

**THE PROVISION OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN  
THE LLANRUMNEY AREA: Pre- Decision Scrutiny**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet, attached at **Appendix A**, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 12 July 2018.

**Background**

2. There are five English-medium and one Welsh-medium primary schools serving the Llanrumney area. The current English-medium primary school capacity can accommodate 1,342 pupils (age 4-11).
3. The report to Cabinet is to enable Cabinet to consider holding public consultation on proposals to rationalise English-medium primary school places in the Llanrumney area.

**Issues highlighted in the report to Cabinet**

4. The existing supply and demand for English-medium primary school places in the Llanrumney area, summarised in tables at **points 42 and 43** of the report to Cabinet, indicates that there is surplus capacity, as at January 2017, of 269 places (20%).
5. The projected demand for places indicates that there is no significant growth in pupil numbers projected within the local area. This is based on the projected demand for reception places up to 2020-21, **at Point 49**, and

a summary of the projected demand for primary school places arising from known housing developments, at **Points 60-65**.

6. The report appraises demand and capacity at the five existing English-medium primary schools and concludes that Glan yr Afon has the highest surplus capacity, at 43% (table 1, point 42). The report highlights that this has an impact on the funding for the school, which currently has a deficit budget in excess of £130,000. The school building is exhibiting major defects/ not operating as intended. In addition, the school remains on the list of schools in need of Estyn monitoring and is currently categorised as Amber by the Welsh Government School Categorisation.
7. Glan yr Afon has a Community Base, which is part of the Flying Start Initiative, and works with children from birth to 3 years, parents and the community in a multi-agency approach providing parenting groups and health drop in clinics for parents. There is also a Wellbeing Class at the school, offering six-month placements for pupils with emotional health and wellbeing needs.
8. The report to Cabinet concludes that the quality of accommodation and education available at the other schools in the areas is of a higher standard than that available at Glan yr Afon and that there is the potential for demand for places to be met at these schools. The report therefore recommends consulting on a proposal to close Glan yr Afon.
9. The report to Cabinet highlights the following points in respect of the proposed closure:
  - i. Demand for English-medium primary school places could be met via St Cadoc's Catholic Primary School, if the Governing Body of that school determined a Published Admission Number of 60 places per year group;
  - ii. The expansion of St Cadoc's Catholic Primary School would utilise existing accommodation to provide additional classrooms. The expansion of other schools in the Llanrumney area would require significant capital investment;

- iii. Further consideration would need to be given to how alternative facilities could be made available to accommodate the Flying Start provision and any costs associated with this. Any such provision would need to be located in the local area;
- iv. The Council would be able to close the Wellbeing Class at the end of a six-month placement period, without detriment to the pupils. Capacity for Wellbeing places could be maintained by opening a new class in another school.

10. The report to Cabinet includes a number of appendices, as follows:

- Appendix 1 – Catchments Map
- Appendix 2 – School Number on Roll data
- Appendix 3 – Statutory Screening Tool

11. The Cabinet is recommended to authorise Officers to:

1. *Consult on a proposal to discontinue Glan-yr-Afon Primary School from 31 August 2019 including changes to community primary school catchments in the local area.*
2. *Note that officers will bring a report on the outcome of the consultation to a future meeting to seek authorisation as to whether to proceed to publish proposals in accordance with section 48 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.*
3. *Note that the determination of Admission Arrangements, including Published Admission Numbers are a matter for the respective Admission Authority, which in the case of Voluntary Aided primary schools is the Governing Body of the school.*

### **Scope of Scrutiny**

12. The scope of this scrutiny is for Members to consider and provide comments on the draft report to Cabinet. Pre-decision scrutiny aims to inform the Cabinet's decisions by making evidence based recommendations. Scrutiny Members are advised to:

- a. look at the information provided in the report to Cabinet to see if this is sufficient to enable the Cabinet to make an informed decision;
- b. check the financial implications section of the Cabinet report to be aware of the advice given;
- c. check the legal implications section of the Cabinet report to be aware of the advice given;
- d. check the recommendations to Cabinet to see if these are appropriate.

## **Way Forward**

13. Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education Employment, Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning), and Michele Duddridge-Hossain (Operational Manager – Planning and Provision) will present the report to the Committee, and be available to answer any questions Members may have.
14. This report will also enable Members to provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

## **Legal Implications**

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the

procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Review and assess the information contained in the draft Cabinet Report, attached at **Appendix A**, together with any information provided at the meeting
- b) Provide any recommendations, comments or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director of Education and Lifelong Learning prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

**Davina Fiore**

**Director of Governance and Legal Services**

**6 July 2018**