

Report

Cabinet Member for Education & Young People

Part 1

Date: 7 January 2015

Item No. 1

Subject **Welsh-medium secondary education provision**

Purpose To seek approval to move to Formal Consultation to establish a seedling Welsh-medium secondary school on the site of the current Duffryn High School in Newport

Author Amanda B Davies, Assistant Head of Education (Resources & Planning)

Ward All

Summary Welsh-medium secondary school provision is currently available across the South East Wales Consortium area at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni in Caerphilly.

However pupil forecasts show that from September 2016 there will be insufficient places to accommodate Welsh-medium secondary learners across the region, with additional pressures emerging by September 2019.

The four authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen have all included a commitment within their 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to work together to secure additional and sufficient Welsh-medium secondary provision within the region in the medium to longer term.

The Outline Business Base submitted to Welsh Government outlines that the preferred option is to split the Duffryn High School site, currently set over three blocks, to provide for a 1200 capacity two-block English-medium school and a 900 capacity one-block Welsh-medium school. Some site remodelling will be required to accomplish this.

The new Welsh-medium school would initially operate in a seedling capacity of approximately 100 pupils in the first academic year. The catchment area for this school will be the south-Gwent area, encompassing the city of Newport along with the geographical catchment area of Ysgol Y Ffin in Monmouthshire.

Proposal **Proceed to Formal Consultation to establish a new Welsh-medium secondary school in September 2016.**

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director – People
- Strategic Director – Places
- Interim Head of Regeneration & Regulatory Services
- Senior HR Business Partner
- Schools Resources Manager
- Governor Support Manager, EAS
- Education Business Manager
- Cabinet Member for Education, Monmouthshire County Council

Signed:

Background:

Newport City Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is presented in conjunction with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen Local Authorities (LAs) and the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS). The five LAs and the EAS work together in partnership to plan and deliver Welsh-medium education across the area and the plan details how the Council and its' consortia colleagues will aim to achieve Welsh Government's outcomes and targets as outlined in the national Welsh Medium Education Strategy at a local and regional level.

The vision and aim is that the South East Wales consortia will lead the development of Welsh standards in education to equip a bilingual Wales with a skilled bilingual workforce, supporting the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh in Education. The region will work together to equip schools and education providers across age ranges and linguistic sectors with the capacity and sustainability to increase standards in Welsh and promote the use of the Welsh language within families, communities and workplaces. The Council will also aim to stimulate and provide local, accessible, sustainable, community-focused provision to meet the growing demand for Welsh-medium education.

As part of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, Newport City Council will work colleagues across the South East Wales Local Authorities to ensure sufficient Welsh-medium secondary provision in 2016 when Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw reaches its full capacity.

There is a requirement therefore to move to statutory consultation on the proposal to establish a Welsh-medium secondary school in Newport. This process is a Cabinet Member for Education & Young People decision.

The following sections set out the current situation, the future demand for provision, proposed location for the seedling school, and timelines for any project to emerge.

Current Situation:

Welsh-medium secondary school provision is currently available across the South East Wales Consortium area at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni in Caerphilly. However pupil forecasts show that from September 2016 there will be insufficient places to accommodate Welsh-medium secondary learners across the region, with additional pressures emerging by September 2019.

The four authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen have all included a commitment within their 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to work together to secure additional and sufficient Welsh-medium secondary provision within the region in the medium to longer term.

In July 2014, Newport City Council received approval for an extension to the 21CS Strategic Outline Programme of approximately £12 million, specifically targeted at delivering Welsh-medium secondary education for the city of Newport and south Monmouthshire. In August 2014, the South East Wales Consortium regional planning group were successful in achieving Welsh Government approval of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) in respect of this proposal.

A regional Outline Business Case (OBC) is now to be submitted to Welsh Government to seek approval to invest an estimated £17m in the proposed programme for development of additional regional Welsh-medium Secondary provision in South East Wales, during Band A 2014 – 2019. The case for change in the region is based on 6 investment objectives which were agreed by the South East Wales Consortia regional planning group established to plan for future Welsh-medium secondary provision. The summary of those investment objectives are as follows:

1. To achieve greater economy and efficiency
2. To develop a sustainable education system

3. To create safe learning environments
4. To achieve inspirational settings
5. To secure places for Welsh-medium learners across the region
6. To achieve inclusive settings

Future Demand for provision:

The development of regional Welsh-medium secondary education provision in Newport will deliver up to 900 school places in future years. It will consolidate and expand provision within the region and allow sustainable education provision at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw to continue and meet the demand that exists across the region.

Pupils will benefit from a local provision, reduced travelling times, allowing energy to be focused on learning. Within a site that will allow for integration between two schools, the community cohesion will quickly be established. The expansion of Welsh-medium provision will also cater for linguistic continuity across the region.

This proposal to develop a seedling regional Welsh-medium secondary school will not de-stabilise Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, neither is it intended to have a detrimental impact on local English medium schools. It will underpin the delivery of the regional approach to Welsh-medium provision as a whole.

Proposed location for Seedling Secondary School:

The OBC identifies that the preferred option in the medium-term is to establish a solution within Newport on the site currently hosting Duffryn High School, presently split over three blocks. Under this proposal, English-medium provision would be retained on the site for 1200 pupils over two blocks, with a new Welsh-medium Secondary School for in the region of 900 pupils within the remaining block on its own site. Regional planning officers across the South East Wales region are supportive of this option as the preferred way forward.

This will include some site remodelling in order to accomplish a split site, as follows:

- Demountable replacement and essential extension of the two retained blocks for Duffryn High School;
- Re-provisioning of essential curriculum accommodation to support additional pupils;
- Creation of a separate Welsh-medium secondary to operate on its own site for 900 pupils within the remaining third block.

Both schools will have exclusive use of education classroom curriculum facilities including separate pitches, but will have shared access to the Sports Hall.

To achieve this, the project will take the form of three separate phases on the school site:

Phase 1: Approximately 400 pupils and associated curriculum facilities will be re-located from the Lower School Block of Duffryn High School into a designated area between the Upper and Medium School Blocks. This phase will deliver works to consolidate education provision for the whole Duffryn High School of 1200 pupils.

Phase 2: The Lower School Block for Duffryn High School will then be used for the proposed establishment of a new seedling Welsh-medium Secondary School. As such the current Lower School Block and associated site of Duffryn High School will form the design outline for procurement of this new school with some refurbishment in order to support a seedling intake of pupils with full curriculum delivery.

Phase 3: The Lower School Block and associated site which will form the proposed new Welsh-medium Secondary School will then be extended and remodelled to deliver full curriculum delivery for circa 900 pupils from September 2016.

This will maximise the efficiency of an expansive school site within a city which is carrying a burgeoning population and for all other site options have been tested.

Timelines for implementation:

The project will include the development of a new 900 place Welsh-medium learning and teaching environment to share the existing site with the present Duffryn High School. The management of the site will remain with Newport City Council and the Governing Body of Duffryn High School until the new school is implemented when the site will be split between Duffryn High School and the new Governing Body of the Welsh-medium secondary school.

At this point a Shadow Governing Body will be appointed who will take forward the recruitment of the staffing structure, the set up and organisation of the school, including the naming of the new school.

Admissions to the new seedling school will be the responsibility of the Chief Education Officer for Newport City Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy. Approximately 86 pupils will be admitted to the 2016/17 Year Seven group, and the catchment area for this school will be the south-Gwent area, encompassing the city of Newport along with the geographical catchment area of Ysgol Y Ffin in Monmouthshire.

The timeline and milestones for the project are proposed as follows:

Milestone activity	Provisional Dates
Submission of Outline Business Case (OBC)	December 2014
Approval to move to Formal Consultation	January 2015
Approval of OBC by WG	January 2015
Formal Consultation period to establish a new seedling Welsh-medium secondary school	2 nd February – 20 th March 2015
Publication of Statutory Notice	Late April 2015
Determination of Proposal	Late May 2015
Submission of Full Business Case (FBC)	May 2015
Approval of FBC	June 2015
New seedling school opens	September 2016

Financial Summary:

The Strategic Outline Case previously submitted to Welsh Government set out how collaborative funding by Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Council could deliver a scheme under the 21CS programme to increase regional Welsh-medium secondary education provision. The subsequent OBC confirmed the preferred option with a level of funding for this joint project by the two authorities at £8.5 million, and with 50% match funding from Welsh Government, the total budget envelope is £17 million.

The budget of £17 million will enable the transfer / relocation of some pupil services for Duffryn High School to free up a block for the new Welsh-medium secondary school. The scheme will ensure that English medium education is consolidated for Duffryn High School and allow Welsh-medium education provision to emerge on the same site with a full spectrum of curriculum delivery. The schools will operate as two separate schools.

There will be an increase in whole authority staff costs through the creation of a new seedling school. There would also be a requirement to set up the staffing team in advance of the open date for the school – those costs are over and above normal running costs.

Each Council would have usual demographic growth applied to the Revenue Support Grant. Within each Council it is for the Chief Education Officer to determine with the corporate mid-term revenue planning how additional school places are applied through the Individual School Budget sums.

Newport City Council has a policy of awarding a sum of £35,000 start-up costs to any newly established school and this would support organisational development issues as part of the implementation programme.

The project will also see the realisation of efficiency savings:

- Transport costs would be reduced as pupils migrate to schools closer to home;
- More efficient running costs will be achieved in schools currently hosting surplus places;
- Shared services during the early seedling years until the school reaches its full capacity.

Risks:

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to establish the new school	H	M	Moving to formal consultation within the statutory consultation process will enable wider stakeholder feedback to adequately test the case for a new school.	Chief Education Officer

Fairness & Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA)

The development of the Equality Impact Assessment has assisted the Council in determining the preferred option to date. This will also be relevant for the preparation of the statutory consultation process.

The FEIA was originally devised in November 2013 when regional planning work included the Newport option and it has now been updated to note the stage for the Council in taking this proposed service forward. [A copy is attached dated December 2014.](#) It will continue to be updated and revised at each stage of the decision making process and published on the Council web site.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Statutory Code for Admissions
- Newport City Council Admissions Policy

Options available

Option 1: To proceed to Formal Consultation to establish a new Welsh-medium secondary school in September 2016.

Option 2: To maintain the status quo and continue to use Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw as the catchment Welsh-medium secondary school for Newport pupils.

Option 3: To seek further alternative solutions.

Preferred Option and Why:

The preferred option is Option 1. This option will:

- achieve greater economy and efficiency through appropriate sized schools, collaboration and better use of resources to improve the cost effectiveness of the education system, and in doing so will ensure that the Council has schools of the right type and right size in the right place;
- develop a sustainable education system with all schools meeting national building standards and reducing the recurrent costs and carbon footprint;
- create safe learning environments for schools and communities that will enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes and life chances for children and young people that are aligned to the Council's key strategies;
- achieve inspirational settings appropriate for new educational developments, new technologies and adaptable to cater for the changing needs of the future;
- secure places for Welsh-medium learners across the region through security of admission, and;
- achieve inclusive settings, providing for the individual learning needs for all pupils, providing pleasant and appropriate spaces for all school users; spaces in which pupils including those with additional learning needs and disabilities feel that their needs are respected.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

This is being funded via the 21st Century Schools programme which is jointly funded via WG grant and Council funds. The move to formal consultation does not incur financial costs at this stage.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

In taking and implementing any decision about the development of a new Welsh-medium secondary school on part of the current Duffryn Comprehensive School site, the Council must comply with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the statutory Code on School Reorganisation issued by the Welsh Ministers under the legislation. The key issues are in relation to standards of education and efficient use of resources and the demand for Welsh language education within Newport. Because the proposals will involve the development of a new secondary school, the Council must undertake a period of prior consultation with key stakeholders and consider any responses before deciding whether or not to proceed with the publication of the relevant statutory notices. Although Cabinet have already agreed to the submission of the OBC for the funding, this is dependent on the outcome of the consultation process.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no staffing implications as a result of this report.

Comments from Non Executive Members

Councillor Fouweather

I very support the establishment of a Welsh Medium Secondary School in Newport. This is long overdue and will present many benefits to the wider community. There are many families in my ward who have chosen this route for education and I believe that once the school is up and running properly more families will choose Welsh Medium Education.

Local Issues

None

Background Papers

Dated: 7 January 2015