

Proposal to Establish a Rhymney 3-18 School

(Incorporating Abertysswg/Pontlottyn Primary
and Rhymney Comprehensive)

Consultation Response Report



Directorate of Education & Lifelong Learning

March 2017

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CONSULTATION REPORT

Responses from formal consultation on the proposal to establish a 3-18 Rhymney School (incorporating Abertysswg/Pontlottyn Primary Schools and Rhymney Comprehensive School)

Introduction

The Council has consulted with interested parties on its proposal to change the provision of education for children in the areas served by Abertysswg Primary, Pontlottyn Primary and Rhymney Comprehensive Schools. If implemented, this proposal will take effect in January 2018.

The consultation period ran from 3rd January 2017 to 16th February 2017. A list of consultees is included at Appendix 2. The consultation document was e-mailed to all consultees and was also available on the Council's website.

Legislative Process

The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. Under the Welsh Government Statutory Code for School Organisation the Council is required to publish a consultation report summarising any issues raised by consultees, the Council's response to those issues and Estyn's view of the overall merit of the proposal.

If approved, the next stage of the process is to publish a statutory notice outlining the proposal. This would need to be published for a period of 28 days and formal written objections would be invited during this time.

If objections are received, an objection report will be published summarising the objections and the Council's response to those objections. The Council's Cabinet will need to consider the proposal in light of objections received when making its decision on whether the proposal is to be implemented.

Consultation meetings

During the consultation period, the following consultation meetings were held:

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| 16 th January 2017
(Rhymney
Comprehensive) | : | Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers, governing body and public/community meetings. |
| 18 th January 2017
(Pontlottyn Primary) | : | Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers and governing body meeting. |
| 30 th January 2017
(Abertysswg Primary) | : | Drop-in sessions for school pupils, staff, parents/carers and governing body meeting |

Consultation Responses

Only 14 written responses including Estyn were received. These included 3 responses in favour, 3 were against and 7 who did not feel strongly either way.

The responses are largely consistent with those outlined in the formal consultation meetings and are summarised below.

- An amazing opportunity for our children
- Good idea to incorporate the two schools together
- Modern environment for the children
- Support of transition of children

However, a number of concerns were expressed, mostly in relation to:

- Safe routes to school
- Mixing of children from both schools
- Success over 3-18 schools in Wales
- Teaching across age ranges

Estyn response to the proposal:

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortium which delivers school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a consultation proposal from Caerphilly County Borough Council. The proposal is to:

- establish a Rhymney 3-18 school by extending the age range of Rhymney Comprehensive from 11-18 to 3-18 from 1st January 2018;
- incorporate the planned Abertysswg/Pontlottyn Primary School within the new school;

Summary/Conclusion

The proposer has provided an appropriate rationale for its proposal to establish an all-through school incorporating Rhymney Comprehensive and the new Abertysswg/Pontlottyn Primary School. However, it has not considered in sufficient depth the risks associated with the proposal and how it would manage these. For example, it identifies the challenge of creating a unified vision for the new school and avoiding a two-tier approach but does not indicate how it would address this issue. Furthermore, the proposal does not adequately consider the current quality of leadership and management in the three schools and the standards achieved by pupils.

Although the proposal lacks detail and there are gaps in important areas, it is Estyn's opinion that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the present standards of education provision in this area will at least be maintained.

Description and benefits

The proposer provides a clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer bases its case on a wide range of arguments. It usefully points to sources of evidence that support the benefits of all-through schools including the Department for Education and Skills in England and the National College of School Leadership. The proposer argues reasonably that the changes would lead to continuity in provision that avoids a potential dip in pupil performance when pupils transfer from one school to another. Furthermore, the proposer asserts that organisational benefits arise from the new arrangement through the opportunity to share expertise and resources across year groups and key stages. The proposer considers appropriately the benefits of the proposal in assisting the implementation of curriculum reform as outlined in Professor Graham Donaldson's Successful Futures report. It maintains that all through schools align well with the report's proposed removal of phases and key stages and break down the distinction between what happens in primary and secondary schools and the various key stages.

The proposer reasonably assumes that the combining of the budgets for the existing schools will allow the new school to use its budget more effectively to achieve economies of scale. The proposer does not envisage any changes to home to school transport as a result of the proposal.

Overall, the proposer provides strong arguments in favour of the proposal. However, the proposal document does not outline the disadvantages of the proposed changes in sufficient depth or discuss the alternative of maintaining the new combined Abertysswg/Pontlottyn primary school and Rhymney Comprehensive School as separate bodies. Similarly, whilst the proposal indicates clearly a number of associated risks, it does not indicate how it would manage these other than to suggest that the proposer would develop a risk matrix to address these challenges if the proposal proceeds.

The proposer considers the current number of students attending Rhymney Comprehensive School and its feeder primary schools including the existing Abertysswg and Pontlottyn schools. It also considers the projected pupil numbers for these schools over the next five years. However, the proposer does not consider in sufficient detail the effect of the proposal on the total number of surplus places in the area nor how the proposal may reduce or increase this figure.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has sufficiently considered the impact of the proposal on the quality and breadth of provision. It argues appropriately that the proposal would increase opportunities for an uninterrupted education, enabling the school to develop pupils' skills without the negative impact of transition between key stages. It asserts, reasonably, that the new arrangements would allow teachers to develop consistent approaches to teaching and learning across the age ranges and to share specialist staff and curriculum expertise that would benefit pupil progress. Furthermore, the proposer argues that the establishment of an all-through school will allow teachers to better track the progress of pupils from entry at the age of three to leaving at sixteen or eighteen.

The proposer makes appropriate reference to the outcomes of the existing schools' most recent Estyn inspections and any follow up activity. The proposer considers the National School Categorisation support category of all three schools. However, it does not examine in sufficient detail the current improvement capacity of the three schools or indicate in enough depth the impact of the proposals on leadership and management overall. The proposer has not provided a data analysis of the schools involved in the proposal.

The proposer has undertaken an impact assessment that considers community, Welsh language and equality issues. However, the outcomes of this activity are not included within the proposal document. The proposer considers broadly its expectations for pupils with additional learning needs. However, it does not outline in sufficient detail the implications of the proposal for pupils with additional learning needs.

Caerphilly CBC response to Estyn:

It is pleasing to see that Estyn acknowledge that:

- The appropriate rationale was provided to establish an all-through school.
- The sources of evidence provided support the benefits of an all-through school.
- It is reasonably argued that the changes would lead to continuity in provision that avoids a potential dip in pupil performance when pupils transfer from one school to another.
- The organisational benefits that arise from the new arrangements will provide an opportunity to share expertise and resources across the year groups and key stages.
- Appropriate consideration was given to the benefits of the proposal in assisting the implementation of curriculum reform as outlined in Professor Donaldson's report.
- All through schools align well with the report's proposed removal of phases and key stages.
- The combining of budgets for the existing schools will allow the new school to use its budget more effectively.
- Sufficient consideration on the impact of the proposal on the quality and breadth of provision.
- The proposal would increase opportunities for an uninterrupted education, enabling the school to develop pupils' skills with the negative impact of transition between key stages.

- The establishment of an all-through school will allow teachers to better track the progress of pupils from entry at the age of three to leaving at sixteen or eighteen.
- There is appropriate reference to the outcomes of the existing schools' most recent Estyn inspections and any follow up activity.
- Consideration has been given to the National School Categorisation support category of all three schools.
- An impact assessment has been undertaken that considers community Welsh language and equality issues.

However Estyn also highlighted areas which required more detail:

- **Risk and Impact Assessments:** The consultation document only included extracts from the assessments, thorough risk and impact assessments were carried out. The risks associated were discussed at length during the consultation process in relation to the consultation document.
- **Leadership and Management:** None of the 3 schools involved in the proposal have any intensive support. Details of their recent inspections were shown on page 8 of the Consultation Document and in the most recent categorisations none of the 3 schools required intensive support.
- **Surplus Places:** The establishment of the new school will reduce surplus places in the Primary Sector by 25 places.

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Summary of issues raised during the consultation meetings that relate specifically to the 3-18 proposal:

Below is a summary of the questions raised during the consultation meetings with staff, pupils, Governors and the Community at all schools

Q: Would the new school be using our facilities and teachers?

A: There may be times when classrooms or facilities are not being used by the secondary school. The primary school could then use the facilities if available – e.g. science labs, rugby pitch or tennis courts.

Q: When younger children come into our school would there be disruption?

A: The Headteacher of the school will manage this to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the school.

Q: Head of Years 5-8 Phase will this mean that Primary teachers can only teach up to year 6, but what will happen to years 7 & 8?

A: Years 7 & 8 will continue being taught by teachers in the secondary school, however, there may be an opportunity for the younger pupils to be able to access provision within the school if it is not being used by older pupils.

Q: What about the heavy vehicles that are moving around the site. How safe are we?

A: The Company involved is very experienced in building schools and are aware of dangers. They have certain hours when they can move heavy goods vehicles on site. This is to minimise the danger to pupils.

Q: What about our sixth form? Will this move?

A: No, this is a proposal for a 3-18 school.

Q: Will year 5 and 6 children be sharing our classrooms?

A: There are surplus places in Rhymney School so the primary school could benefit from transition work.

Q: Will the 3 year old pupils mix with 16 year olds?

A: They have their own play areas, so would stay there. They may attend the secondary school at planned times subject to prior agreement.

Q: Decision on the Phases of the 3-18 school – why is the one that is in the consultation document being used?

A: The three phases in the consultation document was decided taking into account the staff of the 3 schools. The phases of the 3-18 school would be decided by the governors and Head Teacher. Just because it is in the consultation document does not mean it is set in stone. How the Head Teacher and Governors run school is down to them.

Q: Is this flexible?

A: This is the Head Teacher and Governors decision.

Q: What is the future of 3-18 schools?

A: There are a number of 3-18 schools in Wales. If this works for us, then we could extend this further.

Q: ICT Support – would this be required in the Primary School?

A: If 3-18 systems could be shared there could be opportunities for staff.

Q: Will they share their IT connection?

A: Separate links to begin with.

Q: Is there access between schools?

A: There is a footpath that links both schools, but vehicular access across the site is limited.

Q: Car Access?

A: There is a car park for parents/staff on the main road with a pathway from the main road. Safe routes will stay in place.

Q: Will the Head Teacher be appointed by June 17?

A: Reference was made to the Consultation Document (Page 6). The document indicates that we would have to wait until at least the end of June 2017 before advertising as the Council would need to make its final decision.

Q: The concern is that the Head Teacher needs to be done first, and this leaves a short time for the rest of the school to know if we have jobs in the new school.

A: The budget will be amalgamated from the Pontlottyn/Abertysswg Primary and Rhymney Comprehensive Schools formula. It is anticipated that all permanent staff will remain and the 2 Acting Headteachers will slot into Heads of Phase. There may be potential issues with support staff dependant on the structure agreed by the Governing Body and Headteacher.

Q: I am a Level 4 trained LSA, but employed as a Level 3 – Would I have the opportunity to do a Level 4 job?

A: This depends on what the Head Teacher and Governors decide is needed by the school.

Q: We will not know whether the school will become a 3-18 until Oct/Nov, we may not have enough time to swap (transfer) children to other schools.

A: Transfers can be done at any time and is subject to space in alternative schools.

Q: What is the vision as to how the management structure is going to be?

A: This was shared with Governors of all the schools in March 2016. There were 7 options given and the favoured one is the one mentioned in the consultation document i.e. Phase 1 Nursery to Year 4, Phase 2 Year 5-8, Phase 3 years 9-13. The emphasis is on Years 5-8 transition around the Donaldson report of continuity. As things stood at the time there was Acting Headteachers in both Primaries Schools and a Deputy Headteacher in the Comprehensive School. All 3 members of staff could apply for the Head Teacher post of the 3-18 school. Governors would decide on the structure of the school. The new Head Teacher may then influence the phases. This is not set in stone and Governors and the Head Teacher could follow a different structure.

Q: There is such a short time to get everything sorted?

A: Page 6 of the consultation document outlines the time frame. Will this allows sufficient time to appoint the Head Teachers and Heads of Phases. School will be finished by the end of 2017.

Q: Are we able to ride bikes to school and will there be bike racks?

A: Yes

Q: Is there going to be a class for each year?

A: The primary sector of the school has been built for 240 children, and has 8 classes, so yes they will have a class each depending on numbers.

Q: Can we have a quicker route to school?

A: There is a safe route to new school. (The pupils were shown the plans of the school and the safe routes) Children were asked if they liked the look of the new school. 100% said yes.

Q: Will the leaves be moved?

A: Yes

Q: Will we still have school eco/council?

A: Yes

Q: Can we have an allotment?

A: There will be a lawn and raised beds that you can plant things in.

Q: Are we having different uniform?

A: The Governing Body will decide on this.

Q: Will we still need to switch off lights?

A: Most lights will be automatic and turn off if they do not detect movement.

Q: Are we going to have a rugby pitch in our new school?

A: When the senior school are not using their rugby pitch and tennis courts you may be able to use these.

Q: Will gates be big enough to get my bike though?

A: Yes

Q: Will there be whiteboards?

A: Yes, each room will have a 70 inch touch screen LCD whiteboard

Q: Are our teachers coming to the new school?

A: Yes

Q: Is there going to be a gym?

A: You will have a big hall to play sports in – the children were again referred to the plans

Q: What time will school start?

A: This will be a decision for School Governors, but maybe fairly similar to the time you come in now.

Q: Will there be a breakfast club at our new school?

A: More than likely

Q: I am not permanent – will I have a job at the new school. I am paid out of grant money?

A: The Head Teacher and Governors will need to look at the staffing structure of the school – potentially no jobs will be lost, but this is a decision for the Headteacher and Governors.

Q: I have been permanent since 2008, will my job be held at the school?

A: It is envisioned that all permanent staff will remain.

Q: There are only 3 permanent TA's in the school, will we still be needed?

A: TA's will still be needed. It is envisioned that all permanent staff will remain.

Q: When will we find out if we still have a job?

A: 21st June 2017 is final decision date. Then we would need to advertise for a Head Teacher and Head of Phases.

Q: Is there a proposal to amalgamate Admin staff?

A: When the new Head Teacher is appointed they will discuss the structure with the Governors. In time they may bring admin of both schools together. This will be a decision for the Headteacher and management team.

Q: What is the distance between the 2 schools?

A: About 400-500 yards.

Q: Would the staff room be in Comprehensive school?

A: There is a staff room in the new school.

Q: Age – would my age be a disadvantage?

A: No – all staff will be treated equally

Q: What about the transition for the other feeder schools?

A: We met with the Headteachers of the other feeder schools this morning. We had a discussion on various matters which included the option to share inset days and ways to ease transition for their schools.

Q: If a child is 12 would they go into primary if they were poor in Maths?

A: We are not doing away with Key Stages. The Donaldson Report recognises the importance of transition.

Q: Proposed 3-18 – where else is there a school like this and what are the outcomes?

A: In Wales this is a new and innovative proposal. In Scotland it has been going for a longer period. The reports from Scotland indicate success. In Wales the other local Authorities who have gone down this route are Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot and Blaenau Gwent.

Q: Would I and the Head Teacher of the other school be able to apply for either of the posts?

A: Yes, 2 phases would be relevant to Primary and 1 to Secondary.

Q: Will there be a deputy leader of phases?

A: This depends on the leadership and Governing body, and also budgetary restraints. Effectively if the 3-18 did not happen we would look at a 3-11 structure. If 3-18 would look at the structure of the whole school.

Q: Years 5-8. What will happen to the More Able and Talented pupils and those with Special Educational Needs. Would we see movement between years 8 to 5 and years 5-8?

A: That would be down to the leadership. All schools will be facing changes with regards to ALN legislation.

Q: I am a parent as well as a teacher. My daughter is in Nursery, I have applied for Reception for Sept 17. We are out of catchment – will she still be able to attend?

A: If there is capacity

Q: Transition – would there be a chance to have times for secondary and primary to meet?

A: It would be for the Governing Body and leadership to decide. There would likely be common inset days.

Q: In September there will be a new school year, when they join together in January 2018 what will happen about the work?

A: Schools will need to work together to ensure a smooth transition for all pupils.

Q: I have a big concern about it opening in January 2018. Can it not wait?

A: January 2018 is the completion date. There will be problems but the 2 schools would need to get together and start planning what is being taught. The problem will be the same whatever is decided, 3-18 or 3-11.

Q: Any chance the timescale can be shorter?

A: There has to be a 6 week consultation which ended 16th February 2017. Cabinet will meet on 15th March 2017 and decide if to publish the statutory notice, this can only be done during term time. By the end of the summer term we will know what we will be going forward to.

Q: Will we lose our jobs in December 2017 if we are grant funded?

A: The PDG (Pupil Deprivation Grant) Plans will come out in April, so contracts would possibly be April to December 2017. PDG is funded April to March, so for most staff there shouldn't be any impact on jobs. It will be a school management decision.

Q: Share staff – Can Primary and Secondary staff cross match?

A: Again, this is up to the leadership. We have 2 examples within CCBC of teachers, one who went from Secondary to Primary and vice versa. Both have been very successful. When we look at cross matching we do look at Primary and Secondary.

Q: Will there be different start times?

A: This will be for the Governing Body to decide. At present both schools start at different times.

Q: Page 10 of consultation document “what an all-through school gives us is a deeper, wider and richer range of people in the school to develop learning together, and a single community focus where people who do not spend all if their time in the school can spend some of it to support and widen learning experiences for all the young people of their community”

A: This was written by EAS (Education Achievement Service) – an idea for a community school, so not just for the children, but flying start and community groups.

Q: I have a year 4 in school and a nursery child in Sept 17?

A: If accepted into Nursery 2017 the pupil will be able to stay in school, but would still need to apply for Reception for September 2018.

Q: Will we have an inset day to learn how to use the new technology?

A: You will be given a number of closure days to move. It would be an advantage to start having common inset days with Pontlottyn now to start to work together.

Q: When will we know what the school is going to be called?

A: This will depend whether it is a 3-11 or a 3-18 campus. By June we will have a decision then the Governing Body and leadership of the school will make this decision and they will also decide on the uniform.

Q: Will there be a new school badge?

A: Yes, new uniform, new badge, new name. What would you like the school to be called – Aberlottyn!

Q: Will year 6 move up to the comprehensive phase in year 7?

A: Yes

Q: Will people older than us be able to smoke near us?

A: No, the whole school and grounds have a no smoking policy.

Q: Will older students come to us?

A: Sometimes year 7 will work with you to talk about their experience of going from the Primary to Secondary phase.

Q: The children were asked what they were most excited about in the new school?

A: The equipment

Q: Will we still have assembly?

A: Yes

Q: How big will the school be?

A: The children were shown the plans of the school and grounds. There will be approximately 700 children in the Comprehensive phase and 240 in the Primary phase.

Q: Are you extending the Secondary School Building?

A: No there will be separate schools but under one management. There were 2 pupils here this afternoon who had never been to the Secondary school. The transition for pupils will be a lot easier. They will benefit from seeing and using facilities etc. The transition could be developed even further with links to the 5 other feeder schools.

Q: The Car Park is an issue for us. We think the school is a great idea. However is the car park going to be locked at night?

A: Yes that is the plan.

Q: Our concern is that we pay Council Tax but we cannot park in our street now. Are there plans to restrict parking in Warne Street?

A: For us to build the new school we have to provide a safe route to schools and a traffic impact assessment. The new car park will have a lot of parking spaces.

Q: Do you have any drawings to suggest double yellow lines to keep the junction clear. Are there going to be any restrictions?

A: This is a matter for Highways.

Q: Can we see the Traffic Management Plan?

A: You need to speak to Highways.

Q; What is the maximum age for the new School?

A: We are proposing a 3 to 18 school.

Q: I don't agree that children should be on site and walking to school with older children?

A: There will be a car park at Electric Sub Station. Pathway will go to primary school and separate one to the Comp.

Q: What difference will this proposal make to my year 9 child?

A: Probably no change as they will just continue on as they are at the moment.

Q: Concerns over the year 5-8 phase? How can the Acting Headteacher cover/share?

A: There are concerns over transition in all schools across Wales. Key Stage 3 is the problem area. If we extend primary practice over the 5-8 transition we would see benefits.

Q: Can a good Key Stage 2 teacher teach in Key Stage 3?

A: In Donaldson's view, yes they can.

Q: Will the Head Teacher role be ring-fenced for Primary?

A: There are 3 Acting Headteachers who have substantive deputy Headteacher posts who potentially could apply for the post, although it could be decided that the post be opened up Nationally.

Q: Would these staff get lower money?

A: They will go from Acting Headteachers to Phase Leaders, so should not be a drop in money.

Q: Is there an overriding thought that a year 5 & 6 pupil could be integrated into the comp?

A: Transition could be enhanced, and we can take advantage for transition and extend to other feeders, these schools could be given opportunities too. School is not fully utilised as there are a number of surplus places. Donaldson is trying to strip the walls so that a good teacher teaches children, not age groups.

Q: I don't want this to be a pilot that goes wrong, what evidence is there to substantiate this that I can read?

A: The growth of 3-18 across Wales is a new and initiative proposal. The Leadership of the school, funding, structure of management and quality of teaching are important factors to get right to ensure success.

Q: Just moved into the area and we not sure if we are staying. How difficult is it to move back to an English school?

A: In England the Local Authority send the application to the new school for them to process. In Wales parents would complete an application form and Local Authority would process. In a 3-18 school once a child is accepted into Reception, the child would automatically go through to 18 subject to parental preference. The feeder school children would have to make an application in year 6.

Q: Will my child have the same education?

A: The curriculum will be the same.

Q: How will you assess achievements?

A: Achievement will be assessed in the same way if the school is a 3-11 or 3-18.

S: Parent commented that she sent the consultation document to her mother who is a Head teacher in a school in Cornwall. Her mother said it was a wonderful opportunity for the children.

Q: What will the school uniform be?

A: At this stage we are consulting on a 3-18 school. As it stands Abertysswg and Pontllynn Primary Schools will amalgamate in January 2018. Whatever option is chosen the new school will have a new name. It will be the responsibility of the Governing Body and the Leadership Team to decide on the new school name and uniform etc.

Q: Will the Primary and Secondary Schools be in separate buildings?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the Primary School use classrooms in the Comprehensive School?

A: Yes the Primary will have the opportunity to use Science Labs, Art Rooms and Sports facilities.

Q: Will my child be kept safe?

A: Yes.

Q: My daughter is in year 8 and has ASD. What will happen to her in the new school?

A: This proposal will not affect your daughter. The Secondary School will continue as it is.

Q: I have heard that the younger children will be mixing with the older year groups?

A: There are two separate schools, with separate play areas. There are no plans for mixed Primary/Secondary classes. This proposal will allow for a smoother transition. The younger children may have an opportunity to use facilities in the Secondary School, e.g. Science Labs, Art Rooms and Sports facilities. This will be under supervision.

Q: Will there be a safe walking route to the school?

A: A new car park is being built and there is a safe route to school.

Q: How many will be in the classes?

A: The Welsh Government Class Size regulations only allow 30 pupils per class with one class teacher in Primary Schools.

Q: Would my 5 year old child be able to stay in the new school. I have a 14 month old will he be able to attend?

A: The 5 year old will continue their education in the new school. You would need to apply for the younger child at the relevant time.

Q: Will there be counselling in the new school if the children don't settle?

A: There will be pastoral care that will be part of the transition process.

Q: Will the children be able to meet the other pupils and staff prior to the new school starting?

A: This is something the two Acting Headteachers could manage.

Q: Would it be possible to have a 3d model of the new school so that children can get used to it?

A: We have 2d drawings.

S: I think it's a good idea. It can open up a lot of learning opportunities.

Q: Would the maths teacher from the Comprehensive School come into the Primary School?

A: Yes they could and vice versa.

Q: Will the years 7 and 8 pupils be in the Primary School?

A: No they will be educated in the Secondary School but there may be an opportunity for them to go into the Primary School and share their experiences of moving up to year 7 with the younger pupils

Q: My child has a one to one, will this person transfer with him?

A: Support staff will transfer with the children. Consistency is important.

Q: When will the Governing Body and staff be in place?

A: This proposal ends in June. If the 3-18 school is agreed then the Governing Body and staffing structure will be decided soon after.

Q: How will the Emergency Services be able to access the new school?

A: They will have access via the Secondary School site.

Q: Will the new car park be for staff or parents?

A: Both staff and parents will be able to use the car park.

Q: Is there evidence of success of 3-18 across Wales.

A: In Wales this is a new and innovative proposal. In Scotland it has been going for a longer period. The reports from Scotland indicate success. In Wales the other local Authorities who have gone down this route are Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot and Blaenau Gwent.

Q: I know it is not a big thing but can we have a virtual model of the school that we can see?

A: We will look at the possibility of putting something on the website.

Q: Will the school be finished on time?

A: Yes, a typical building takes 12 months. It will be dependant on the weather, but there is a good indication that it will be finished on time.

S: It is vital that the right person is appointed as Headteacher to make sure the Teaching Staff work together.

Q: How will it affect a year 9 pupil?

A: There should not be any disturbance, it would probably be the least tumultuous year. When new leader comes in, whether 3-18, or 11-18 school, things could change. In real terms the ambition will be huge. This school has improved over the past 3 years.

Q: Would secondary teachers be expected to work in the primary school?

A: This will be determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

Q: If we don't get it right parents may move their children.

A: We invite the governors to work with us and get it right, whilst difficult, you are on the verge of something incredibly exciting.

Q: What Act are we following?

A: School Organisational Code 2013.

Q: Were there any plans to include the other schools?

A: In the original consultation Fochriw was included, but the parents of the village voted not to be included.

Q: Will we lose the 6th Form?

A: There are currently no proposed changes to 6th Form provision.

Q: Is the Primary section going to be fenced off from Comprehensive pupils?

A: The existing path will be upgraded and extended to Primary Children. The path will go around the gym on the Comprehensive site. The legislation states that pupils under the age of 14 should be accompanied by a parent. All addresses in Pontllytyn and Abertysswg indicate that all pupils reside under the 1.5 miles CCBC transport requirement. National guidelines say that transport will be provided for pupils living more than 2 miles from the school. Therefore, pupils in both schools are not eligible for transport. CCBC has a very generous transport policy.

Q: Are there any plans to have a barrier at the Comprehensive entrance to stop children being dropped off by parents?

A: The parents of Primary School pupils will not be able to use the Secondary School access. We will look at the option for a barrier.

Q: Has survey been done on Road?

A: A traffic Impact Assessment has been done.

Q: Is the Traffic Impact Assessment readily available?

A: It was undertaken as part of the planning permission.

Q: Could parents from other schools apply.

A: Yes, if there is capacity within the school.

Q: As a teacher in a school, the biggest problem is time, particularly in GCSE Results. Additional Training for 3-18 will bring concerns regarding impact extra training/meetings, which will have a broadening remit on staff.

A: Head Teacher will have to prioritise and organise curriculum as appropriate. The number one priority will be pupil outcomes.

Q: Nothing to stop us from doing this and being a 3-18 school later.

A: You have a fantastic opportunity to make the change and make it 3-18 by appointing a Head Teacher for both schools.

Q: What if it doesn't work?

A: We would need to determine the reason why. This would not necessarily be due to the 3-18 school but could be due to other factors.

Q: How much confidence can you give to us that the right person will apply?

A: As the 3-18 would be a larger school it would be more attractive to potential candidates, as the salary will be higher.

Q: What would happen if the existing Head Teacher got other jobs?

A: There would be a recruitment exercise undertaken.

Q: Will Governing Body of Rhymney 11-18 remain if made 3-18 school?

A: To establish 3-18 School there were 3 main options:

- Start Afresh – discontinue Abertysswg, Pontlottyn and Rhymney
- Extend Primary to 3-18
- As proposed in the Document – Take Rhymney 11-18 and extend to 3-18.

Structure in 3-18 school is subject to change like any other school.

Q: What about the Budget for the 3-18 school?

A: The level of funding will remain the same.

Q: Should there have been other options with regards to the phases. It doesn't give complete picture?

A: Having the 3 phases is just a suggestion. Governors /leaders can make changes. This was put in place to protect existing members of staff.

Q: In the Consultation document (Page 3) it says the Governing Body agreed in March 2016. I object to this wording to say that it was agreed whereas, in the meeting it was agreed in principle

A: A meeting was held with Chairs, Vice-chairs and Executive members and all were invited. It was agreed to go away and look at options of 3-18 school.

Q: I am not happy with the document saying that the Governors agreed. Whereas there was only a representation of Governors at the meeting.

A: Those present supported the proposal of establishing the Rhymney 3-18 school. The consultation document does say representatives of the Governing Body.

Q: Can Governors from Rhymney attend the other consultations?

A: Yes

S: The document is very self explanatory

Q: This is great for the summer, but what about in the bad weather?

A: A pupil plotting exercise was done for all children in Abertysswg and Pontlottyn, and all children live within 1.5 miles of the school. There is an available walking route, so no transport is available. CCBC transport policy is very generous with 1.5 miles. The National guidelines is 2 miles for a primary aged pupil. Routes are measured by GIS (Geographical Information System) and a trundle wheel where necessary.

Q: What is the biggest problem the Governing Body has?

A: Ensuring the appointment of an effective Leader.

Q: Surplus Places – There are about 400 surplus places in the secondary school. Could years 5 and 6 go there and then have more places in the primary school so that other children can go there?

A: We do not want to disadvantage other schools in the area. A new school is a magnet for children, so out of catchment children could increase if there is space.

Q: Will Secondary pupils lose use of classes to Primary School?

A: No, but they can make use of unused rooms and facilities. If science lab is not being used, then the primary school could use it. Same with the sports facilities

Q: What about running costs?

A: All 21st Century schools need an ambient rating of excellent. There will be solar panels, and the children will be able to observe how much they are making from them. In the session we had with the children they asked about turning off lights that are not in use. Lights in the school will be automatic and on sensor control, so if nobody in the room they will automatically turn off.

S: The general consensus of the Governors is that this is a wonderful opportunity for the children, and that they are delighted and excited by the prospect. If it works we will set a precedent for this way of working.

Q: What about staggered times?

A: Staggered times may fit better as pupils leave the school. This will be a Governing Body decision, if Governors do make changes they will have to consult with parents.

Q: What about the finances?

A: No difference in funding if just a primary or secondary. For example if Comprehensive gets £1m and Primary £0.5m, then the 3-18 would get £1.5m.

Q: Would there be a possibility that the Head Teacher would spend all the extra money on just the comprehensive school?

A: The Head Teacher will be the head over both schools and the Governing Body would be involved in any spending decisions.

Q: There is flooding on the path to the school?

A: We will look at the path in question. However the new paths definitely have drainage.

Q: Will there be doggy bins on the paths?

A: We can look at this.

Q: Composition of the Governing Body. How do we attract good people to come onto the Governing Body?

A: There are Local Authority Governors in all schools. Where there are vacancies we have asked for these to stay empty until June, this is until we know what the position will be with the 3-18 proposal. There is new legislation that will impact on all School Governing Bodies.

Q: On Page 17 it says "Reduce planning and admin costs by exploiting economies of scale (fewer head-teachers, centralising support services)". Can you expand?

A: There will be fewer Headteachers as there will be one Headteacher and 3 Heads of phases. It is not about cutting costs, but planning across key stages. When you have a larger number of teachers some things are shared, after school clubs etc. We have had an experience of schools in CCBC collaborating together and it has been very successful both from a financial and standards prospective.

The Education Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of the 27th February, 2017 unanimously supported the proposal.

List of Consultees

Rhymney Comprehensive, Abertysswg and Pontllytyn Primary School – Pupils, Parents/Carers/Guardians, Prospective Nursery Pupils, School Staff, Governing Body and the Community

Headteachers of all Caerphilly Schools

CCBC Members

CCBC Town and Community and Community Councils

All AM's and MP's representing the area served by the schools directly affected by the proposal

Directors of Education of all Bordering LA's

Principal of Coleg Y Cymoedd

Principal of Coleg Gwent – Coleg Gwent

CCBC Youth Forum

Communities First Local Partnership

Families First Board

Teaching Associations/ Support Staff Associations

Welsh Government – Schools Management Section

Welsh Government – Post 16 Division

ESTYN Catholic Diocesan Board of Education

Church in Wales Diocesan Board

Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (WASACRE)

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

South East Wales Consortium (EAS)

Integrated Transport Unit

Gwent Police and Crime Commissioners

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners

Local Independent Nursery Providers

Flying Start.