

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

23rd June 2016

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Arwel Jones
Portfolio Holder for Education**

SUBJECT: Nantmel C. in W. School

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 15th December 2015, the authority has carried out formal consultation on closure of Nantmel C. in W. school.

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet members of the responses received to the consultation and to determine whether or not to proceed with the statutory process to close Nantmel C. in W. School, through the publication of a statutory notice.

The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Consultation Document

Appendix B – Consultation Report

Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with School Council, staff, governors and parents / community

Appendix D – Impact Assessments

Background

The Consultation Period

On the 15th December 2015, Cabinet approved the commencement of consultation on the closure of Nantmel C. in W. School from the 31st December 2016. The consultation period commenced on the 29th January 2016, and was due to end on the 11th March 2016. However, the consultation period was extended, and eventually ended on the 22nd April 2016.

The consultation document was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period. The document was also distributed to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code (2013). The consultation document that was issued is attached as Appendix A.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing the online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it

to the School Modernisation Team, or by writing to the School Modernisation Team.

During the consultation period, meetings were also held with the following:

- The School Council of Nantmel C. in W. School
- Staff at Nantmel C. in W. School
- Governors at Nantmel C. in W. School
- Parents / community at Nantmel C. in W. School

The minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix C, and the issues raised in the meetings are included in the consultation report.

Consultation Responses

A total of 127 written responses were received to the consultation. This includes responses received via the online response form, the paper response form, other written responses and responses from pupils received using the questionnaire in the young people's version of the consultation document.

All issues raised during the consultation period, including those raised in written responses and those raised in the consultation meetings, are listed in the Consultation Report (attached as Appendix B), along with the authority's response to these issues.

Proposal

- i) To receive the Consultation Report in respect of closure of Nantmel C. in W. School.
- ii) To approve the publication of a statutory notice in respect of closure of Nantmel C. in W. School from the 31st December 2016.

A financial analysis of the draft recommendation was carried out, and details were included in the Consultation Paper (Appendix A). It was originally estimated that closure of Nantmel C. in W. School would lead to annual savings of £68,033 based on the 15/16 formula.

However, the figures have been rerun for the 16/17 financial year inclusive of transport costs. This has led to a reduction in the estimated savings to £54,000, due to the number of funded pupils reducing from 33 in 2015/16 to 30 in 2016/17, which has led to the reduction in the small schools allowance of £18,000 which was included in the previous estimated savings based on the 2015/16 formula.

One Powys Plan

'Transforming Learning and Skills' is one of the priorities within the One Powys Plan. Within this priority, the Plan states that *'We need to re-organise schools (primary, secondary and post 16) to ensure affordability, sustainability and appropriate leadership capacity.'*

Options Considered/Available

The School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) discussed a range of possible options in relation to Nantmel C. in W. School with the governing body before agreeing the draft proposal to close the school. These were outlined in the paper considered by Cabinet on the 15th December 2015, and are also listed in the Consultation Document issued in respect of this proposal (Appendix A).

A number of alternative options were also suggested during the consultation period. These are listed on pages 115 – 124 in the Consultation Report (Appendix B), along with the authority's response.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

N/A

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

A Single Integrated Impact Assessment has been produced in respect of this proposal. This is attached in Appendix D.

The Equality Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment in respect of this proposal have been updated following the consultation period, and are also included in Appendix D.

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The authority's Schools Transformation Programme is intended to improve educational outcomes for children and young people. This aligns with the aspiration to improve safeguarding and well-being for children and young people.

Local Member(s)

The local member County Councillor David Evans has commented:
“Unfortunately there has been insufficient time for me to thoroughly analyse the report and appendices which in all extend to some 220 pages. From what I have read however I believe that there is no justification for the school to close.”

Other Front Line Services

N/A

Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

Legal: The proposal can be accepted from a legal point of view.

The Finance Business Partner comments: The figures have been rerun for the 16/17 financial year inclusive of transport costs. This has led to a reduction in the estimated savings from £68k to £54k due to the funded pupil numbers reducing from 33 (15/16) to 30 (16/17), this drop to 30 has led to the reduction of the smalls schools allowance of £18k which was included in the previous estimated savings based on 2015/16 formula. The small schools allowance ensures sufficient funding is delegated to the school to enable them to employ a minimum number of teachers. The funding generated by pupil numbers alone does not provide sufficient funding.

The estimated savings do not include any redundancy costs

The School ended the 2015/16 financial year with a surplus of £24,338 and has a projected budgeted surplus of £8,034 for the 2016/17 financial year. In accordance with the Scheme for Financing Schools, finance continue to work with schools to ensure that resources are used appropriately.

HR: Any HR implications will be managed in line with the school’s HR policies and in consultation with the Governing Body, staff and recognised trade unions.

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

Corporate Communications

Communications Comment: The report is of considerable public interest and requires the use of a news release and appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

Statutory Officers

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and would remind Cabinet that they must have read the consultation report and the Impact Assessments before coming to their decision.”

The **Strategic Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)** notes the comments made by Finance.

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
1. to receive the Consultation Report in respect of the proposal to close Nantmel C. in W. School;	To provide a sustainable model of primary education
2. to approve the publication of a statutory notice in respect of closure of Nantmel C. in W. School from the 31st December 2016.	

Relevant Policy (ies):	School Transformation Policy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	Cllr David Evans
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Marianne Evans
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	End of June 2016

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Background Papers used to prepare Report: