

Report



Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years

Part 1

Date: April 2024

Item No:

Subject **School Reorganisation Proposal – Increase in Capacity at Tredegar Park Primary School – Final Determination**

Purpose To seek final determination on the school reorganisation proposal that has been progressed “to increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School from 420 to 525 pupil places with effect from September 2024”.

Author Assistant Head of Education – Resources

Ward Tredegar Park & Marshfield

Summary This school reorganisation proposal is being progressed by the Council in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code and included a period of formal consultation followed by the publication of a statutory notice for the required period of at least 28 days.

The proposal passed through the statutory notice stage without objection. As a result, the Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years can now take the final decision to implement the proposal as consulted upon.

Proposal **To approve the school reorganisation proposal that has been progressed by the Council “to increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School from 420 to 525 pupil places with effect from September 2024”.**

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Education Senior Management Team
- Senior HR and Finance Business Partners
- Headteacher and Governing Body of Tredegar Park Primary School

Signed

Background

Tredegar Park Primary School currently has a published admission number of 60, with capacity for 420 pupils of statutory school age. However, the proposal that is being progressed suggests that the published admission number is increased to 75, thus inflating the total overall capacity for pupils of statutory school age to 525. This increase is possible by utilising part of the Forest Family Centre, which is adjacent to the school and has recently been vacated by Duffryn Community Link, and also by making some adaptations to existing space within the main school building. The proposal confirmed that the increase in capacity would be applied incrementally over a 7-year period. As a result, from September 2024, 75 places will be available in each new Reception year group at the school, and this arrangement will continue until September 2030 when the new Published Admission Number of 75 will be realised across all year groups, and the proposal will become fully implemented.

The January 2023 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) identified that the school is currently operating at 89% of total available capacity. However, the demand for pupil places at the school is expected to increase as a result of housing developments in the areas around the school including at the Panasonic, Mon Bank and Whiteheads sites. The scale of development in the wider area will result in a significant pressure on the availability of school places in The John Frost School cluster. Indeed, the October 2023 census count confirmed that there were only 5 spaces available in the current Reception year group across the whole cluster area, equivalent to 1.47% of the overall capacity. All primary schools in the cluster were considered for expansion; however other schools are either not suitable, are too far away or are already being considered for expansion under alternative projects. The capital costs associated with this proposal are being funded via a Welsh Government grant.

The proposal included a period of formal consultation which was carried out between 25th September 2023 and 12th November 2023, following which a Consultation Report, containing a summary of the issues raised and the Council's response to these matters, was prepared and published on the Newport City Council website. The decisions to initially take forward the proposal and later to publish the statutory notice were both approved by the Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years in accordance with the Council's agreed democratic processes and procedures.

Current Position

The Council moved to the second stage in this reorganisation process by publishing a statutory proposal between 19th February 2024 and 17th March 2024. This confirmed the intent to increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School from 420 to 525 pupil places with effect from September 2024. The statutory notice gave an opportunity for stakeholders to lodge formal objections against the proposal.

The statutory proposal was published on the Newport City Council website, with copies also displayed on all access and entrance gates at the school. Information was also distributed by email and weblink to all stakeholders as outlined in the statutory School Organisation Code, and those individuals who submitted a response during the formal consultation process and had opted to receive updates as the proposal progressed. Hard copies of the statutory proposal were available on request. The proposal passed through this statutory notice stage without objection. As a result, the Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years is now required to take the final decision to determine to implement the proposal as consulted on.

Financial Summary

Capital

The Council has been awarded Welsh Government grant funding of £1m to support the capital works associated with this project. Officers are confident that this is sufficient to undertake the required works; therefore, this project will not impact on the capital headroom.

Revenue

The proposed increase to the PAN will be incremental, growing at 15 places per year over 7 academic years. The total funding required for the additional places is outlined in the table below. Once fully established, the 105 additional places will cost c. £360k per annum. As a maintained setting, these places will be funded through the school's Individual School Budget (ISB), distributed by the Council according to the prescribed funding formula.

| School Name | 24/25 £,000 | 25/26 £,000 | 26/27 £,000 | 27/28 £,000 | 28/29 £,000 | 29/30 £,000 | 30/31 £,000 | 31/32 £,000 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tredegar Park Primary | 66 | 118 | 166 | 214 | 259 | 305 | 350 | 396 |

The expansion proposal is currently included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Funding of c.£29k was first approved in 2021/2022; however, due to the delay in progressing the proposal, the MTFP will be revised to reflect the incremental funding requirements each financial year as per the table below:

| 2024/25 £,000 | 2025/26 £,000 | 2026/27 £,000 | 2027/28 £,000 | 2028/29 £,000 | 2029/30 £,000 | 2030/31 £,000 | 2031/32 £,000 | 2032/33 £,000 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 9 | 58 | 50 | 48 | 46 | 45 | 45 | 45 | 19 |

It is important to note that as the additional places are required due to an increase in demand for primary sector places, if this proposal is unfunded, the ISB funding available for all other schools will be diluted.

Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme's exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

| Risk Title / Description | Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L) | Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L) | Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect? | Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk? |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Failure to determine the proposal | H | L | There has been a full consultation process in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code, followed by the publication of a statutory notice that generated no objections. | Chief Education Officer |
| Proposed expansion is insufficient to demand the demand for pupil places in the area | M | L | Pupil projections will continue to be monitored by the Council's Planning of School Places group, with mitigating action taken as required to support oversubscription. | Chief Education Officer |
| Demand for pupil places in the area diminishes leading to an increase in the number of surplus places | M | L | Pupil projections will continue to be monitored by the Council's Planning of School Places group; however, this risk is considered unlikely due to latest pupil projections and considering the impact of housing developments in the local area. | Chief Education Officer |
| The increase in the number of primary school places causes greater pressure on secondary school places in the area | M | L | Pupil projections will continue to be monitored by the Council's Planning of School Places group; however, as there are no proposed changes to catchment boundaries, this risk is considered unlikely. | Chief Education Officer |

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|---|--|---|--|--|
| Insufficient capital funding to support the project | H | L | Officers are confident that the grant funding of £1m awarded for this project is sufficient to support the required works. | Chief Education Officer |

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Corporate Plan
Education Service Plan

Options Available and considered

Option 1: To determine to implement the proposal as consulted upon and, as a result, increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School from 420 to 525 pupil places with effect from September 2024.

Option 2: To decide to withdraw the proposal and therefore maintain the existing admission arrangements for the school. This option would require the Council to a) consider alternative opportunities to expand primary school provision within The John Frost School cluster and b) return the grant funding awarded to this project to Welsh Government. Any costs incurred to date would need to be funded by the Council.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is Option 1. The demand for pupil places at Tredegar Park Primary School is expected to increase in coming years as a result of housing developments in the area, the scale of which will result in a significant pressure on the availability of school places in The John Frost School cluster. All primary schools in the cluster were considered for expansion; however other schools are either not suitable, are too far away or are already being considered for expansion under alternative projects. The capital costs associated with this proposal are being funded via a Welsh Government grant. The proposal confirms that the increase in capacity will be applied incrementally over a 7-year period. As a result, from September 2024, 75 places will be available in each new Reception year group at the school, and this arrangement will continue until September 2030 when the new Published Admission Number of 75 will be realised across all year groups, and the proposal will become fully implemented.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Capital

The Welsh Government has awarded £1m to undertake the required expansion works, however there remains significant volatility in relation to inflationary price increases and, therefore, the capital expenditure will need to be monitored closely to ensure the project remains within the available funding, as it will not be possible to absorb any overspending from existing local authority capital funding headroom.

Revenue

The proposal will create capacity within the John Frost Cluster in response to an increased demand for places, following several housing developments in the surrounding area. The growth of the school is planned to be incremental to mitigate migration from other surrounding schools, however, there remains a risk that pupil numbers at those existing schools may reduce over time if primary numbers remain static overall, which could lead to a loss of funding to those schools and consequentially create budget pressures. If approved, this revenue funding requirement will become a pre commitment to fund the growth from the ISB. As noted in the financial summary, the expansion proposal is currently included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the MTFP will be revised annually to reflect the incremental funding requirements. However, if it is deemed not possible to fund this pressure from within the overall Council budget, and the provision is implemented, it will dilute the funding available to all other schools, many of whom are already facing significant financial challenges.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The proposal in the report constitutes an “regulated alteration” according to School Admissions (Variation of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 because the proposal is to increase the capacity of the school by 25%. The report indicates that the required consultation and publication has taken place in accordance with the School Organisation Code and that no objections to the proposals were received. It does not appear that there are any related proposals. It is therefore open to the Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years to decide to adopt the proposals set out in this report, such decision being within her delegated authority.

Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

The report sets out the proposal to increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School and use Welsh Government funding to create additional primary school places, to help meet demand for places in the local area. Following Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code, the period of formal consultation, stakeholder engagement, and statutory notice has been completed. The Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Assessment has been updated following the consultation period to inform the Cabinet Member and subsequent consultees. There will be a requirement to consider the workforce arrangements in the progression of this plan as additional staff may be required to expand the pupil offer.

Scrutiny Committees

None

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) was undertaken and is published on the Council’s website (available in Welsh [here](#) and English [here](#)). The Council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality. A Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) was completed to support the decision to launch this proposal and was later revised to provide further detail around the potential impact on the Welsh language. The FEIA was subsequently revisited to support the decision to publish the statutory notice and has been reviewed and updated again to support the final determination of the proposal.

This school reorganisation proposal was undertaken in accordance with the legislation outlined in the statutory School Organisation Code. This Code outlines the key stakeholders that should be consulted with as part of the process, but this is not exclusive, and the Council extended this list because of feedback received in relation to previous proposals. An invitation to engage in the consultation process was emailed to identified stakeholders. The proposal was also published on the Newport City website, and on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The consultation documents contained a consultation response pro-forma, and there was an opportunity for any questions or concerns to be submitted. All consultation documents were available bilingually in Welsh and English. The consultation involved 2 drop-in sessions with those affected by the proposal, and a Pupil Voice session was arranged for a group of learners from the school. The publication of the statutory notice offered an opportunity for stakeholders to lodge legal objections against the proposal; however, no such objections were lodged.

The FEIA has identified positive impacts of the proposal in relation to *Age and Pregnancy or Maternity*. The proposal will increase the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School by 105 pupil places, and this will increase the likelihood of local children securing places in a local primary school. Whilst the additional places will be available to all applicants, in accordance with the Council’s School Admissions Policy, priority will be afforded to children living within the school catchment area. The increase in pupil places will also have a positive impact on families with, or planning to have, children within the Tredegar Park & Marshfield area.

Whilst no negative impacts have been identified, it is acknowledged that the proposal has no bearing on the Council's plans to develop and promote Welsh-medium language provision across the City and will not contribute to the Council's targets in relation to Cymraeg 2050. The FEIA does however provide further detail around the potential impact of this proposal on the Welsh language. The measures being employed as part of the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and the WESP Implementation Plan are deemed sufficient to mitigate any perceived negative impact.

The sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been considered as outlined below:

- Long term: the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs. **The proposal will result in the capacity of Tredegar Park Primary School increasing by 105 pupil places, starting in September 2024. Over the past 5 years the number of pupils attending the school has fluctuated, with a high of 398 in 2021/22, however, the current Reception year group is fully subscribed. Most other English-medium schools in The John Frost School cluster are almost at capacity. There is a need to increase capacity within the area, and whilst all schools within the cluster were considered for expansion, Tredegar Park Primary School was identified as being the most suitable.**
- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives. **Welsh Government guidance recommends a 10% surplus of places across schools. As of January 2023, there were 11% surplus places at Tredegar Park Primary School, predominantly due to an unusually small Reception intake in September 2022, although the current Reception year group is fully subscribed. The increase in housing developments in the local area and the fact that many of the primary schools in the cluster are already full means that additional school places are required. The Newport One ward profiles show that the Tredegar Park & Marshfield ward population has constantly grown over the past 10 years in all age groups. Tredegar Park Primary School has been identified as the school most suitable to accommodate a small scale expansion to 2.5 form entry.**
- Integration: Consider how the proposals will impact on our wellbeing objectives, our wellbeing goals, other objectives, or those of other public bodies. **The proposal is supported by a comprehensive FEIA which has been regularly reviewed to consider the impact of the decision. This proposal supports the "A prosperous Wales", "A more equal Wales" and "A Wales of cohesive communities" Well-being Goals and has no adverse effect on any of the other Well-being Goals. In addition, this proposal supports the One Newport PSB well-being plan for 2018-2023, and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act's Wellbeing Goal to create a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.**
- Collaboration: have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person, or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives. **A formal consultation has been carried out with the opportunity for engagement with all stakeholders and is being supported at each stage by a FEIA to consider impact. If approved, the Education Service will work with the Governing Body of Tredegar Park Primary School to successfully deliver this proposal and achieve the required expansion.**
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the City we serve. **The Council has engaged with stakeholders affected by the proposal through the formal consultation process. Following conclusion of the formal consultation, a Consultation Report was prepared, published, and distributed to all identified stakeholders. The subsequent statutory notice period offered an opportunity for stakeholders to lodge legal objections against the proposal. There were no legal objections launched in this case.**

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable

Consultation

This proposal has been subject to a full programme of stakeholder engagement as required under the statutory School Organisation Code, and as outlined in detail in the consultation report.

Background Papers

Updated FEIA

Dated: April 2024