

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

3rd March 2020

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

REPORT TITLE: Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 7th January 2020, the Council published a Statutory Notice proposing to close Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School from the 31st August 2021, and to establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 from the 1st September 2021.
- 1.2 The Statutory Notice was published on the 13th January 2020 for a period of 28 days, and the purpose of this report is to provide an Objection Report to Cabinet members.
- 1.3 The report includes a recommendation to proceed with the establishment of an English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the sites currently occupied by Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School from the 1st September 2021.
- 1.4 The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Statutory Notice

Appendix B – Updated Impact Assessment

2. Background

The Consultation Period

- 2.1 Consultation in relation to establishing an English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2018) from the 26th September 2019 to 7th November 2019.
- 2.2 A Consultation Report listing the issues raised during the consultation and the authority's response to them was published. This was discussed by Full Council on the 20th December 2019, and was considered by Cabinet on the 7th January 2020.

- 2.3 On the 7th January 2020, Cabinet agreed to proceed with the process to establish an English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the sites currently occupied by Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School through the publication of a Statutory Notice.

Statutory Notice

- 2.4 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 7th January 2020, the Council published a Statutory Notice proposing the following:

'From 31 August 2021:

- i. *The Council proposes to discontinue the following two schools:*
- *Ladywell Green Infants School, Park Lane, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1EG;*
 - *Hafren C.P. Junior School, Park Lane, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1EG.*

From 1 September 2021:

- i. *The Council proposes to establish a new English medium community school for boys and girls aged 4-11 years old, that will operate on the current sites of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School.'*

- 2.5 The Statutory Notice was published on the 13th January 2020 for a period of 28 days, in accordance with the guidance within the School Organisation Code (2018). A copy of the Statutory Notice is attached as Appendix A.

- 2.6 The objection period ended on the 10th February 2020.

Objections

- 2.7 No objections were received during the statutory objection period.

3. Advice

- 3.1 As no objections were received during the objection period, it is recommended that the Council proceeds with implementation of the proposal to close Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School from the 31st August 2021, and to establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the sites currently occupied by Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School from the 1st September 2021, as outlined in the Statutory Notice (Appendix A).
- 3.2 It is estimated that implementation of the proposal would lead to annual savings to the Council of £131,885.

- 3.3 In order to ensure effective stewardship of the resources available to schools, particularly those that are subject to closure, Powys' Scheme for Financing of Schools makes provision for this under Section 3.7.2, where it states that:

'The Authority may impose additional restrictions, including but not limited to:

- Restriction of expenditure to agreed plans
- Removal of powers of virement'

- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that:

- Spend at the schools is restricted to that included in their approved budget plan and no virement of funds between budget headings is permitted unless approved by the Authority;
- Any staffing changes are subject to approval by the Authority;
- Any contracts awarded for the supply of goods or services are subject to approval by the Authority.

This will ensure that expenditure is limited to that which is absolutely necessary to protect council resources.

- 3.5 It must be noted that the establishment of a new school does not preclude that school from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 It is estimated that implementation of the proposal would lead to estimated annual savings to the Council of £131,885, based on current projected pupil number estimates and the current 2019/20 funding formula in place. This figure does not include any redundancy costs that could arise should the proposal be implemented. The council will continue to work with both schools to ensure that any projected deficit prior to closure has a robust recovery plan in place, in line with the Scheme for Financing schools.
- 4.2 Implementation of the proposal will require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, Finance, HR and ICT. These service areas have been kept informed of the development of the proposal throughout the statutory process, and are aware of the need for them to support this process.
- 4.3 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) comments that the proposal can be approved from a financial perspective, and supports the expenditure restrictions recommended in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 No comments were received.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Impact Assessments has been carried out, was updated following the consultation period to take account of the issues raised, and has been updated again following the objection period. The latest version is attached as Appendix B.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 To approve the proposal to amalgamate Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School in order to establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the current sites of the two schools, by:

- Closing Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School from the 31st August 2021
- Establishing a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the current sites of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School on the 1st September 2021

- 8.3 In line with Section 3.7.2 of the Scheme for Financing Schools, it is proposed that:

- Spend at the schools is restricted to that included in their approved budget plan and no virement of funds between budget headings is permitted unless approved by the Authority
- Any staffing changes have to be approved by the Authority
- Any contracts awarded for the supply of goods or services have to be approved by the Authority

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