

Your re/Eich cyf:
Our ref/Ein cyf: MH/
Date/Dyddiad: 18th July 2016

Please contact/Cysyllter â Mark Horton
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To: Statutory Consultees and Other Interested Parties

Dear Sir/Madam,

Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School and Cwmffrwdroer, Garnteg and Victoria Primary Schools

At a meeting held on 12th July 2016, Torfaen County Borough Council's Cabinet determined the proposals as they affect the above mentioned schools following the conclusion of the statutory objection period, specifically:-

- a) the closure of **Victoria Primary School** with the dispersal of pupils to neighbouring schools (predominantly Garnteg Primary School) with effect from 1st September 2017;
- b) the closure of **Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School** with effect from 1st September 2017;
- c) the extension of **Garnteg Primary School** with the new provision available with effect from 1st September 2017;
- d) the extension of **Cwmffrwdroer Primary School**, and at the same time an increase in the age range from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 to provide nursery provision. The nursery provision and extended provision to be available with effect from 1st September 2017;
- e) An adjustment/reallocation to catchment areas as follow:
 - current Victoria Primary School to Garnteg Primary School
 - current Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School to Garnteg Primary School

The cabinet considered the proposals, the statutory objections submitted and the Local Authority response in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013. The cabinet decided to approve all the proposals and the changes will be

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implemented on 1st September 2017.

In determining the proposals, cabinet were satisfied that the proposals will:-

- Achieve greater economy and efficiency through appropriate sized schools, of the right type, right size and in the right place and help to reduce overall, primary school surplus places across the borough in line with Welsh Government targets.
- Develop a sustainable education system with all schools meeting national building standards.
- 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.
- Achieve inspirational settings appropriate for new educational developments.
- Provide outstanding resources for the whole community.
- Achieve inclusive settings, providing for the individual learning needs for all pupils.

It was noted that there were 770 statutory objections. These are detailed in the [objection report](#) which has been published on our website at:-

<http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>

A hard copy of the objection report is also available on request and can be obtained by telephoning or emailing the contact details at the top of this letter.

Please note that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the above mentioned decisions were subject to a challenge/"call in" process. As no challenges were received by the deadline (i.e. Noon on Monday 18th July 2016) the decisions may be implemented on or after Tuesday 19th July 2016.

It should also be noted that although the council made a determination to proceed, that decision will not be implemented until the outcome of the ongoing legal proceedings is known.

The reasons for the decisions in relation to the factors noted in the School Organisation Code 2013 are as follows:

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Quality and Standards of Education

It is the view of Estyn that the proposal (Brynteg and Victoria) is likely to “*at least maintain the current standards of Education and provision in the area. The proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools or educational provider in the area*”. In the case of Cwmffrwdroer and Garnteg, it is the view of Estyn that the proposal would, “*at least maintain the current standards*”.

In light of the decision, the ability to deliver the national curriculum requirements of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 will be enhanced with the addition of new extensions at the proposed receiving schools which will provide buildings fit for the 21st Century.

Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

The council is satisfied that the alternative provision will have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality, for existing and projected numbers. The “receiving” schools are considered to be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.

Resourcing of education and other financial implications

The proposals will ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding between mainstream schools within the local authority’s area. Some surplus places will be retained to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils. The proposals contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st century and to the better strategic management of the school estate through the removal of maintenance backlogs and school buildings which are inefficient or in poor condition.

Specific factors in the consideration of school closures

The impact of closure on the community has been assessed through the production of community Impact Assessments. In addition, an alternative proposal was put forward to retain Victoria Primary School but was discounted because of its likely viability.

Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to add or remove nursery classes

The council maintains a mix of private, voluntary, independent and council run providers and takes into consideration data from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which indicated that the net impact of the proposals would be relatively neutral. The removal of the provision from Abersychan Brynteg Nursery with the addition of places at Cwmffrwdroer along with the other existing provision will mean there are sufficient places to meet current and forecast demand.

Factors to be taken into account in approving/determining school organisation proposals

In approving these proposals, the council is satisfied that the statutory consultation has been conducted in accordance with the Code. The objections received and the objection report has been conscientiously considered alongside the arguments in respect of the proposals. The council has therefore not approached the determination of these proposals with a closed mind.

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Yours sincerely,



Mark Horton
PRINCIPAL OFFICER, LONG TERM CAPITAL STRATEGY
EDUCATION SERVICE

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