Welsh medium secondary school places with any degree of certainty beyond 2026 as it is largely dependent on demand for places in the primary sector which has plateaued over the past two years and the percentage of pupils continuing on into the sixth form.
24. In order to provide sufficient capacity to meet the demand for additional Welsh medium places for children of secondary school age, it is estimated that Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg would need to increase its secondary phase capacity from 1,151 places to 1,450 places. This is an overall increase in school capacity of 299 places or 22 per cent.
25. The additional places would be provided in the form of an extension to the school. Issues with the condition and accessibility of the current building would be addressed at the same time. A new 3G pitch would be provided along with improvements to the reception, parking and external areas. The estimated cost of the building work is £19.3M.
26. Careful planning will take place in consultation with the school to minimise any risk of distraction or disruption to the day to day running of the school by building work, especially during key exam periods.

Statutory Process

27. In order to increase the capacity of the school the Council would need to comply with the statutory process detailed in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
28. However, a consultation document will be issued during the school term and should be provided to all interested parties allowing a minimum of six weeks to respond, the consultation period will include a minimum of 20 school days. Meetings would be held during the consultation period to provide additional information as requested and would include meetings with parents, pupil representatives, governing body and staff of the school.
29. Within three months of the closing date for the consultation period a consultation report would be published including a summary of comments received and the Council's response to these comments.
30. The Council will then decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal within six months of the end of the consultation period. If following the consultation process the Council decides that the expansion of the school is to be progressed a statutory notice would be published providing 28 days for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and with 15 school days included within the notice period.
31. If objections were received, an objection report must be published with a summary of the objections and the Council's response before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination.

32. [Appendix B](#) sets out the anticipated timescale for this process if approved by Cabinet.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

33. It is estimated that the total cost of the Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg scheme is £19.3M which anticipates part-funding by the Welsh Government under Band B of its 21st Century Schools Programme. The remainder of the capital funding would be contributed by the Council.
34. Band B of 21st Century Schools funding starts in 2019/20 and extends up to 2024/25. Welsh Government is actively encouraging local authorities which have schemes scheduled to start in 2019/20 to submit a business case a year in advance. This would enable the funding to be agreed and work to commence on site early in 2019/20.
35. A grant intervention rate of 50% is available under Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme which means that Welsh Government contributes 50% of the cost of approved capital schemes that meet published criteria. Welsh Government has acknowledged formal feedback from local authorities on the need to increase the intervention rate for Band B but has yet to publicise its plans. It is expected that more information will be available in June 2016 following Welsh Government's official launch of Band B.
36. Additional revenue support grant would be received from the Welsh Government for any overall increase in pupil numbers in the Vale of Glamorgan. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg would be funded for its actual number of pupils via the Council's schools funding formula.
37. Whilst the decision regarding re-organisation of schools can be made by Cabinet, the capital funding for schemes must be approved by Full Council.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

38. By addressing the projected shortage of places in the Welsh medium secondary sector we will be meeting parental demand for Welsh medium places. The option to expand will ensure that new and refurbished buildings will meet modern building standards to reduce carbon emissions and the new building will achieve the highest rating of A for the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

39. Powers for councils to develop school organisation proposals derive from the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which was enacted on 1 October 2013 and are guided by the School Organisation Code (2013) Statutory Document Number: 006/2013. The School Organisation Code Wales (2013) states that "a proposal must be published for.... significant alterations" including "an enlargement of the premises of a school, which would increase the capacity of a school by at least 25 per cent or 200 pupils." In this case the school will require an expansion of 22 per cent of pupil places or 299 pupils to be able to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand.
40. If, following the consultation process and the consideration of responses, a decision is made to proceed with the publication of a statutory notice, the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code Statutory Document Number: 006/2013 will need to be complied with.

41. These proposals will lead to other implications which will include, for example, contract law and property law. Advice in relation to these matters will continue to be taken from the Council's legal advisors as appropriate.

Crime and Disorder Implications

42. There are no direct crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

43. The extended premises for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg will increase opportunities for learning through the medium of Welsh. The new buildings will be fully DDA compliant.
44. During the consultation period an Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed which will be made available to Cabinet with the consultation report for consideration prior to a decision being made on whether to progress to the next stage of the statutory process.

Corporate/Service Objectives

45. The development of proposals for secondary school provision in Barry is a corporate priority for the Council. Consultation on proposals to expand Welsh medium secondary school places is a key element of this work and features in the Strategy, Community Learning and Resources Service Plan 2016 - 2020.

Policy Framework and Budget

46. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

47. Public consultation with all prescribed consultees and interested parties will be carried out, in accordance with legislation.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

48. Learning and Culture

Background Papers

None

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Officers Consulted

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Mike Glavin: Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
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