

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

QUESTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL AGREED BY COUNCIL ON
5TH MAY, 2010

QUESTION FROM: MR. J. ANGELL

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

With the closure of the Primary School in Llancarfan proposed for the end of the summer term in 2021 the number of pupils in the school has dropped considerably and the school will continue to haemorrhage pupils as time passes and parents look to give continuity to their children's education by moving them elsewhere. I am extremely concerned that those children remaining will end up receiving a poorer education due to this fall in numbers. I have two grandchildren at the school and so have a vested interest to know how the Vale intends to ensure the highest level of education continues at this school and I ask for information on what contingency plans, if any, are in place to ensure this happens.

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QUESTION FROM: MR. G. PAICE

TO: THE EXECUTIVE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE
AND RESOURCES

LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Did the Council feel a great sense of relief in managing to push through the closure of Llancafarn Primary School just ahead of the introduction of a revised School Code that includes a presumption against such moves?

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QUESTION FROM: DR. A. BARRATT

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

WESTERN VALE PRIMARY PROVISION

Kirsty Williams AM recently announced a change to the 21st Century Schools Band B funding intervention rate, reducing Councils' contribution from 50% to 35%. Has the Council considered the implications of this change on Band B projects including the reconfiguration of Western Vale primary provision? And does the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture agree that a review of Band B project financing is advisable to re-examine the viability of alternatives to the Western Vale proposal in light of the intervention rate change?

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QUESTION FROM: DR. A. BARRATT

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME FOR 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS

The Council's Strategic Outline Programme for 21st Century Schools Band B funding, updated in January 2018, gives the following details of projects anticipated under Band C and D of the programme: 2 x 420 primary schools and nurseries, 1 x 630 primary school (Band C); and "other reorganisation projects related to the Rural Vale and Penarth clusters" (Band D). Given the importance of public engagement around such plans, and the likelihood these projects will be the focus of considerable interest in the local communities affected, can the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture give the names of those Vale primary schools ear marked for these plans, and whether any of these projects will involve the transfer, amalgamation or closure of existing primary schools?

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QUESTION FROM: DR. A. BARRATT

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

CONSULTATION REPORT

Annex A of the Consultation Report on the reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale reports that “Periodical comparisons of actual pupil yield against estimated pupil yield have demonstrated that the pupil yield assumptions used by the Council are appropriate and recognise that some children may remain at their current school.” Does the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture share my concern that officers cannot give the most recent date on which the Council’s pupil yield methodology was tested against real-world pupil yield data emanating from developments in the Vale of Glamorgan? And does he also consider it is unfortunate that the results of these periodical comparisons are not recorded, and therefore cannot be made available for public scrutiny?

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QUESTION FROM: DR. A. BARRATT

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL PROTECTION PLEDGE

The Head Teacher of Llancafarn Primary School recently wrote to parents explaining that the Council “have pledged that should the proposal go ahead, additional financial protection for the school will be provided during the transitional period and that jobs at the school will be safeguarded.” Can the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture confirm that such a pledge has been made, and give an estimate of the likely cost of this over the next two years (2019/20 and 2020/21)? Can the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture also make the same pledge to parents, pupils and staff should the proposal not go ahead?

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QUESTION FROM: DR. A. BARRATT

TO: THE EXECUTIVE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE
AND RESOURCES

WELSH ASSEMBLY DEBATE

During a recent Welsh Assembly debate on the Presumption in Favour of Rural Schools, Jane Hutt AM described as “both flawed and concerning” the Council’s labelling of its proposal for Llancarfan Primary School as a transfer rather than a closure, which “does discredit the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013”. The Assembly Member went on to describe the Council’s proposal as “a unique interpretation of the school organisation code”, which “could indeed set a precedent for local authorities to use school transfers as a means of avoiding additional safeguards for rural schools in the revised code.” In the same debate Mr. Andrew RT Davies AM said the Council’s proposal was “cocking-a-snook” at “the sentiment that the Welsh Government put forward via their new code.” Is the Executive Leader of the Council concerned that the proposal risks bringing the Council into disrepute and could jeopardise Welsh Government support for the project?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. D. O'HARE

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Why is the Council not accountable for their attack on a Llancafarn school a beautiful rural school which is/was meeting its needs? To steal the money from the sale of the site to benefit another community, to close down a school that has a long history of providing good education, to close a school where children has gone on to die fighting for the freedom of this country, do you not value the values that children for this school fought and died for? There has been a protracted systematic campaigning launched by the Vale on this school which has directly caused numbers to decline made it harder for the school and directly affecting the children in its care's education. If you genuinely believe the school has no future can you give the school a guaranteed survival open your new school and allow for freedom of choice? But the way you have gone about this is now causing parents not to select your new school but neither to select Llancafarn as they want surety that their children are not going to be moved around like cattle and auctioned of to the highest bidder. Do you not want a school that provides good education had good pupil numbers (until your attack) to provide an education to our children? Why is there no focus on a rural education in a rural community? Why does the Council believe in cookie cutter children each of or children? Why are our children not individuals and treated that way?

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QUESTION FROM: MRS. S. O'HARE

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Why is Cowbridge Comprehensive School continuing to increase its uptake of pupils from C of W based primary education? Why is it that 80% of the feeder places rely on you giving your child a C of W primary education to access Cowbridge Comprehensive. Why is the Council not increasing the number of non religious places in the primary education in Cowbridge? Why is the Vale closing non-religious places in the Cowbridge feeder area or moving non religious children to alternative schools? Why is the Council allowing for marginalizing of non religious children in the Vale, to say you can have a place in a religious school if you want (if the school allows you to have the place when they have rules to give preference to non religious pupils) surely this is not the same as giving freedom of choice to not attend a religious school? Why is Cowbridge Comprehensive giving preference to C of W children hiding behind the Vale upholding religious places and closing non-religious places?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. S. PARRY

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL DESIGNATED AS A RURAL SCHOOL

Are the Council proud that the Welsh Government designated Llancafarn Primary School as a rural school?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. S. PARRY

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

TRANSFER OF LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Could you give a detailed response as to why the Cabinet decided to reject the recommendations of a four hour Scrutiny Committee tasked at examining the `transfer` of Llancarfan Primary School?

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QUESTION FROM: MRS. J. BETTLEY

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

NON CLOSURE OF LLANCARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Can the Council confirm that after the "non-closure" of Llancarfan Primary School that the school will retain its name? If so, please confirm how many other schools in Wales are named with a location as much as 5 miles away? Related to this why would anyone want to be a governor to a school which has had a name and school badge artificially imposed on it?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. N. RENWICK

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING AND CULTURE

POTENTIAL CAPITAL RECEIPTS

How far do the potential capital receipts from closing the school and selling off the site outweigh the costs of altering and extending the existing school buildings?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. L. ROBERTSON

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND PLANNING

BERTH 31, WIMBOURNE ROAD

On the 6th September 2018 the Planning Committee had before it an application for a Certificate of Lawful use in connection with Berth 31, Wimbourne Road. The application was deferred to a future Committee meeting. The reason for deferring the application was to allow the matter to be considered by the lead Legal Officer. The opposing views had been set out in writing and it is believed the necessary research was minimal. Since then there have been 3 Planning Committee meetings but the application has not been listed for consideration by the Committee. There must have been more paperwork produced in the meantime but there is nothing added to the Planning Register. The Council will be aware of the high public interest in this matter and that openness of deliberation is important in part to continue to encourage public participation in the Council's work. Apart from the views of the Council's Legal Officers there must have been contact between the planning officers and the Applicant that might assist the public to understand why the wood piles are still on Berth 31 if, as set out in DIAG's paper, there is no lawful basis for the continued use. Can the Council ensure that the further documentation produced in relation to this application is immediately added to the Planning Register and that if the legal advice supplied to the officers and/or the Planning Committee supports the views of DIAG, that some explanation is given about the continuing delay in refusing the application and not taking enforcement proceedings.

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QUESTION FROM: MR. P. ROBERTSON

TO: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND PLANNING

INCINERATOR ON WOODHAM ROAD, BARRY

When granting planning permission to the incinerator on Woodham Road, Barry, the Vale of Glamorgan Council included a condition that the plant should only process waste wood. When dealing with the application the Council occasionally used the expression “waste wood” as well as the expression “wood waste”. That would support the view that the Council was not using the expression “waste wood” as a term of art but was using it to define the material that could be used as fuel. This assertion is supported by the way in which the Council included the reasons at condition 23 of the planning condition where the Council expressed its concern that the impact of other material had not been considered through the environmental submission accompanying the application for planning permission. Further support for this interpretation comes from the Final Report submitted to the Planning Committee in July 2015 as this described the fuel as being manufactured from clean wood, pallets, construction timber and other woods which have been removed from the construction and demolition waste stream locally. The description went on to say that “In short, the plant will process dry, non-hazardous batches of timber and wood”. It is noticeable that no objection was ever taken to these descriptions by the applicant the planning permission. The operator of the incinerator has made it clear to Ofgem that the fuel it will be using contaminants such as aluminium door and window furniture, broken window and mirror glass, foam rubber, plastic tape, melamine and other laminates, glues, paint together with other contaminants that the operator either cannot or chooses not to identify. It is understood that the wood will not be dry. It is noted that Natural Resources Wales decided to ignore the limitation on the planning permission and proceed to grant a permit on the basis that “waste wood” is a term of art and includes the contaminants listed by the operator, notwithstanding the open-ended nature of the list provided by the operator. The operator could have made application to vary condition 23 but for some reason has not considered the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s involvement as important enough. Any application for an amendment of condition 23 on the part of the operator would no doubt include a proper analysis of the impact of all potential material to be used as fuel in terms of the way that emissions from the incinerator will impact adversely on residents and the local environment. Will the Council stand by its condition 23 and treat the use by the operator of any other material apart from wood as a breach of planning control and be subject to immediate enforcement proceedings to prevent continuation of the breach?

Question No. 15 continued

If the Council will not take enforcement action then the Council is asked to explain what its condition 23 achieves bearing in mind the Planning Committee's concern expressed of the impact on the environment of the use of alternative fuels. What should the Council have done if its condition 23 does not achieve the result that it is clearly aimed at?

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QUESTION FROM: MR. D. CLARKE

TO: THE EXECUTIVE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE
AND RESOURCES

NATIONAL PRINCIPALS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Vale Council has adopted the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales and has produced its own Framework. Appendix B of this Framework does not appear to have been updated to show progress made by the Council notwithstanding it is now about 12 months old. Could the Council update Appendix B to show the progress made. Could the Council further consider whether it is appropriate in a document purporting to encourage public engagement as its focus to have a number of items in Appendix B that are internal only. In dealing with any updates could the Council make it clear how it has complied with the various principles set out in the National Principles including how the Council has developed systems to engage those with no or limited access to the internet and may have restricted ability to travel or any other disability.