

CROESYCEILIOG SCHOOL

OBJECTION REPORT

MARCH 2017

Introduction

At their meeting held on 17th January 2017, Council Cabinet decided to proceed with the following proposal:

- a) To reduce the 11 – 16 Capacity to 1200 places at Croesyceiliog School with effect from 1st September 2018

In accordance the Council's Constitution, the above mentioned decision was subject to a challenge process. Challenges had to be notified to the Chief Executive and the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer by noon on Wednesday 25th January 2017. It should be noted that this decision was not subject to a challenge.

Following that decision, the Council then had to publish this proposal by way of a statutory notice. A copy of the statutory notice is attached as an appendix to this objection report.

Anyone wishing to make an objection to this proposal was able to do so. To be considered as a statutory objection, objections had to be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the proposals were published. This is referred to as the objection period.

Notices were published on Thursday 26th January 2017 as follows:

- On the council website. Link: <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>
- On or near the main entrance of the schools which are the subject of the proposals
- By providing schools which are the subject of these proposals with copies of the notice to distribute to pupils, parents/carers, and staff (schools may distribute the notice by email). This amounted to some 3,500 copies of the statutory notice being delivered to Croesyceiliog Secondary School and its five partner/"feeder" primary schools (Croesyceiliog, Llantarnam, Llanyrafon, Maendy and Pontnewydd) for distribution to pupils and their parents/carers.
- By notifying prescribed consultees as listed in the School Organisation Code

In accordance with the Act the Council must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the Council's responses to those objections ("the Objection Report").

This proposal relates only to the 11-16 capacity of the school. The post 16 capacity is unaffected but is subject to a separate consultation on the proposed closure of the English Medium school based 6th forms in the county borough, to be replaced by a single 6th form centre in Cwmbran from September 2019. In the event the post 16 proposal was not advanced, 6th form provision would continue at Croesyceiliog beyond September 2019.

Statutory Objections

The objection period ended on Thursday 23rd February 2017. Four statutory objections were received, one from the NASUWT (Torfaen Association) and three from individual members of the public.

The following table provides a summary of those statutory objections and the Council's response to those objections.

REASON FOR OBJECTION	COUNCIL RESPONSE
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVISION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The catchment school for where I reside is category “red” and I don’t want to send my children there. I expect Torfaen to provide a quality secondary school place for my children. <p>Restricting the number of pupils educated at Croesyceiliog will have a net deleterious effect on educational attainment in the County Borough. Therefore it is not only simplistic but also actively harmful to reduce the size of a good school simply because it attracts pupils from outside the catchment area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key reason we are advancing this proposal is the need to reduce the number of surplus places in secondary provision at this time. Welsh Government has set us the target of reducing the amount of surplus places, and funding opportunities for new and significantly refurbished schools would be affected if we did not take reasonable steps to make that reduction. <p>In this instance, it is an appropriate time to propose such a change because we are in the process of designing and building a new school to replace the current buildings. To build the new building bigger than it needs to be to serve its catchment area would be an inefficient and inappropriate use of public money.</p> <p>Overall the view of Estyn (Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales), received in response to the initial consultation period, is that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.</p> <p>The National School Categorisation System aims to provide a clear structure to review how well a school is performing for all its learners, taking into consideration how effectively it is led and managed, the quality of learning and teaching, and the level of support and challenge it needs to do</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cwmbran High School's attendance is 1.4% lower than Croesyceiliog (which in terms of attendance is huge). What does that say about the quality of provision and the learning environment of Cwmbran High if attendance is low? Even pupils are voting with their feet. 	<p>better. The system helps identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. It also identifies those that are doing well but could be doing better and those that are highly effective and could help and support others to do better.</p> <p>National School Categorisation is not about labelling schools or creating league tables. It is about helping schools identify what factors contribute to their progress and achievement and what areas to focus on in order to develop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically Croesyceiliog School's attendance has been higher. Between 1st September 2016 and 31st January 2017 attendance at Croesyceiliog and Cwmbran High Schools were broadly in line, with Cwmbran High being slightly higher (92.71% attendance compared to 92.35%)
SCHOOL PREFERENCE/ADMISSION PROCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should not be playing a "Post code lottery" when it comes to offering/allocating school places • I have a right to send my children to the best performing school that I can. • The Education Act allows parents to make a choice about their child's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has to manage school admissions in accordance with the law. It annually publishes its admission /oversubscription criteria ahead of the annual September admissions round. Where the local authority is responsible for school admissions, each school will have allocated to it a catchment area and admissions will be based on the published criteria (referred to above) with priority given to those residing within the catchment area of the designated school. • Whilst parents/carers can express a preference for their child(ren) to attend any school, published admission criteria will apply (please refer to above bullet point). • See bullet points above. Reducing surplus places, as we are obliged to do,

<p>education. With this proposal, that choice is removed.</p>	<p>does mean that whilst parents can continue to express a preference for a particular school we may not always be able to meet that preference. The proposed capacity for Croesyceiliog School is however sufficient to at least meet the projected need from its catchment area.</p>
<p>PUPIL TRANSITION</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils want to transfer to the same school with their cohort and friends. It is cruel and short-sighted to break up friendship groups before Year 7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When children go to their catchment primary school it is more usual than not that they transition to the same secondary provision as their classmates. Where children do not go to their catchment school it is still open to parents to express a preference for an out of catchment secondary school. Places will however be offered in line with the council's admission policy which gives preference to those living in catchment.
<p>STAFFING</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NASUWT formally objects to the proposal on the grounds that the proposal will directly threaten the employment of a [undisclosed] number of teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal reflects that fact that pupil numbers in Torfaen have reduced over time, and in some cases the concentration of learners has moved to different parts of the county borough as estates have evolved. <p>Schools routinely make staffing adjustments to address changes in pupil numbers – employing more staff when numbers increase and less when numbers decrease.</p> <p>It is accepted that there will a direct impact on some staff at Croesyceiliog as a result of this proposal. The change will be gradual however i.e. one form group per year from September 2018, and will be managed as part of the annual budget and financial planning review. In this particular instance the change will also need to be managed within the context of the delivery of a</p>

	<p>new school building.</p> <p>As part of that review process, and wherever possible, the Council will seek to secure alternative suitable positions within Torfaen Schools for any staff that are at risk of redundancy. This has previously been achieved for other school reorganisation proposals by negotiating a local agreement with our schools and the relevant professional associations, and it is expected that this would continue for this proposal as well as others arising from the 21st Century Schools Programme.</p>
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Appendix 1 – Statutory notice in relation to this proposal

Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to alter Croesyceiliog School, Woodland Road, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, Torfaen NP44 62YB, so that the capacity of the school is decreased to 1200 places. The school is currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on:

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

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1st September 2018.

The current number of 11 to 16 aged pupils at Croesyceiliog School is 1320, the total pupil capacity of the school is 1609 and the proposed capacity once the proposal is implemented will be 1200. It should be noted that the 1609 capacity quoted also caters for 6th form students, and the notional capacity for 11 to 16 aged pupils, based on the current admission Number of 274 is 1370.

The admission number for year 7 and each year group up to and including Year 11 at Croesyceiliog School in the first school year in which the proposal has been implemented will be 240.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by Thursday 23rd February 2017 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB. Email: secondaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk

Torfaen County Borough council will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Thursday 26th January 2017

Explanatory Note

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to decrease the capacity of Croesyceiliog School. The proposal arises from the Authority's 21st Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21st Century Schools across the Borough.

Consultation in relation to this proposal was held during October and November 2016. It should be noted that a separate consultation was undertaken during November and December 2016 in relation to making a regulated alteration to Croesyceiliog School (and also, Cwmbran High School and St Alban's RC High School) by ending 6th form provision and establishing a 6th Form Centre for Torfaen. Proposals to reduce the 11 – 16 capacity with a new school build for Croesyceiliog and to remove its 6th form provision are part of the council's strategic plan.

The council is advancing a proposal to build a new Croesyceiliog School on its existing site which would be ready for occupation in September 2019. Reducing the school's Admission Number from September 2018 will ensure the council has a new school of the right size and help to manage the transition and revenue costs associated with the new build. It will not affect current learners in the school but will change the annual intake of the school from an approximate 9 form entry (274 places) to an 8 form entry (240 places).

The admission number for a school, when incorporated into the published admission arrangements, sets the number of pupils to be admitted to the school each year and is calculated using the Welsh Government guidance "Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales" (2011).

The admission authority (i.e. Torfaen County Borough Council) also wishes to set an admission number which is lower than the current calculation indicates and is required to publish a notice of their intention so that parents of children who live in the relevant area have the opportunity to object to the Welsh Ministers about this lower number if they consider it appropriate.

This will be subject to a separate statutory notice that will be published within 14 days of the date that the admission arrangements (for the 2018/2019 academic session) are determined.

There currently remains quite high numbers attending from the North of the borough and the authority needs to be mindful of the effect of this on other schools within the area. The council would not want to encourage drift from other schools catchment areas by the capacity of the school being larger than is necessary to serve the pupils within its catchment area.

Further information on this particular proposal and other school reorganisation proposals can be found here:

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

A Welsh version of this notice can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: www.torfaen.gov.uk

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