

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 26TH MARCH 2018

PETITION IN REGARD TO CHOOSE LIFE PRESENTED BY THE GLANYMOR & TYISHA SAFER COMMUNITIES ACTION GROUP

Purpose: To provide information to the Executive Board to inform their decision.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

- To consider the contents of the report.
- To consider the recommendations

Reasons: The decision of the County Council held on the 10th of January was to refer this issue for the attention of the Executive Board.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted NA

Exec Board Decision Required **YES**

Council Decision Required NA

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- **Cllrs. Glynog Davies, Education and Children's Services and Cllr. Cefin Campell, Communities and Rural affairs**

Directorate- **Education and Children's Services**

Report Author:
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Designations:

Director of Education and Children's Services

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE BOARD
26TH MARCH 2018**

**PETITION IN REGARD TO CHOOSE LIFE PRESENTED BY THE
GLANYMOR & TYISHA SAFER COMMUNITIES ACTION GROUP**

Mrs Vanessa Marsh, the Chair of the Glanymor and Tyisha Safer Communities Action Group, presented a petition to the meeting of the County Council on the 10th of January, 2018 in relation to the location of Chooselife. The minutes read as follows-

PRESENTATION OF PETITION

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mrs V. Marsh, Chairperson of the Safer Communities Action Group, who had been invited to present to, and address Council on the following petition regarding the 'Relocation of Choose Life'

"We the undersigned call upon the Carmarthenshire County Council to exercise its paramount duty to safeguard and protect children by relocating the Charity Chooselife to suitable alternative accommodation. The present location of Chooselife immediately adjacent to the new infants and junior school in Copperworks Road is unacceptable and dangerous as hundreds of children will be walking to school along Copperworks Road on a daily basis. The close location of both facilities is incompatible and one must move. Due to the investment already committed by the County Council, this must be Chooselife."

Mrs Marsh outlined to the Council the Group's background and the reasons for the petition in relation to the close proximity of Chooselife's operating premises, as a drug and alcohol 'drop in centre', to the new infant and junior school currently under construction in Glanymor. Reference was made to the potential adverse impact that could have on young children attending the school and the Council was reminded of its statutory safeguarding duty to children. She confirmed the Group was not seeking the closure of the 'drop in centre', merely its relocation in the short time left prior to the opening of the new school.

Following her presentation, Mrs Marsh formally handed the petition to the Chair of Council

A view was expressed that the Executive Board should look favourably upon the petition when affording consideration thereto.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that in accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule 10.14 the petition be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

There were also three letter of support from-

- Michael's Hairstylist, 102 Station Road, Llanelli- *Business owner for 47 years*
- Deborah Peane, 5 Tŷ Cydweli, Station Road- *Grandparent*
- Albert Muszynski, 69 Clos Sant Paul, Llanelli- *local resident and School Governor*

Location of Chooselife



Timeline

February 2015- The Council consulted on the [Future Primary Education Provision for Children Residing in the Copperworks Infants School and Lakefield Primary School Area](#) proposing the following-

1. The closure of the existing Copperworks Infant and Nursery school and Lakefield Primary school and through the closure of the two schools. The establishment of one new Dual Stream Primary School by 1st September 2016, with one Governing Body, one Staffing structure with one Headteacher.
2. Investing some £12.5m to transform the former Draka site to include a new school building with the latest facilities which will cater for 60 early years children and 420 pupils from age 3 – 11

In response to the consultation some comments were received in regard to Chooselife-

The consultee expresses concern with regards to how close Chooselife is to the entrance of the school. Consultee's children have expressed their concerns as well. They often find dirty and discarded needles in the rear lane of their home and her children are worried that similar needles will be found in the grounds of the school.

The County Council's response was as follows-

The security of the school and its environment is maintained through the strategic control of entrances to the site and movement within it. There are two main entrances: one primarily pedestrian from opposite George Street on Copperworks Road and one from vehicles from dedicated road to the western side of the site.

There will be CCTV surveillance of both entrances, and additional cameras overlooking the tertiary (emergency) entrance at the north-eastern corner of the site and on key corners of the main building.

Full-height, anti-climb fences will be used to ensure the security of the site and the safety of the school community.

A meeting with Rob Chapman, Community safety Officer took place on the 23rd October 2014, where the security of the school was discussed and implemented into the design as recommended.

3rd of November 2015- The Statutory Notice was published. No objections were received.

10th of February 2016- Carmarthenshire County Council determined the proposal as follows:

1. to discontinue Copperworks Infant and Nursery School on the 31st August, 2016
2. to discontinue Lakefield Primary School on the 31st August, 2016
3. as from 1st September, 2016, to establish a new 3-11 Dual Stream (DS-Welsh and English) language category Community Primary School on the existing sites and buildings of the current Copperworks infant and nursery school and the current Lakefield Primary School to cater for 60 nursery places and 420 pupils aged 3-11 until such time the new school building is complete.

The Council considered the proposal in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013 and noted that no statutory objections had been received in respect of the proposal during the statutory objection period.

Minutes of the Meeting

Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 1st February 2016 (Minute 7 refers) had, considered a report outlining proposals to discontinue Copperworks Infant & Nursery School and Lakefield Primary Schools. It was noted that no objections had been received to the Statutory Notice published on the 3rd November 2015 which detailed the Council's intention to proceed with the discontinuation of the schools.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Executive Board be adopted:-

'to proceed with its proposal to discontinue Copperworks Infant and Nursery School and Lakefield Primary School and to implement the proposal as detailed in the Statutory Notice dated 3rd November, 2015.'

Chooselife (On the 15th February the Director of Education & Children's Services met with Alan Andrews, Director, Chooselife)

Chooselife was founded in January 1996 and is in its 21st year of operation. It provides a Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service that believes that recovery from addiction is not only possible, but also achievable. It currently also provides sheltered housing for 23 people. According to the Charities Commission Chooselife's charitable objectives are-

1. To relieve persons who are in conditions of need or hardship or who are aged or sick (particularly but not exclusively as a result of drug or alcohol abuse) and to relieve the distress caused thereby (particularly but not exclusively by providing advice, information, guidance and accommodation to individuals and to enable them to access suitable treatment and to give advice and assistance to their families) in Llanelli and in such other parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the trustees may from time to time think fit.

2. To help to prevent drug and alcohol misuse through providing advice, information and guidance to individuals and groups

In 2007 Chooselife secured capital funding from the Welsh Government to the value of £105k which was used to secure a 20 year lease for their current accommodation. There are 9 years left on this lease. The Centre opens at 10.00 o'clock each morning. Chooselife's funders in 2016/17 were DrugAid (£106,300) and Lloyds Bank Foundation (£23,913).

Chooselife have clear guidelines for service users and high expectations in respect to managing behaviour. They expect service users to respect the Centre and what Chooselife does. It does not provide a needle exchange service to its clients, however, they do have trained volunteers who can dispose of needles safely and securely. Chooselife offers this service to the new school and can provide a more responsive service than the County Council can.

According to Report of the Trustees for Year Ended 31st March 2017-

1. The Centre had been accessed 5231 times by 253 service users, 192 male and 61 female.
2. Centre is open Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.
3. The Centre runs programmes such as DARE Workskills Programme (gardening, building, fencing, removals and house clearances, delivering leaflets), On The M.O.V.E (16 individuals signed up to the course supporting the gaining skills for volunteering and future employment)
4. 5 individuals were supported back into work.
5. 28 individuals support with cooking and clearing up in the kitchen amongst other task.
6. 1 individual who has undertaken both MOVE and DARE programmes has secured a place on a social inclusion degree course.

Mr Andrews' Comments

- **Chooselife, has not to date met with the local County Councillors but would welcome a discussion with the local Elected Members in respect to their concerns and to try and reach a compromise or resolution.**
- **Chooselife has noted that should the Council or anyone else be able to provide alternative accommodation, of similar size and quality in a suitable location, they would consider relocating.**
- **Chooselife would like to offer "Know the Score" workshops/sessions for schools in respect to this agenda and use their experience to support PSE in schools.**
- **Chooselife offers a responsive needle recovery service should any needles be found anywhere in the vicinity.**

A Statement from Dyfed Powys Police

"Balancing the different requirements of vulnerable members of society can be complex, particularly where these may transect; Dyfed-Powys Police are responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and are committed to supporting the needs of school communities and community based rehabilitative functions. Dyfed-Powys Police actively encourage the participation and cooperative engagement of all such communities to these aims and will work with County Council partners as required in furtherance of whichever decision is passed by the Executive Board in its inherent jurisdiction."

THE LEARNER TRAVEL (WALES) MEASURE 2008

The law on school transport in Wales is set out in **The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008**. However, other legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 will also be relevant.

The law says that:



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www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales

- **children at primary school get free home to school transport if they live 2 miles or more from the nearest suitable school and**

Subsequent guidance notes-

- Section 3(8b) of the 2008 Measure states that a walked route to school or relevant place of learning is 'available' if—*“it is safe for a child to walk the route with an escort, if the age of the child would call for the provision of an escort”*.
- **Parents have a duty to ensure their child receives suitable full time education when the child reaches 5 years of age.** There is no statutory requirement on local authorities to provide an escort, unless specifically stated in a learner's SEN statement.
- **Parents are responsible for deciding if children can walk by themselves to school. However, local authorities are under a legal duty to assess the travel needs of children who walk to school.**
- Local authorities have to assess the nature of the routes walked by children. If a parent is worried about a walking route to school they can ask the local authority if it has been assessed as available for children to use.
- Parents are entitled to see an assessment report.
- Parents can ask their local authority for an assessment to be made of a walking route if they have concerns about safety.
- If a route is not safe to walk the local authority can work to make it safe. However, if a route is not safe and cannot be made safe, the local authority must provide free transport for children to attend school.
- **Children can walk with adults, friends or groups in 'walking buses' if parents do not feel the learner will be safe on their own. Community groups can coordinate travel activities, such as helping parents to share the school run.**

Actions the School has in place

As part of the Personal and Social Education Curriculum the school will continue to increase the learners' awareness amongst other things of taking increasing responsibility for keeping the mind and body safe and healthy and the harmful effects, both to themselves and others, of illegal substances.

The pupils have been engaged in work with the community in relation to developing the community-
<https://twitter.com/YsgolPenRhos/status/922444536294584320>

On the 22nd of February, 2018, the Ysgol Pen Rhos Scheme was awarded the '**Secure by Design**' certificate which is a Police initiative to reduce crime in our built environment combining the principles of 'designing out crime' with physical security.

Outcome of the Public Meeting held on the 19th of January

Following the Public Meeting a letter was received from Paul Harries, SCAG Volunteer, on behalf of the attendees.

The meeting agreed a motion- ***‘the Safer Communities Action Group write to the County Council advising the Cabinet Board of the strong feelings expressed in the meeting and urging the Council (in consultation with Chooselife) to affect the relocation of the “drop in centre” as soon as practicably possible to suitable alternative premises’.***

Concerns were raised in respect to *‘who would be responsible if a pupil of the new school came to harm as a result of some of the activities witnessed outside Chooselife’*

Reference was made to a previous '2000 named petition presented to the Council 8 or 9 years ago that was presented to the Council objecting to the presence of Chooselife in Copperworks Road but this had not achieved anything'.

The Elected Members present (not listed) 'spoke in support of the aims of the community and pledged to work cross party towards the agreed objective.'

Recommendations

Pupils from the Copperworks and Lakefield sites will transfer to the new Ysgol Pen Rhos building following the Easter break i.e. April 9th, 2018.

In order to ensure the safety of children, which is of course our priority-

- 1. The Local Authority will assess the nature of the route walked by the children along Copperworks Road. If the route is not safe to walk the local authority will work to make it safe.**
- 2. The school will put in place a system to check the school boundary and grounds, on a daily basis, to ensure everything is in order.**
- 3. The school will monitor incidences during the Summer term and update the Education Department of any concerns.**

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

No

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: *Edymorgans*

Director of Education and Children's Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: *Edymorgans*

Director of Education and Children's Services

1. Scrutiny Committee
2. Local Member(s)
3. Community / Town Council
4. Relevant Partners- Headteacher of Ysgol Pen Rhos
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE