

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 19 February, 2018

Report of the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture

Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform members of the consultation outcome on the proposed educational changes required to ensure children and young people educated other than at school (EOTAS) can prosper and achieve attainable outcomes.
2. To seek approval from members to undertake further work to develop a financially viable option to improve the delivery of EOTAS services to targeted children and young people.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the outcome of consultation on the proposed relocation of the Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit to Llantwit Major Youth Centre is that this proposal should not proceed.
2. That Cabinet approve the proposal to further develop options for reshaping EOTAS provision within the Barry area as set out in this report.
3. That a further report be submitted to Cabinet on the recommended way forward in due course.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To make Members aware of the issues raised by respondents to the consultation.
2. To enable the Council to take a strategic approach to the provision of education services for young people within the resources available.
3. To ensure the on-going process of required consultation and engagement work with Trade Unions, staff and other stakeholders is undertaken efficiently and effectively in line with Council policies and procedures.

Background

3. The Local Authority conducted a consultation on changes to its EOTAS provision from October 2017 to November 2017. These included a proposal to relocate the Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), known as Ysgol Y Daith based at Amelia Trust

Farm to Llantwit Major Youth Centre. The reasons for this proposal were set out in a previous Cabinet Report (4th September 2017, [Appendix A](#)).

4. The relocation of the PRU to a more suitable location is essential in order to ensure the most positive outcomes possible for this vulnerable group of learners. However, all those consulted raised valid concerns as to the suitability of the Llantwit Major Youth Centre for this provision ([Appendix B](#)).
5. Concerns raised were as follows:
 - the negative public perception of a PRU in a town centre location near a primary school;
 - the increased travel time and expense of moving students to Llantwit Major;
 - increased risk of pupils absconding from the site due to the town centre location and access to transport links;
 - proximity of the provision to the local primary school which would create a number of difficulties, in particular relating to increased traffic and parking difficulties;
 - the need to erect fencing on the site to improve security which would be difficult to achieve due to the proximity of the provision to public spaces.
6. In addition, consultation with the Amelia Trust indicated a willingness to work with the Council to enable an effective transfer of this service from that site. However, the eventual relocation of the PRU will have a negative financial impact upon them.
7. During the consultation, school staff were concerned about what they perceived as overly negative reporting about standards at the provision. The current categorisation of the school is Improvement Capacity 'C' and Support Category 'Amber'. The PRU, like a number of educational establishments, is required to maintain standards in accordance with legislation pertaining to education, and as such is subject to inspection by Estyn. The Council has implemented actions to improve the categorisation with support from Central South Consortium over the last academic year. It is pleasing to note that there has been improvement in performance, however, further improvement is required in order to meet required standards.
8. While there are potential benefits to this move, the concerns raised during this consultation are sufficient to warrant recommending to elected members that this move should not take place and that every effort should be made to identify a more suitable alternative provision based in Barry.
9. In order to achieve this, further engagement with stakeholders is necessary. In a meeting with staff and Trade Union representatives, it was agreed to create a staff forum. The forum will review the current provision and explore alternative models of delivery.
10. The Council has a strategic plan to transform education in the Barry area by creating two co-educational schools including the establishment of a centre of excellence for behaviour within the new school environment. This is intended to provide enhanced support for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties [SEBD]. The respondents to the recent consultation felt that the Council should concentrate its efforts on developing a central Barry location as a centre of excellence. When developing options for change this consideration should be central in any further strategic planning.

Relevant Issues and Options

11. The forum will work with Council officers to consider the viability of a range of options such as:
 - remaining at the Amelia Trust Farm [ATF] as a temporary measure, improving the physical environment to address safeguarding concerns and improving the current standards and outcomes for young people;
 - develop proposals for the Centre of Excellence, to include the delivery model, curriculum, and physical environment;
 - conduct research and compare and contrast other local authority EOTAS strategies, including this learning in the development and evaluation of options.
12. The Council has been informed that the Strategic Outline Programme for Band B 21st Century Schools has been approved by Welsh Government. This includes schemes to provide new and refurbished school buildings for the two new co-educational schools. However a full business case for individual schemes will need to be completed and agreed by Welsh Government prior to any funding being released. It is by no means certain that Welsh Government agreement would be given and even if this is the case the timescale for when such a development would be completed is unclear.
13. In the meantime, the Council still has safeguarding concerns in relation to the Amelia Trust Farm site. Action has been taken to mitigate these risks in the short term and officers are currently looking at cost and practicality of making the changes required to ensure that students are safe and are able to learn effectively in the medium to long term. Following the outcome of this work the Council must reach a decision to either:
 - invest in the current ATF site in order to mitigate the safeguarding risks and remain on this site until the Centre of Excellence is in operation; or
 - identify a central Barry location for the PRU with a redesigned model of delivery.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

14. To develop the proposals a staff forum has been established which will work collaboratively to identify improvements. Once the period of engagement is complete, the options will be costed and the financial implications included in a further report to Cabinet.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

15. The Council is committed to promoting sustainable development and our understanding of our duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. This proposal demonstrates the Council's approach to sustainable development and the five ways of working introduced by the Act. The proposal seeks to take into consideration the long-term sustainability of the PRU. In light of increasing demand, taking an integrated approach to the way the Council operates and the use of alternative forms of complementary service delivery to design joined up services around pupils' needs, builds upon the principle of prevention as well as demonstrating working with others in a collaborative way. In doing so, the proposal seeks to contribute to the national well-being goals established by the Act, notably a more Equal Wales, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

16. There are a number of legal implications arising from this project. Advice is being accessed from the Council's legal advisers as appropriate and this will continue during the course of the project.
17. In respect of the employment law implications, given at this stage the forum is going to be considering the most appropriate options for moving forward, the consultation aspect of employment law obligations is being met and appropriate advice will continue to be sought.

Crime and Disorder Implications

18. Many young people who use EOTAS services have significant support from Youth Offending and Children and Young People Services. When appropriate, interventions from these service areas can be incorporated into the provision for the young person. Individual risk assessments are completed and individual behaviour plans and strategies are produced to mitigate against any reoffending or risk-taking behaviours.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

19. An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed and will be updated throughout the course of this project.
20. These proposals are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan, Well-being Outcome 3: An Aspirational & Culturally Vibrant Vale. The proposals seek to raise the overall standards of achievement, and will contribute to the achievement of a number of actions contained within the Corporate Plan. These actions include securing improved outcomes for groups of learners at risk of underachievement, increasing the learning opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and vulnerable families, as well as reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
21. The proposals are also consistent with the Council's Reshaping Services programme which seeks to mitigate the impact of reduced financial resources and increasing service demand by evaluating and adopting alternative forms of service delivery model to protect priority services.

Policy Framework and Budget

22. This report is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet and is within the policy framework and budget.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

23. Local Authorities are expected to inform the Welsh Government (WG) whenever a new PRU is set up or an existing PRU is closed. However, there are no formal procedures for opening or closing PRUs. Welsh Government expects, however, that such actions would normally involve reasonable consultation locally, including with the management committees of all PRUs in the local authority. Accordingly, the Learning and Skills Directorate were consulted with staff, students, parents/carers, local members and the management committee, on the proposal to relocate the Key Stage 3 PRU to Llantwit Major Youth Centre. In light of the concerns raised by consultees, the recommendation to elected members is that this move should not take place. Further consultation may be necessary dependent upon the conclusions drawn by the Forum.

24. Consultation has been undertaken with a staff forum about the change in location and operating model of the PRU.
25. Staff and Trade Unions have been informed of the information presented in this report. As indicated above, a process of ongoing consultation with trade unions, staff and parents will be undertaken regarding any proposal to change the location, operating model and organisational structure.
26. Upon completion of these consultation activities, a report will be brought to Cabinet for consideration in reaching a final decision on these matters and will set out the results from the consultation process, the response to it and any changes to the proposals that may be required. The Equality Impact Assessment will be updated to reflect the current position and will continue to be developed throughout this project.
27. Throughout the process a programme of communication will continue with stakeholders.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

28. Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers

Health and Safety Audit

Welsh Government document Inclusion and Pupil Support

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160318-inclusion-and-pupil-support-en.pdf>

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